Supporting Research in Colleges of Education: Some Preliminary Data

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1-9-09
BERD Committee

• Committee Charge:
  – The committee was to design a unit that would support high level research and granting activities in the UNLV COE.
Committee Charge

- Managing grants and contracts in an effort to reduce the delays involved in post-award implementation – hiring personnel and paying for supplies and other sundries; and

- Increasing the resources available for faculty to increase their research productivity, in all areas, not just those that generate external funds.
Committee Process

• The committee decided on the following process:
  – Investigate history at UNLV COE
    • Bring in Paul Jones to begin to understand the role of the CERP committee.
  – Review how research and grant support is done at the university levels: aspirational and comparative.
    • The 35 University Study
  – Write a draft of the report and modify it until it can be approved by a committee majority.
    • Currently in process
Previous COE Research Support

• Center for Educational Research and Policy (CERP)
  
  – Founded by Dr. Paul Jones in 1994 -- a time when the culture of the COE in relation to research and granting was different than it is today.
  
  – Dr. Jones was in the Dean’s office when CERP was created.
  
  – CERP Goals
  
    • Enhance faculty awareness of research opportunities.
    • Act as a liaison between COE faculty and the Office of Sponsored Projects (OSP) in an attempt to promote grant writing.
CERP

– Provide at least some level of assistance to faculty as they engaged in these activities.

• Dr. Jones reported that CERP was a moderate success in that some grants were written and some research was done.
CERP

• In later years and under the direction of Dr. Randy Boone, CERP expanded its role to include serving as a liaison with Clark County School District (CCSD) in an effort to reduce the barriers involved in getting research approved so it could be conducted using CCSD staff and students as subjects.

• In the fall of 2000, Dr. Gregg Schraw took over as CERP director. It continued to run for about another year until Dr. Schraw resigned.

• It should be noted that CERP seemed to be chronically under funded during its history.
The 35 University Study

• A study of research support units was undertaken. The sample included 35 other colleges of education located in research-oriented universities. College of Education websites from each university COE were copied. Then, the copies were read to identify possible scoring categories.
The 35 University Study

• Once the scoring categories emerged and were vetted by at least two members of the UNLV Center for Evaluation and Assessment staff (U-CEA), they were used to go back and rate each research support unit in each of the sampled universities.
The 35 University Study

• The categories that emerged were:
  – unit location,
  – unit administration,
  – unit role in supporting research,
  – unit relationship to other COE Centers.

• The names of the universities in the sample are shown in Table 1.
The 35 University Study

• Aspirational Universities:
  – Arizona State University, University of North Carolina,
  – University of Arizona, Northwestern University,
  – University of California – Berkeley, University of Connecticut
  – University of Oregon, Duke University, Pennsylvania State University
  – University of Florida, Princeton University, Harvard University
  – University of Illinois, Indiana University
  – Texas A&M University, University of Iowa,
  – University of Texas, University of California – Los Angeles
  – University of Maryland, University of Utah, Michigan State University
  – University of Southern California, University of Michigan
  – University of Virginia, University of Minnesota, University of Wisconsin
The 35 University Study

• Comparative or lower Universities:
  – Oregon State University, San Diego State University
  – University of Maine, Utah State University
  – Mexico State University, University of New Mexico
  – Washington State University, Colorado State University
  – University of Nevada-Reno, University of Idaho
The 35 University Study

• Results

• Across our sample, these types of units were housed is one of four locations:
  – The COE Dean’s Office (20%)
  – The Provost or Research VP’s Office (29%)
  – Stand alone units (9%)
  – In individual Centers (38%)
The 35 University Study

- Results across unit locations and university category. Aspirational universities mainly follow two models:
  - Center-Driven set ups where individual Centers in the COE provided research and granting support for the faculty as part of their missions.
  - Units located in the COE Dean’s office.
The 35 University Study

• Comparative universities tended to have:
  – Units located in the Provost’s Office
  – Units located in the COE Dean’s office
  – Little or no structured research support
The 35 University Study

• Results in terms of unit functions
• Most units reviewed took on most or all of the following activities:
  – Grant Administration
    • grant accounting
    • Compliance monitoring
    • Purchasing
    • Deadline monitoring,
    • Reporting assistance and production
The 35 University Study

- Grant Acquisition
  - Assistance with grant writing
  - Budgeting
  - Liaison with OSP
  - Grant submission
  - Indirect cost negotiation
  - Notification of grant opportunities, etc.
The 35 University Study

- Research Support & Promotion
  - Seed money grants/awards
  - Funds for purchasing research equipment and materials
  - Space allocation for research purposes (mostly labs)
  - Creating opportunities for collaboration across academic units
  - Outreach and coordination with public schools (in COEs), these are frequently research laboratories), etc.
The 35 University Study

- Support in Research Design and Methods

  - Design consultation
  - Qualitative methods support
  - Quantitative methods support
Observations from Study

- Aspirational universities most commonly use individual Centers (38%) or Centers located in the COE Dean’s office (20%) as their research support units.
  
  - UNLV COE should consider this model.
Observations from Study

• The Unit most likely should provide services in the following areas:
  – Grant Acquisition
  – Grant Administration
  – Research Support and Stimulus Packages
  – Research Design and Analysis Techniques
  – Liaison with Subjects/Participants
Observations from Study

• The unit must initially adequately funded with seed money. This did not happen in the past.

• I/C generated by unit grants and contracts should eventually make the unit self-supporting.