

September 2008

Dear MSU Faculty and Staff -

Greetings from the Office of Research and Economic Development! I hope that you had a chance to see our Bulldogs in action against the University of Southeastern Louisiana this past Saturday night. The Dawgs got a big win, the weather was nearly perfect, and the cowbells were ringing loudly!

As you may remember from the February 2008 Dear Colleague Letter, MSU enjoys strong support from our congressional delegation in Washington, DC. With the onset of the fall semester, it is once again time to start soliciting proposals for possible inclusion in the FY 2010 MSU Federal Wishbook. Details on the submission process are on the ORED website (go to the main ORED page - <http://www.research.msstate.edu/> - and click on the icon entitled "2010 Federal Initiatives"). The deadline for submission of federal projects to the Office of Research and Economic Development is October 3, 2008. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me at [schulz@research.msstate.edu](mailto:schulz@research.msstate.edu).

Last month, I shared with you that we had just over \$151M in new grants and contracts for the past fiscal year, and I have included the actual numbers by academic unit below. If you would like more information, I have posted our end of the year numbers on the ORED webpage (under the icon entitled "FY2008 New Grants and Contracts"). Let me once again congratulate the MSU research community on another solid year in new research funds for MSU.

College of Architecture, Art, and Design - \$192,961.49

College of Arts and Sciences - \$4,102,622.52

University Branch Campus (Meridian) - \$280,425.00

College of Business and Industry - \$430,082.00

University Centers and Institutes - \$23,407,294.38

College of Education - \$8,828,966.23

Bagley College of Engineering - \$67,238,253.01

College of Forest Resources/Forest Wildlife Research Center - \$6,160,454.39

Office of Graduate School - \$475,078.43

MS Agricultural and Forestry Experiment Station (MAFES)/College of Agriculture and Life Sciences - \$17,485,180.05

MS State University Extension Service (MSU ES) - \$12,848,380.19

College of Veterinary Medicine - \$5,078,726.25

Currently, I have a senior in high school who is going through the selection process of where he would like to go to college. Like many parents of graduating seniors, we have been inundated with brochures and information from schools all over the southeast - including several that I had never even heard of. In reading through these materials, it has caused me to ask, "Why should my son or daughter attend a research university?" I think this is a very valid question, and I would like to share my thoughts on this in the remainder of this month's newsletter.

First, research universities give our undergraduates the chance to work on cutting edge projects. Scholarly activity is a part of virtually all college and university campuses - but research universities have the pursuit of new knowledge as part of their main mission. As such, we invest in new laboratory facilities, new instrumentation, and the development of state-of-the-art infrastructure. With the development of these research capabilities comes the opportunity for our undergraduate students to be involved in significant research projects - where they get to interact with faculty, professional research staff members, graduate students, and post-docs. As the largest research university in Mississippi, I believe the opportunities for undergraduate research at MSU are part of what makes this a great institution.

Second, research universities have faculty members who must keep up with their respective fields to remain competitive. Picture this - you are going to have some surgery done, and you are waiting to see your doctor. You are admiring his diplomas on the wall, which state that he attended medical school in 1970. Trying to make light conversation, you say, "Boy, medicine has really changed in the last 35 years". Your doctor says, "No, not really". You then say "Well, what about all of the advances in medicine - the ability to scan a person with MRI and see what is happening in the body without surgery?". He then replies, "Well, I have been busy, and don't really have time to keep up with all of the new trends in medicine - what worked in 1970 still works today!" At this point, you politely excuse yourself and decide to go to a different doctor. While this may seem like a silly example, I believe that it illustrates a key point - faculty members who are actively engaged in scholarly activity bring the newest information into the classroom. These faculty members know what is happening in their professional fields, and they use this information to do a superior job educating students.

Third, research universities give our students the chance to make an impact on the world around them. Research universities tackle BIG problems that are often too large and complex to be solved anywhere else. Several of our most significant research programs at MSU are tackling significant problems facing the US and the world at large - things like the development of a sustainable biofuels industry or the development of inexpensive satellite technology - which can not be addressed by one or two people in a laboratory. By involving our undergraduate students in projects which are large, complex, and meaningful - they get an experience that won't come from anywhere else.

Finally, a modern research university promotes the development and analysis of new ideas, and as such, our students are exposed to thinking about things in a different way. Through prominent

speakers, seminar programs, and faculty members pushing the envelope on new ideas and new technologies, our students are exposed to a "climate of discovery and challenge". The exposure of our students to such an environment is something that many of us take for granted, but is a unique aspect of participating in being a student at a major research university like MSU.

I am sure that each of you has your own ideas about why being a research university is important to our undergraduate program, and I would welcome your ideas and thoughts on this issue - send me an email note at [schulz@research.msstate.edu](mailto:schulz@research.msstate.edu).

I wish all of you the best of success this semester in your scholarly endeavours. Remember to take advantage of the ORED seminars ([http://www.research.msstate.edu/pdf/ored\\_seminar\\_series\\_08\\_09.pdf](http://www.research.msstate.edu/pdf/ored_seminar_series_08_09.pdf)) and let me know if there is anything my office can do to assist you as you grow your research program.

Go Dawgs! Beat Auburn!

Kirk.