

July 2008

Dear Faculty and Staff –

Greetings from the Office of Research and Economic Development. I hope that you are enjoying your summer – mine seems to be passing by at a blinding rate. July is Mississippi at its best – humid, hot and muggy – and a great time to enjoy air conditioning!

The Office of the President has provided funds for several academic conferences to be held at MSU during the upcoming year. You, your colleagues and your students are invited to the Bio-Inspired Design - Enabling Technologies in the Life and Materials Sciences Conference to be held at Mississippi State University (MSU), August 20-22, 2008. This conference is being funded by MSU in response to a growing interdisciplinary effort focused toward the advancement of technology beyond current capabilities and to bridge Life and Materials Sciences through Bio-Inspired Designs. More information on this conference is available at: [www.bioinspired.msstate.edu](http://www.bioinspired.msstate.edu).

Let me pass on some faculty and staff kudos for this month –

The Life Sciences and Biotechnology Institute (LSBI) has named four faculty members as inaugural LSBI Fellows. In order to be designated as a Fellow, a faculty member must: Demonstrate commitment to MSU's goals to increase our research capacity in the molecular and genomic life sciences, especially through their support of the LSBI; have a national reputation in the molecular and genomic life sciences; have a proven track record of extramural competitive grant funding success; and have multiple publications in high impact-factor scientific journals.

Please join me in congratulating the four new LSBI fellows: Dr. Susan Bridges, Computer Science and Engineering; Dr. Mark Lawrence, College of Veterinary Medicine; Dr. Dan Peterson, Plant and Soil Sciences; and Dr. Zhaohua Peng, Biochemistry.

There are several key items that I want to put the finishing touches on including the strategic plan, our faculty travel and grant program, and our leadership program, and these three areas will be the focus of this month's newsletter.

Strategic Plan -

It was almost a year ago at this time that we started the process of developing a strategic plan for research and scholarly activity at Mississippi State University, with a specific goal of “Mississippi State University will rank in the Top 100 research universities nationally in all major research categories. Our recognition as a major research university will be reflected by our designation as a Research University - Very High Research Activity by the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching.”

I appreciate all of the comments and suggestions on the draft strategic plan, and we have incorporated several suggestions into our working version. I attended a meeting the other day in which one of the speakers discussed strategic planning and noted “A strategic plan with a grade of C coupled with an implementation plan with a grade of A is better than a strategic plan with a grade of A and an implementation plan with a grade of C”. It would be possible to continue to tweak and modify the goals and objectives, but I believe that it is now time to move into the implementation phase. While I would like to think our plan would receive better than a C if graded, I certainly want to ensure that our implementation plan is first rate. As such, our working plan is now located on the ORED website under the “Strategic Plan” tab at: <http://www.research.msstate.edu/plan/>.

#### Faculty Travel and Quick Grants Program –

Once again this fiscal year, we will be helping to support faculty travel and small grants. The ORED Faculty Travel Program is designed to assist faculty members with travel support to present at a professional meeting and conference. These awards are not intended for research travel or travel to visit with a potential research sponsor, and are for a maximum of \$750 (for domestic travel) and \$1500 (for international travel - with the exception of travel to Hawaii which is awarded at a maximum of \$750). Faculty members will only be eligible for a single travel grant per academic year. Some matching travel funds from an applicant's academic department and dean are expected. Faculty submitting these requests must have approval of their department head and dean, and can expect an answer back within one week. These requests should be sent to Ms. Sandy Williamson ([Sandy@research.msstate.edu](mailto:Sandy@research.msstate.edu)) with prior approval from your department head and dean.

The ORED Quick Grants Program is designed to provide faculty members with small grants to assist with their scholarship. These awards are for \$2000 or less and can be used for small equipment purchases, travel to meet with a program sponsor, purchase of special scholarly tools, or other needs as appropriate. These funds are not intended for normal faculty travel to conferences (these requests should be routed through the Faculty Travel Program). Faculty submitting these requests must have approval of their department head and dean and can expect an answer back within one week. These requests should also be sent to Ms. Sandy Williamson ([sandy@research.msstate.edu](mailto:sandy@research.msstate.edu)) with prior approval from your department head and dean. In contrast to the Faculty Travel Program, no matching funds are required.

If you have any questions about either program, please do not hesitate send me an email note. These guidelines are also posted on our website under the Research Funding tab (<http://www.research.msstate.edu/funding/>)

#### Faculty and Staff Leadership Programs –

Once again this year, we will be conducting a yearlong leadership program for faculty and for staff. The Office of Research and Economic Development will be working with Human Resources on the staff leadership program during this next year, and we will open up nominations to this program next month. We will start accepting nominations for faculty members interested in the 2008 – 2009 Faculty Leadership Program immediately. If you are interested in an academic leadership position now or in the future, this workshop will give you the background needed to “hit the ground running” in your first

leadership position. Any faculty member is eligible, but you must be nominated by a center director, department head, or dean. Please send a one-page summary of why you are interested in participating in the Faculty Leadership program, along with a one-page nomination letter from your department head, center director, or dean. These materials should be sent to Ms. Cristi Stevens ([cstevens@research.msstate.edu](mailto:cstevens@research.msstate.edu)) by no later than August 1, 2008.

If you would like to see the materials from the 2007 – 2008 Faculty Leadership program, please look at the Faculty Leadership Program under the Leadership and Faculty Development tab on the ORED website (<http://www.research.msstate.edu/development/flp.php>). The format of the workshop will consist of 2-hour workshop sessions conducted once per month from August to May. A variety of topics will be covered including -Understanding Your Leadership Style; Facilitating Organizational Change; Effective Communication in Organizations; Academic Planning; Diversity; Building Effective Research Teams; Principles of Fundraising; Working Effectively with Staff Members; and Evaluation and Assessment of Your Organization. These topics will be covered using case studies and readings, and will be taught by experienced academic leaders at MSU. Because of the nature of the workshop, participation will be limited to 12 people annually. If you have any questions or need more information, please contact my office.

I hope that each of you has a chance for a little “down time” this summer. The SEC Football season is just around the corner – I can hear the cowbells ringing now!

Go Dawgs!

Kirk.