Faculty Ideas to Foster Research at the University of Nevada

This is a report from the Center for Advanced Studies (CAS) at the University of Nevada, Reno (UNR) summarizing the results of a process to develop input from faculty at the University regarding ways to foster research.

Who We Are

The CAS is composed entirely of faculty members who have received the UNR Researcher of the Year Award since 1975. The sole mission of CAS is to recognize, facilitate and promote research and scholarship of UNR. The Center was established in 1984 (www.unr.edu/cas).

The Process

In the context of severe budget cuts that could threaten UNR’s decades long effort to become a research University, exploring ways to increase funded research is one of the few means to bring resources to the Campus. The following process has generated creative ideas that might have the desired impact. In Fall of 2008, it was clear that the University was facing a series of budget cuts, which potentially be a threat to the research mission of the University and an opportunity for research to be part of the solution. In that semester we began preparations to invite all faculty members in a campus-wide bottom-up discussion on policies and procedures that would expand the amount, visibility, and efficiency of research on campus, particularly funded research, and that would better link the growth of research to the support of the broader educational and service missions of the University.

The goal was to serve as a catalyst for this discussion, rather than functioning as a decision or policymaking body. The set up of the process was designed with active knowledge and support of the central administration. The Provost and Vice-President for Research participated in the developmental steps and expressed strong support for this open and non-hierarchical process by and for faculty.

On May 14, 2009, after designing the process, the top 175 most funded researchers on campus, over the previous two years, were invited to a meeting. Twenty-one participants met and brainstormed ideas. These ideas were then put into written form and shared with the same group who refined and added to them.
In the Summer of 2009, an interactive website was created and all ideas were posted to collected comments and additional ideas added. The site was opened to faculty in late August, 2009. Top funded faculty, and members of CAS, were recruited to comment on existing ideas or to add new ones. An email from the Provost was sent to all faculty members in October 2009, asking them to add ideas or to comment on existing ones. Faculty, were promised that at the end of the process all ideas would be shared campus wide.

During the Fall Semester, 2009, the top researchers on campus as well as the CAS members were asked to rate the 60 ideas that were recorded. Thirty-six faculty in this group provided ratings on a five point scale: very poor (1); fair (2); good (3); very good (4); excellent (5). Faculty, were informed that a score of 3 or more meant that they were supportive of seeing the idea actually being implemented.

In Spring Semester of 2010, the Final Report was prepared.

**Structure of the Report**

Based on the above rating system, ideas with average faculty rating scores below 3 are listed in this report as “Not Supported.” Five ideas (8.3%) fell into that range. 15 ideas (25%) had average ratings from 3 to 3.5 and are listed as having “Good Support”; 28 ideas (46.7%) had average ratings from 3.51 to 4 and are listed as having “Very Good Support”; and 12 ideas (20%) had averages above 4 and are listed as having “Excellent Support.”

In order to focus attention, the report is organized by area. In each area the “excellent” or “very good” ideas are described first followed by the “good” ideas. Ideas are not ranked within these groupings because it may over emphasize trivial differences in ratings. A final section lists ideas that were not supported. An Appendix lists the mean ratings and their standard deviations for all ideas in ranked form and sequential form. Additional unranked ideas that were attached to ratings are also attached in the Appendix.

It should be noted that these ideas are the voice of faculty members. If at times they seem edgy it is because they were written that way, originally. Several faculty raters felt uncomfortable with the tone or wording and asked the CAS to alter them. Because it was promised to faculty that their ideas would be put forward, we have edited the space and grammar, but have largely left issues of tone alone. Certainly, administrators can see through the issues of tone or wording and focus on the substantive issues involved, provided it is kept in mind that the wording was up to the individual faculty member. We have drafted the Report Summary for the Final Report.

We would like to thank all who participated in this process and hope that this document be useful for advancing the research mission of our University.

Respectfully submitted on behalf of the CAS,

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Faculty Ideas to Foster Research at the University of Nevada

Final Report
March, 2010

Report Summary

Presently, the University of Nevada, Reno is facing a budgetary crisis, but more than that it is facing an identity crisis. After working for 25 years to become a Research University, Colleges are closing, majors are being eliminated, and Ph.D. programs are being shut down. Over the next several years there seems to be little chance of an influx of new money from the State; further budget cuts seem likely. The Governor has suggested that the University should be given more control over its destiny, but has also made it clear that this will be in association with less and less help from the State. Decades of work could be unraveled in just a few years if dramatic steps are not taken.

Increasing research on campus, both funded and unfunded, is one of the few effective ways to turn this crisis into an opportunity. Research oriented faculty have the skill sets, reputations, and energy to make up for some of the losses created by the budget crisis -- to our identity and to our resources -- but only if the administration provides both the vision and set of policies that can harness and grow our human assets.

In the present input process, research oriented faculty on campus have made clear by their ideas and their votes that the University needs to empower research on this campus. The ideas that follow are remarkable for the relative absence of resource demands without accountability. Instead, the faculty are asking for an opportunity to help grow resource by creating an effective partnership between the administration and faculty. In the eyes of the faculty this can be done by taking these steps:

- Provide a clear vision
- Develop and fairly apply incentives for research productivity
- Reduce and eliminate barriers to the conduct of research
- Improve infrastructure
- Tell the story of the importance of research to the community and campus
- Foster collaboration and mentorship
- Increase accountability
- Promote change as a continuous process, and
- Make administrative changes

In this summary report we will briefly describe the main ideas in each of the above-mentioned areas. This is followed by the actual faculty ideas.

**Provide a clear vision**

If we are going to advance in the research area, the administration needs to be clear about where UNR wishes to be headed, why, and how. Faculty can innovate, if given a clear goal and contingent support. The faculty suggested that it would be helpful to declare a specific five-year goal for research productivity (funded and unfunded), link it to comparable institutions, and update it each year. Specific goals should be set for major unites (e.g., colleges) and faculty and administrators should be rewarded or not depending on progress toward these goals.

The faculty feel that it is critical that a research goal should not be set up in opposition to educational and service missions. Instead, the University should make clear that the research mission and educational mission of the University are interlinked, especially in graduate education. An emphasis on research helps recruit and retain excellent faculty, advances graduate education, and provides other educational benefits. Research has a major impact on the health and well being of citizens and thus the research and service missions are similarly interlinked.

**Develop and fairly apply incentives for research productivity**

The faculty have ideas about how to incentivize and recognize research. They want to see graduate teaching and research supervision to be better recognized as teaching even if it is not classroom based, and they want teaching loads to recognize research, scholarship and grant work. Most departments have a single teaching load for all, which is clearly unfair when individual productivity is examined. Chairs and Deans who push hard for differentiation within Departments can be harmed politically; thus a University-wide, explicit standard seems needed. Course releases for successful grants at specified levels, in addition to expensive course buy-outs, is a key incentive that would cost the University nothing, if the increased F&A generated were channeled properly.

Research oriented faculty want Chairs and Deans to know where F&A money comes from. They feel that lists of top funded researchers across campus and within units should be known and widely promulgated and that the productivity of research teams should be tracked. If successful research teams are to be built, there needs to be increased incentives and job security for soft-money faculty and better acknowledgement of their role. The University should make it easy for post-docs to become research faculty, with sabbaticals and others perks that make academic life livable.
More flexibility is needed for researchers to bank extra courses for future releases. Researchers in disciplines that are not highly funded still need high levels of support and recognition.

Finally, areas of excellence should be identified and rewarded based on open, objective, and publicly stated criteria.

**Reduce and eliminate barriers to the conduct of research**

For an active researcher, every minute spent dealing with trivial matters is a minute wasted. Hand carrying grants around for signatures makes no sense; hiring grant staff and technicians into inappropriate and burdensome state employee categories creates layers of waste and inefficiency; budgetary rules can be arcane and wasteful of time and energy. Researchers believe that all grant and research related entities on campus need a service organization mentality, and they need to be help accountable to that vision. It is instructive that some in NSHE (DRI) operate free of the burdens of State regulation in purchasing and hiring, precisely in order to streamline their research competitiveness. Finally research active faculty need more flexibility in their role statements, buy-outs, and course scheduling.

**Improve infrastructure**

Research faculty want to have better post-award support. They are open to innovative methods of solving this problem: paying for administrative support in the form of self-taxes of F&A; application of F&A funds to purchasing infrastructural support within the University on a competitive basis; allowing commercial IRB reviews to be purchased through grant or other funds, to increase responsivity. Researchers also need more technical support in grant writing and more consistent IRB policies. Graduate student support needs to be increased.

**Tell the story of the importance of research to the community and campus**

Research oriented faculty want the University to promote the campus in part on the basis of the value of research and research funding to the University’s mission. Our citizens need to understand the employment and economic impact that is produced by research grants, and how the substance of research impacts the local economy. Faculty suggested a number of ideas to do that: a speaker’s bureau, tasking OSPA with a continuous dialogue with media relations, creating a research magazine, and developing better relationships between cooperative extension and academic departments.

**Fostering collaboration**

Faculty feel as though silos have formed in the University. A number of ideas were offered to overcome this problem: increased use of joint appointments, a faculty club, and lecture series. Faculty suggested that we formally build research mentorship and incentivize mentors with a small amount of F&A from the University portion of successful mentee grants. Graduate students need to acquire grant writing skills, and the faculty suggested using formal classes in grant writing both to increase that skill while also increasing submissions from the campus.
**Increase accountability**

One of the highest rated items was to hold the Foundation more accountable for the F&A funds it receives. The faculty wanted more information on how UNR ranks in relation to other institutions and more accountability, openness and flexibility in the distribution of F&A funds. The emphasis was not just on demands, but also on rewards – for example we should create ways to recognize good service in OSPA.

**Promote change as a continuous process**

The faculty want to create a continuous process of change and development by instituting process changes that will expand the impetus and constituency for change. Faculty suggested the University form a Council of Funded Researchers, perhaps linked to the CAS, with a seat at the ALC. This Council could be tasked to survey researchers and to continuously detect and reduce bureaucratic barriers to research. A report on administrative procedures that interfere with research should be publicly released periodically. Programs designed to help foster research should be continuously subjected to evaluation and revision. A research ombudsman, perhaps supervised by the CAS, could field calls from researchers regarding bureaucratic hurdles that need to be removed. Faculty suggested providing an annual award for the chair and/or dean who used F&A most effectively to grow research.

**Make administration changes**

Finally faculty feel that we need a nationally recruited, powerful VP for Research with a real budget to make a difference in the life of research on this Campus. We need more attention to be given to recruitment and retention efforts.

**Conclusions**

The spirit behind the ideas generated by the faculty is entrepreneurial, pragmatic, and forceful. The message from these ideas suggest that, if the Campus wants more research and more research funding they need to declare that as an explicit mission, show how it can foster the educational and service mission at the same time, and then aggressively root out barriers and recognize and reward accomplishments. The faculty would like to build research teams and programs without the excessive bureaucracy and without resources disappearing into other areas while research infrastructure withers. Creating a new atmosphere on campus requires confronting the homogenized, non-contingent view that all faculty should have the same roles, teach the same loads, and receive the same treatment regardless of abilities or performance. The research-oriented faculty have an alternative vision that is bold yet realistic. A more contingent approach will not only reward the efforts of research-oriented faculty, but will encourage other faculty to follow in the same path. This plan can be followed using resources that are generated by the success of the plan itself. In this era of budget cuts and tuition increases, researchers on this Campus believe that they can help turn the tide back toward growth and excellence.
Faculty Ideas to Foster Research at the University of Nevada

**Domain 1: Vision, goals, and administration**

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**Very Good Ideas**

41. **Declare a goal**
   
   The administration should publicly declare a specific 5 year goal, linked to comparable institutions and updated each year, on research productivity and recognition and administrators need to be rewarded or not depending on progress toward that goal. Sub-goals for specific units should also be set.

44. **Research mission is coupled to education mission especially through graduate teaching**
   
   More attention should be given to the educational impact of research in the form of recruitment of excellent faculty, the presence of excellent graduate students to teach some courses, and so on.

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**Domain 2: Recognizing, incentivizing, and rewarding research productivity**

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**Excellent Ideas**

27. **Provide Chairs, Deans, VPs, with total F & A generated each year and by whom**
   
   In some units, F&A is sent to a common ICR account which then administrators (such as chairs and Deans, or VPs) can access. However, they often do not know where this money comes from and who and which project exactly has generated it. This makes it difficult for researchers to advocate effectively for increased support within their own units. These indirect funds are often viewed as "mana from heaven" that may not get used towards the development of sorely needed research infrastructure. This leads to all faculty requests for help and support for research to be considered equally when the contribution is actually not (e.g., secretarial help). F&A distribution should be made transparent, particularly to administrators. Creating a tradition on campus that at the end of the year, OSPA would send an analysis of which investigator and which project generated the ICR funds administrators have accessed the previous year, would bring more visibility to the contribution of research to regular departmental operations as well. These benefits are often invisible.

30. **Graduate teaching and research supervision needs to be recognized in the teaching recipe even when it is not classroom based**
   
   More credit should be given for supervision and training that is not classroom based. One way to do that might be for the various credits for thesis, research supervision, and
dissertations all to be linked to faculty, not just departments as a whole, and when a certain number of such credit accrue, faculty should be given an earned release from classroom teaching.

**Very Good Ideas**

23. **Increase equity in the teaching load between those active in research and scholarship and those who are not**

There should be a University wide, explicit standard for the teaching load of research productive faculty (e.g., tenure faculty without at least x number of substantial publications in a three year period would automatically teach an extra course). Individual Deans and Department chairs try to do this but the guidelines are too vague so it is needlessly hard politically. Virginia Tech has this policy and it works very well (they require 3 substantial publications for every 3 year period).

26. **Teaching loads needs to be lessened for grant writers**

Grant submissions and grant success needs to be rewarded by recognition of the considerable effort it takes by readjusting the role statement for grant active faculty to reflect their greater time allocation to research. In many ways the campus seems to have gone backwards on this front. As an example 20 years ago this campus had an automatic course release for any major grant. A variety of steps are needed to recognize the principle and merely allowing buy outs is too unidirectional.

28. **Provide annual lists of top research funding producers, organized by units**

OSPA should publish the list of top funding producers in separate lists for research, instructional, and public service funding. These should be organized for the whole campus and by unit (by Department and by College). Each administrator should be sent their particular list of top producers and the major results should be released to the entire University community. If you want to give incentives for outside funding, give fair and unbiased credit when people produce. An annual "Top 10" list by college and a "Top 25" for the whole University would have a big impact on the morale virtually no cost once the macros were written.

31. **Increase incentives for soft-money faculty to choose UNR for their research career**

Provide incentives that will encourage soft-money research faculty and classified support staff to make UNR a career choice. Concepts that have been implemented at other research universities include: (1) leave pools (sick leave and annual leave) for soft-money research faculty and for soft-money classified support staff; (2) a sabbatical leave pool for soft-money research faculty; (3) a higher rate of ICR return to soft-money faculty than currently provided; (4) funding for time to write proposals for research grants and contracts; (5) editorial services to improve the grammar and understanding of proposals; (6) encouragement of postdoctoral research scholars to write proposals and become PIs on grants. UNR could see more research funding if incentives were in place to encourage soft-money research faculty, technicians, and other support staff to consider UNR as a career destination. Some incentives could directly lead to more funded research. Other incentives would foster a culture of support for research activities.
32. **Bank credits for free research time**
   Some research projects need prolonged stays away from the university. Work in European archives and libraries, series of experiments at special research facilities, field work in Anthropology, etc., often cannot be done in the summer alone and sabbaticals are too rare to be of much help. If faculty with active research agendas could teach extra credits for a series of semesters, bank these, and then cash them in to have a free semester spent doing this special kind of research, this would strongly facilitate some forms of research or even make it possible at all.

33. **Soft-money faculty need more job security (e.g., seed funding; bridge funding)**
   Central and college administration need to establish set aside funds to soften the cycles faced by soft-money faculty. Faculty who are 100% soft money should have at least 10% State funding so they can write proposals, serve on committees and otherwise participate in the campus community without running afoul of effort reporting rules.

34. **Give researchers proper teaching credit for student research supervision**
   After a certain number of individual credit hours for supervised research, or for thesis and dissertation credits, faculty should be given a course release. After production of a certain number of master's or doctoral degrees, faculty should be given a course release.

**Good Ideas**

24. **Keep track of research team success**
   We currently track PI success (and college and department) but not the success of organized teams of researchers. This should be done.

29. **Provide an automatic teaching release after X amount of F and A**
   Faculty should be given 1 course release, to be spent over the next xx years (I suggest 3 years) in cooperation with their Department and College administration, for each year they produce xxx amount (I suggest $100,000) of F and A for the University. Up to two course releases could be earned in a given year (the second release would be for the second chunk of F & A -- so if 100K was the cut off, a second one would come at 200K). The amount settled on in this policy would be adjusted for inflation, to keep the incentive properly tuned over the years. Faculty can now buy out of courses, paying a certain amount of their salary (it is 12.5% in my college). This is fine but at a certain level of productivity, the University receives so much that it seems almost usurious, especially since it is usually not expensive to pay for LOA alternatives. It would push faculty to produce more outside funding and reward highly productive faculty if there were automatic course releases at certain levels of outside funding. In 2007 and 2008, for example, only about 50 faculty generated $75,000 in research F and A per year; and about 30 generated $100,000. In order to pay for an LOA, the Provost's office would need to transfer 3-4K to the Department. If the amount generated by the incentive was above the amount spent, which seems highly likely, this policy will pay for itself.
43. **Pick areas of focus – centers of excellence – and fund differentially**

Based on discipline-sensitive criteria, centers of excellence should be identified and rewarded. Instead of rewarding centers of excellence based on promises and politics, the criteria should be objective and publicly stated. These may include such criteria as outside funding per faculty compared to expected levels within a discipline, national recognition for programs by independent bodies, publications per faculty, literature citations per faculty and so on.

47. **Respect diversity of research across disciplines**

Research is practiced across disciplines, not entirely within the budgetary definitions of what constitutes F&A. Listing priority privileges according to dollar amounts received may not reflect the research accomplishments by others outside of normal funding channels. We should encourage and support scholars whose research work functions outside of normal F&A paths. Finding methods to support research scholars outside of normal F&A paths could also benefit traditionally funded research. For example: 1. Provide course release time based upon level of research activity determined by Chairs, Deans, or the VP of Research. 2. Seek funding extensions beyond the fiscal year for state-funds, depending upon circumstances. 3. Relax restrictions on outside consulting and commission work, as this can lead to more funding streams. 4. Re-introduce mid-level or senior faculty-level financial support (funding for project grants, in-house). 5. Streamline the Office of Sponsored Projects so that delays are not risking grant renewals. 6. Allow funding from sponsoring agencies or entities that do not allow F&A charges. 7. Evaluate the amount of paperwork and committee work required in grant management and service.

**Domain 1: Reducing barriers to conducting research**

*Excellent Ideas*

1. **Electronic signatures for grants and OSPA Transmittal forms**

   It does not make sense in the modern era to hand carry grants from office to office for signatures.

2. **All grant and research related entities on campus need a service organization mentality**

   Often researchers feel as though they are begging for help in order just to do their job. The expenditure of social capital to bring in funds to the campus and to run projects that are supposed to be supported once here is offensive and discouraging. All units and levels (department staff; OSPA; the IRB; the VP for Research; Deans) should be expected to adopt a service orientation for encouraging and supporting research and need to be evaluated on that basis.

3. **Streamline the hiring process for technicians**

   Hiring a technician at UNR is a lengthy process that is burdened by the State classified system. Is there a way that we could set up a different way to hire these people outside of
the classified system to avoid the lengthy paperwork. It seems that a research environment is not well suited to the same system as hiring road workers. This is possible to do, as it was used extensively in the University I used to work for. This would allow researchers to quickly hire staff when grants come online, or when their fast changing research needs call for it. I think the VP could spend time researching this idea and report back to us. I am sure that there are many Universities with systems in place that are not as burdensome as ours. This has been done at DRI.

6. **We need more efficiency in administration of funded research activities**
State-sponsored activities should conform to State rules but externally funded activities should conform to the rules of the funding agency (usually federal), not necessarily the State rules. Clearly separate the oversight of federally funded research from the oversight of State-funded activities in all units of the Controller's office- purchasing, PCard, travel, personnel, etc. When State strictures are applied on top of Federal rules in the operations of units of the Controller's office, UNR researchers are boxed in by conflicting, Byzantine strictures that stifle research productivity. With fewer rules to follow, and clearer sets of rules, I believe the Controller's units will be able to do their jobs more efficiently, saving administrative costs.

**Very Good Ideas**

5. **Allow faculty to use grant funds for buying out all scheduled teaching during one semester**
Faculty who have multiple grants to manage and/or publications to write can benefit the most by being able to buy out all of their scheduled classes during one semester. For example, if a faculty member who teaches 4 courses a year (2 courses a semester) is allowed one course release per year (when grant funds would instead be available to buy out two courses), that's often not enough because it does not leave large chunks of time available for preparing publications.

**Good Ideas**

8. **Have more flexibility with one's role statement**
Not everything that each College does fits into the neat areas of teaching, research, and service. Alas, service which is an area that is little recognized as valuable, becomes the "catch-all" of many invaluable initiatives in which faculty are engaged. These initiatives are essential change agents, making powerful differences in our local community and beyond and when they are not recognized as areas for merit and scholarship, our faculty tend to discontinue these activities. The outcome for this "turn-inward" rather than outward has impacted others' perception of the university - many in the local community perceive of the university as a group who has little vested interest in the community, the region, and the state. Cost factor - less appeal for funding at the state-level.
Domain 5: Fostering productivity, collaboration and mentorship

Very Good Ideas

35. Silos have formed in the university. We need to break down barriers among groups that might collaborate
This is a “big picture” item and a number of other items (faculty club, lecture series, joint appointments) should be seen as partially responsive to it.

37. Lecture series sponsored by the University
A real lecture series focuses on cross-disciplinary themes, especially if linked to conscious team building efforts (e.g., discussion sessions with selected faculty that follow lectures with major persons), might help break down University silos.

39. Increase joint appointments
Joint appointment (both within and especially across colleges) should be more widely used to link together research teams. Often these are at no cost. Administrators should be encouraged to do this and reports should be made on the growth and success of joint appointment programs. For example, department heads might be asked why they do not have any growth in joint appointments and the role of jointly appointed faculty in collaborative research efforts should be required in annual reports from the department to the Dean or the Deans to the Provost.

40. Create graduate students grant writing classes
Create graduate level, disciplinarily-based grant writing classes taught by the best research faculty. Make them 2 semesters long. The grade comes when the grant is submitted.

Good Ideas

36. Create a faculty club
A real multi-faceted faculty club with everything from a lounge to a gym would do a great deal to foster the kind of connections that lead to creative research collaborations across units. The faculty lounge in the new Knowledge Center that could be a starting point with monthly get-togethers (wine & cheese in the late afternoon; coffee and pastry in the morning; soft drinks & snacks mid-day) and build interest in a full-blown faculty club that could be developed/built in stages, perhaps in the old Getchel Library building.

38. Create and incentivize a research mentorship model to help junior faculty learn the grant ropes from experienced senior faculty
Junior faculty often have to learn the ropes by trial and error. Senior faculty can help but often they are fully funded, or over worked, or are in other areas. One idea was to incentivize this process with a kind of multilevel marketing strategy: A small slice of F and A would be taken from the central administration’s proportion and given to the research mentor’s F and A account for the next xx years from the mentee’s grants.
**Domain 2: Dealing with infrastructural problems**

**Excellent Ideas**

12. **Increased support for post-award grant administration.**
    Current administrative assistants and PIs are often already overburdened with administering grants. Periodic reporting, accounting, and other paperwork unrelated to the actual research will increase dramatically if our goal of increasing external funding is realized.

17. **Increase graduate student support**
    Graduate students and postdocs fuel the process of research. The productivity of a lab is often limited by graduate student numbers. If research is to be increased, we must increase graduate student support to attract more and better students. This should be considered an investment since productive labs will often successfully compete for external funds which can then finance further grad support.

**Very Good Ideas**

9. **Self-imposed F and A tax for infrastructure controlled by researchers**
    Researchers are being crushed by administrative obligations in the absence of good administrative staff support in many units. F & A distribution is not keeping up with these demands and every year the administrative load rolls more downhill to departments and research teams. In some colleges researchers self-tax F & A to produce a pool of money to help with infrastructural needs but not all colleges or units have this capability. A more organized self-tax program could be expanded to involve multiple levels of F and A and voluntary consortia of faculty and research teams across the campus.

10. **Entrepreneurial purchasing of infrastructural support**
    A variant of the proposal above would be to allow units with staff expertise to sell their expertise (e.g., in budgeting) to other research teams using combination of self, department, college, and university F & A. This would put some competitive pressures on staff to perform or become irrelevant.

11. **Allow IRB reviewed to be purchased commercially**
    The medical school allows IRB review to be purchased from commercial vendors, with greatly increased responsivity. This program should be expanded, on a voluntary basis (and paid for by F & A) to the entire campus.

13. **Greater academic support for grant writing**
    A great increase in funded applications may be realized if we had experienced staff who could help polish drafts of grant applications or directly aid in the production process. Most likely it would pay for itself in increased indirect costs.
This is similar to the proposal below:

14. **Technical writer Assistance**
   I am a non native English speaking assistant professor with prior to my appointment at UNR little or no experience writing grants. I had submitted several NSF grants that were not funded for various reasons. One of my friends at DRI told me last year he has a technical writer who helps him write his grants. I emailed one of these writers and he agreed to help me with one of my proposals. This was such a valuable experience for me and the proposal the technical writer helped me write actually got funded and received compliments from the reviewers. I wish UNR had technical writers available to junior faculty that can help with the: (1) general structuring of grants, (2) making sure you address the goals of the program announcement; and (3) language/grammar issues. Grant writing is really an art and it takes time to learn what works and what doesn't. I'm not sure how expensive it is to hire technical writers, but for me it definitely paid off.

15. **Hire one or two technical writers that can assist junior UNR faculty in writing grants.**
   Our IRB process is cumbersome and time consuming. My research colleague filled out a one-page form for the same project for which I had to fill out a ten page form. When my colleague at one of the major public research universities in the country continually asks me what's wrong with my IRB folks, something is wrong. The staff isn't very helpful. The online documents are hard to navigate and the instructions are incomplete. There's a "secret" code consisting of "code" words. It would be nice that the online documentation actually helped researchers fill out IRB forms rather than setting researchers up for failure. IRB approval shouldn't hinge on how well the researcher knows the UNR IRB secret code words. It feels like the process at times is more about control than evaluating the risk benefit of a research project. The staff is unfriendly at best. Last time I was in the office the person at the front desk didn't even look up from her computer and seemed miffed that I didn't know where the "in" baskets were located. It's this kind of attitude that makes dealing with IRB here at UNR a chore.

**Good Ideas**

16. **More travel money**
   Since the importance of conferences for stimulating and delivering research and raising the research profile of UNR cannot be underestimated, this is for me a serious issue. My colleagues (and competitors) around the nation get $1,500 to 2000 every year for travel, why can't I?

**Domain 3: Helping the University and local community to understand the role of research**

**Excellent Ideas**

20. **Show the economic impact of funding by linking reports of funding to staff/employment impact**
In the recent RGJ story on faculty salaries it became evident that the public does not understand how much employment and economic impact is produced by research grants. The University needs to track and tout these numbers.

21. **Research need to be marketed to the public – citizens need to understand what research is and how it impacts the economy**
Through web-based, print, and broadcast media we need to get the story out. Research makes a difference in the lives of the community. Create a Researchers’ Speakers Bureau.

*Very Good Ideas*

18. **Link PR to research**
OSPA should be constantly linked to the media relations office so that every new grant (etc) is known to and promoted by public relations.

*Good Ideas*

19. **Create a UNR research magazine**
We need to give research much greater visibility. A slick, community and campus focused research magazine would be a good first step. It would also be web-based.

22. **Create a partnership with extension to meet citizens and explain what we do**
In order to better explain the research mission of the University each academic unit of relevance should be linked to cooperative extension. In fields that are relevant, joint faculty status between cooperative extension faculty and disciplinary department may assist in this process. Develop a researchers’ speakers’ bureau specifically to bring the research story to community groups.

**Domain 7: Increase appropriate accountability**

*Excellent Ideas*

49. **Foundation funding needs to be linked to research**
A large amount of University wide F & A goes to the Foundation. The foundation should be held accountable for those funds and their impact on fostering research growth. The Council of Researchers, the VPR, the Provost and the President should get a quarterly report stating how the funds were used to promote research.

*Very Good Ideas*

50. **If OSPA does something good it is ignored, if it screws up they are hit hard.**
If we want OSPA to transition to a service oriented department we should create easy ways to recognize and reward good service (e.g., bonuses linked to researcher ratings; appreciation notes on the web; etc).

51. **Need more data on how UNR ranks in comparison to other institutions on per faculty basis**
   On a per faculty basis, how are we doing as a campus compared to similar campuses? An administrative entity needs to be tasked to get those numbers, recalculate them each year, and release them publicly.

52. **Create a new accounting method for tracking FTE and research and market the big picture; Resist micro-managing – let unit balance interests**
   Units should be held accountable for their FTE, but not individual faculty. Give units the power to allocate resources and stop micro-managing.

**Domain 8: Structuring the continuous promotion of effective policies and procedures and creating a constituency for change**

*Very Good Ideas*

53. **Reducing bureaucratic barriers**
   We need organized efforts constantly in place to detect and to reduce bureaucratic requirements. The effort needs to be ongoing. An online survey/questionnaire could be sent to this group of researchers to begin to catalog the specific barriers and impediments.

54. **Create a Council of Funded Researchers**
   The top 100 or top 200 funded researchers on campus should be made a recognized group on campus with a council representing their interests. This group should be completely separate from the Faculty Senate. Perhaps this council should have a seat at the ALC, just as the Faculty Senate chair does. Link the Council to the CAS.

55. **Empirically evaluate the impact of research policies on increasing research**
   We create policies and programs to impact research but we do not evaluate them. For example, do the junior faculty awards work? We need to start managing by empirical outcomes. If we cannot do that in the research area we cannot do it anywhere.

*Good Ideas*

4. **Review administrative problems**
   A formal process of anonymous faculty review, done by line faculty, of administrative problems that interfere with research should be conducted and publicly released periodically. The process of collecting the information could be web-based and easy to use. This could be part of the Research Council’s charge. This should be tied to evaluation of those responsible.
42. **Provide an award for the chair and/or dean who used F&A most effectively to grow research**

At this time, there is little visibility and recognition to those administrators who are using F & A to sponsor continued research growth. A public award would acknowledge those with vision and provide a good model for others on campus. An award of this type might motivate administrators to use ICR funds in ways to further promote research. In these tight economic times, administrators might be more and more pressed to use ICR to cover routine operations. This would give them some latitude and justification for not completely giving in to these types of pressures. This would have very little cost, except for some administrative time to coordinate the application and selection process. Researchers would serve as judges.

57. **Create a research ombudsman**

Allow a faculty member on campus to serves as research ombudsman, in exchange for one course release a semester. Any researcher could call in with change ideas, complaints of bureaucratic hurdles that need to be removed and so on. Put the oversight of the ombudsman in the CAS.

**Domain 9: Administrative changes**

**Excellent Idea**

59. **We need a Vice-President for Research. The search should proceed immediately. And we need one with a real budget**

The VP for Research office seems to have been devaluated over time. We need a nationally recruited, powerful VP for Research with a real budget to make a difference in the life of research on this campus.

**Very Good Idea**

58. **Create a culture for research in departments e.g. by recruitment and retention efforts**

All too often good young researchers are not recruited aggressively or are stolen away after they come here. We need more attention to this problem perhaps through the creation of college and campus wide special funds for recruitment and retention.
Other ideas

**Good Ideas**

45. **Make UNR/DRI a major league player in solar technology (for example)**

   Here is a long-range, big-project idea that I mentioned briefly at the May 14 meeting, an idea that would address several of the concerns raised at that meeting. The idea is for UNR in conjunction with the DRI to initiate a major project, multifaceted research initiative in a research area that is technically important, a future funding pump, and highly visible both regionally, nationally, and even internationally—and hence a source of pride to the people of this region and to the state of Nevada. Partnership with UNLV, Western, and TMCC as well as with (eventual) commercial ventures should be considered, as well as network links to high-level research institutions and companies. As a particular example, I am thinking of striving to achieve international standing in solar technology. This would be a rapid-start but long-term initiative in which UNR would (1) immediately identify anyone here (UNR/DRI and also perhaps at UNLV, etc.) currently working in this or a neighboring area (2) designate funding to hire new research faculty who are rising stars, (3) set aside research space and significant funds for a rapid start-up; and so on. (4) The UNR Foundation would be strongly directed, top-down, to seek targeted funding in this area. (After all, our region is rich in multi-millionaires and even billionaires, some of whom are looking for a good project to which to donate money.) (5) This would be done in accord with a multi-year but frequently evaluated and revised, staged action-plan.

46. **The Clinical Departments in the School of Medicine Need to Promote and Support Clinical Research**

   One of the major issues with the School of Medicine is its very limited clinical and translational research. Currently there is no protected time for clinical Faculty who want to engage in research. The situation is aggravated by the lack of good mentorship (since there is very little clinical research ongoing). In spite of this there are few Clinical Faculty who have been trying “to make it” in the field of research. The School of Medicine does not have an Office for Clinical Research, or any concrete plan (that I am aware of) to advance clinical research. We need to start somewhere and do more than saying “we need to promote clinical research”.

**Additional Ideas that Were Not Supported**

7. **Let faculty submit their proposals instead of OSPA**

   It has happened to me twice now. I put in the transmittal sheet weeks in advance and then on the day that your grant needs to be submitted, the person at OSPA responsible for submitting is out / sick / needs to leave early to pick up the kids - despite giving them the heads up way in advance. My guess is that 95% of the proposals are not being submitted early but actually an hour before they are due. After so much effort put in writing a proposal we can't run the risk of not being able to submit the proposal because sometimes
it will take another year before that funding opportunity comes up. Most of the late work goes into the summary and description anyway and as far as I know OSPA is not checking these anyway. Why not have a mechanism that allows the PI to submit their own proposals? OSPA can pre approve the budget and IRB forms and only allow faculty to change the summary and project description. This would save a lot of stress and frustration for the faculty as well as at OSPA.

This item was ranked 57th of 60 ideas and fell below the level necessary to list it as a supported item, with an average rating of 2.90. Several faculty members commented that it was impractical and unwise, although others also sympathized with the problem the item reflected.

25. **Link awards for grant writing to grant submission**
   Give out grant priming awards that come in halves: the first half when you have a good idea; the next half when you submit it.

48. **Assist non-traditional "research" roles in finding and using opportunity**
   It has long been a hot-button for me that those of us in the university whose roles are not in traditional scientific/academic fields (creative literature, sport, and all of the fine arts) are led to feel very much out of the loop in the university's publicly espoused mission. Even to the point of the language invoked (all research is creative activity, but not all creative activity is, by any means, research), we feel excluded and disenfranchised. The university and the CAS need to address this, and help us discover or at least be more aware of the opportunities and funding sources that actually apply to what we do.

56. **Fund the Center for Advanced Studies**
   Give CAS a budget specifically to become an advocate for research on campus. Give them an office and a secretary.

60. **Rotating chairs may reduce the leadership role of Chairs**
   Many departments have settled into a rotating Chair system. If overdone this can prevent the positive change that can occur when a powerful person is brought to campus to give new leadership to a unit. The Provost should target a certain number of departments each biennium for the expense and effort of an outside search, and rotating Chair systems that go on for many years should be discouraged as a general operating style unless there is proof of good performance and strong faculty support within the unit.
Appendices

Ideas Contributed

Reducing barriers to conducting research

1. Implement electronic signatures for grants and OSPA Transmittal forms
2. Create a service organization mentality in all grant and research related entities on campus
3. Streamline the hiring process for technicians
4. Review administrative problems
5. Allow faculty to use grant funds for buying out all scheduled teaching during one semester
6. Create more efficiency in administration of funded research activities
7. Let faculty submit their proposals instead of OSPA
8. Have more flexibility with one's role statement

Dealing with infrastructural problems

9. Establish self-imposed F and A tax for infrastructure controlled by researchers
10. Create entrepreneurial purchasing of infrastructural support
11. Allow IRB reviewed to be purchased commercially
12. Increase support for post-award grant administration
13. Create greater academic support for grant writing
14. Institute technical writer Assistance
15. Hire one or two technical writers that can assist junior UNR faculty in writing grants
16. Award more travel money
17. Increase graduate student support

Helping the University and local community to understand the role of research

18. Link PR to research
19. Create a UNR research magazine
20. Show the economic impact of funding by linking reports of funding to staff / employment impact
21. Market research to the public – citizens need to understand what research is and how it impacts the economy
22. Create a partnership with extension to meet citizens and explain what we do

Recognizing, incentivizing, and rewarding research productivity
23. Increase equity in the teaching load between those active in research and scholarship and those who are not
24. Keep track of research team success
25. Link awards for grant writing to grant submission
26. Lessen teaching loads for grant writers
27. Provide Chairs, Deans, VPs, with total F & A generated each year and by whom
28. Provide annual lists of top research funding producers, organized by units
29. Provide an automatic teaching release after X amount of F & A
30. Recognize graduate teaching and research supervision in the teaching recipe even when it is not classroom based
31. Increase incentives for soft-money faculty to choose UNR for their research career
32. Bank credits for free research time
33. Create more job security for soft-money faculty (e.g., seed funding; bridge funding)
34. Give researchers proper teaching credit for student research supervision

Fostering productivity, collaboration and mentorship

35. Silos have formed in the university. Break down barriers among groups that might collaborate
36. Create a faculty club
37. Establish lecture series sponsored by the University
38. Create and incentivize a research mentorship model to help junior faculty learn the grant ropes from experienced senior faculty
39. Increase joint appointments
40. Create graduate students grant writing classes

Vision, goals, and administration

41. Declare a goal
42. Provide an award for the chair and/or dean who used F&A most effectively to grow research
43. Pick areas of focus – centers of excellence – and fund differentially
44. Couple research mission to education mission especially through graduate teaching
45. Make UNR/DRI a major league player in solar technology (for example)
46. Promote and support clinical research in the clinical departments in the School of Medicine
47. Respect diversity of research across disciplines
48. Assist non-traditional "research" roles in finding and using opportunity

Increase appropriate accountability

49. Link Foundation funding to research
50. If OSPA does something good it is ignored, if it screws up they are hit hard
51. Collect more data on how UNR ranks in comparison to other institutions on per faculty basis
52. Create a new accounting method for tracking FTE and research and market the big picture; Resist micro-managing – let unit balance interests

Continuous promotion of effective policies and procedures and creating a constituency for change
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**Rating of Each of the 60 Ideas**

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List of Ideas in Rank Order

*Ideas with Excellent Support in Rank Order*

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23. Increase equity in the teaching load between those active in research and scholarship and those who are not
18. Link PR to research
34. Give researchers proper teaching credit for student research supervision
50. If OSPA does something good it is ignored, if it screws up they are hit hard.
52. Create a new accounting method for tracking FTE and research and market the big picture; Resist micro-managing – let unit balance interests
28. Provide annual lists of top research funding producers, organized by units
26. Lessen teaching loads for grant writers
55. Empirically evaluate the impact of research policies on increasing research
53. Reduce bureaucratic barriers
58. Create a culture for research in departments e.g. by recruitment and retention efforts
35. Silos have formed in the university. Break down barriers among groups that might collaborate
33. Create more job security for Soft-money faculty (e.g., seed funding; bridge funding)
32. Bank credits for free research time
13. Create greater academic support for grant writing
9. Establish self-imposed F and A tax for infrastructure controlled by researchers
11. Allow IRB reviewed to be purchased commercially
14. Institute technical writer assistance
44. Couple research mission to education mission especially through graduate teaching
51. Collect more data on how UNR ranks in comparison to other institutions on per faculty basis
41. Declare a goal
54. Create a Council of Funded Researchers
15. Hire one or two technical writers that can assist junior UNR faculty in writing grants.
31. Increase incentives for soft-money faculty to choose UNR for their research career
37. Establish lecture series sponsored by the University
10. Create entrepreneurial purchasing of infrastructural support
5. Allow faculty to use grant funds for buying out all scheduled teaching during one semester
39. Increase joint appointments
40. Create graduate student grant writing classes
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8. Have more flexibility with one's role statement
24. Keep track of research team success
43. Pick areas of focus – centers of excellence – and fund differentially
19. Create a UNR research magazine
42. Provide an award for the chair and/or dean who used F&A most effectively to grow research
46. Promote and support clinical research in the clinical departments in the School of Medicine
16. Award more travel money
36. Create a faculty club
4. Review administrative problems
22. Create a partnership with extension to meet citizens and explain what we do
38. Create and incentivize a research mentorship model to help junior faculty learn the grant ropes from experienced senior faculty
47. Respect diversity of research across disciplines
29. Provide an automatic teaching release after X amount of F and A
45. Make UNR/DRI a major league player in solar technology (for example)
57. Create a research ombudsman
### Ideas that Were Not Supported

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60. Rotating chairs may reduce the leadership role of Chairs  
7. Let faculty submit their proposals instead of OSPA  
48. Assist non-traditional "research" roles in finding and using opportunity  
25. Link awards for grant writing to grant submission  
56. Fund the Center for Advanced Studies