September 11, 2015

Effective September 1, 2015, the Research Office has been restructured. These changes streamline the administrative process, making it easier for researchers to propose to funding agencies and to conduct their research programs. These changes will also create new research funding opportunities specifically for our Faculty.

Our sponsored research performance has increased dramatically at TTU, consistent with our commitment to become a major ‘Tier 1’ research university. Our Restricted Research Expenditures have increased by almost 20% over just two years, to about $49M. Over the same period our Total Awards have increased by over 35%. We have made great strides in increasing our private research funding and we have established outstanding new programs and facilities, such as the TTU Innovation Hub at Research Park, to advance innovation and entrepreneurialism.

But we still have a long way to go. Our research awards and expenditures from the federal government have declined slightly over the last year. While this decline has been a concerning trend nationally, these federal research expenditures are very important to our national rankings. We must continue to redesign our processes and procedures to reduce our Faculty’s administrative burden, and we are investing our resources to achieve this outcome. The Research Office distributes almost two-thirds of all Facilities and Administration reimbursements that we receive back to the units, primarily either as direct support to the colleges, as match support on major research proposals, or as support of major facilities.

Effective October 1, 2015, Dr. Guy Loneragan, Professor of Animal and Food Sciences and a veterinarian by professional training, will become Senior Associate Vice President for Research (SAVPR). He will serve as my deputy when I am not available, and he will focus on evaluating, building, and improving our Centers and Institutes. He will also work closely to restructure our university core facilities to broaden access to and utilization of substantial equipment.

Dr. Kathleen Harris serves as our Senior Associate Vice President for Research for Operations. She now serves as the Chief Operating Officer for the Research Division. Kathleen will work to assure that our overall administrative operations run smoothly and effectively to reduce faculty burden. Roughly a year ago we restructured the post-award operations under the Vice President of Finance and Administration, although the post-award function is achieved collaboratively between our two offices. CFO Noel Sloan and I will send on another letter shortly describing the division of responsibilities between our offices for the post-award functions. This restructuring allows the Office of Research Services to concentrate
their attention on pre-award operations, such as proposal submission and agency relations. The Office of Research Services will continue to report to Kathleen but will have a separate director, Ms. Amy Cook.

We have formed an entrepreneurial Cluster that consists of Dr. David Snow, Interim Director of the Office of Research Commercialization, Ms. Carrie Romo, Interim Director of the Research Park, and Ms. Jennifer Horn, Director of Translational Research and Entrepreneurialism. This cluster will work closely together to assure that we achieve our entrepreneurial mission as we contribute strongly to our knowledge-based economy here in West Texas.

Dr. Pat DeLucia, Professor of Psychological Sciences, was promoted to Associate Vice President for Research for Faculty Affairs last year, and she has done excellent work in advancing the recognition of TTU through nominations of our outstanding faculty members for prestigious national honors and awards, and managing internal seed grants to help advance faculty research. Pat has also been leading discussion groups with many of our productive research faculty members in order to understand what limits their rate of progress at TTU, so that we can effectively eliminate these barriers in the future. Pat will soon circulate a faculty survey that is intended to systematically evaluate limitations for a more rapid advancement of faculty research at TTU, which we will use to streamline our administrative processes and make them more effective at advancing faculty research and support.

Dr. Alice Young continues to serve as the AVPR for Research Integrity, and we will work together to assure that we remain in full compliance with all requirements for the proper conduct of research in a manner that places the minimum burden on the Faculty. This will encompass a thorough review of the operations of our research integrity committees over the next three years as we incorporate recommendations emerging from national discussions of rules governing conflict of interest, and research safety, and human research protection.

Ms. Kay Tindle was recently promoted to Senior Director of Research Development, and she has worked quite effectively with many of us to develop major new research funding opportunities here at TTU. We have recently developed extensive new faculty research opportunities with the DoD, the DOE/NNSA, and with industry, such as IBM. Our efforts will expand to provide new funding opportunities within other federal agencies, the national laboratories, and other industry partners. Her team will also continue to provide support on large-scale proposal development, coordinate our grant editing efforts, and assist new faculty.

Mr. Russell Thomasson has become our new Director of Strategic Partnerships, and he is the Program Lead on GLEAMM, a $13M state-funded initiative to develop a national test bed for microgrid design and testing. He will also work on new initiatives to dramatically expand faculty research with the national labs, and with other federal and state facilities.
I will be asking Mr. David Dorsett to take on an expanded role in our research facilities administration as we operate both the ESB building, the Innovation Hub at Research Park, and as we plan for the construction and utilization of the ESB-2 building in the near future.

Finally, I want to highlight the opportunity for Faculty to engage with the Research Advisory Council that I chair, which consists of the Associate Deans for Research from each college, and other key research administrative personnel. I encourage all TTU Faculty to work closely with the Research Office through your departments and colleges, and to participate in our very successful Faculty Research Club gatherings on the last Friday of each month. Our future is unfolding nicely, but we need everyone’s close involvement to further accelerate our efforts to advance TTU as a major national research university.

If you have questions about this memo or other research-related matters, please contact a member of the VPR staff or see our website www.vpr.ttu.edu

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