

DRAFT

2y2d Discovery Focus Groups: Summary and Preliminary Recommendations 12/29/09, M. E. Lidstrom, Vice Provost for Research

Process: 10 focus groups encompassing about 60 faculty, 20 department chairs, associate-, divisional- and vice-deans, 10 senior administrators, and 2 graduate students, each meeting for 1.5 hr, representing all schools and colleges, UW Bothell, UW Tacoma, and UW Libraries. Includes Research Advisory Board and Faculty Council on Research.

2y2d Themes: Flexibility, Nimbleness, Collaboration

1. Don't fix what isn't broken: entrepreneurship of individual faculty
2. Flexibility: breadth of cultures will dictate different solutions in different disciplines
3. Porous boundaries: facilitate, don't hamper, faculty pursuing their career goals
4. Collaborations are just as often between faculty in the same disciplines but in different departments, than faculty in different disciplines. Reflects the changing face of faculty and their disciplines, and this trend is expected to continue.
5. Need a concept that faculty earn their salary from a combination of instruction, research, and/or service, and any drop in activity in one category requires an increase in one or both of the others.
6. Incentivize people to solve their own problems
7. Prepare for the wave of upcoming faculty retirements

2y2d Future of Research:

1. Must change or will become stagnant; may or may not require net growth due to upcoming wave of retirements
2. Although our breadth is our competitive edge and we need to take advantage of it, we can't do everything, and must make hard decisions about what to continue.
3. Need a strongly supportive and facilitative culture
4. Need to leverage our strong foundation of single-discipline, single-PI fundamental research to foster collaborations
5. Quality and nimbleness will be our most important bywords
6. Collaboration will be a cornerstone

Vision: highly collaborative and interactive research environment based on a foundation of fundamental research, often driven by single-PI labs, resting solidly on a very high quality faculty; research carried out with many different partners (at UW, at other universities, with companies, with foundations, with other countries, with new public/private/government partnerships); fewer but larger and more cost-effective research facilities, highly leveraged and cooperative; environment for research is supportive and enabling

2y2d Recommendations

Place top priority for new investments on infrastructure that will benefit research broadly.

Examples:

1. IT infrastructure
 - a. Collaborative tools, including cybertools for the humanities, arts, and social scientists.

Annual cost \$? Part of UW Tech plan?

- b. Network, network, network **Annual cost \$? Part of UW Tech plan?**
- c. eScience. **use existing staff, no new cost**

2. Increase revenue/increase efficiencies

- a. Help for faculty to set up and administer recharge and cost centers, perhaps via a new position in FM. **Annual cost \$?**
- b. Develop a mechanism to share best practices and standards between units with regard to research infrastructure. **use existing staff, no new cost**
- c. Create a small unit for centrally-submitted proposals for infrastructure, administrative improvements, etc. Needs expertise to 1) find opportunities, 2) help write and submit grants, c) administer grants. Needs a minimum of 2 FTE (one senior, one junior). **\$150K/yr.** Should determine if an ROI of at least 3 is feasible, or don't do it.
- d. Provide support for non-traditional funding requests that require a level of polish and PR not expected for federal funding. **Annual cost: \$?**
- e. Require addition of administrative direct costs to all non-federal grants that don't pay full indirect costs; develop a template, similar to that for LSDF. **use existing staff, no new cost**

3. Support tools to help faculty find resources: facilities, expertise, and collaborators. **Annual cost \$?**

Create a set of "nimbleness" funds to take advantage of new collaborative opportunities

1. Create a program to stimulate collaborations. Focus on faculty in different departments, not necessarily in different disciplines. Two tiers are proposed:

Tier 1: \$25K one-time funds to initiate collaborations; pay for attending a workshop, a seminar series, salary to help write a big proposal, salary for a grad student to get preliminary data, a piece of equipment needed to get preliminary data, etc. Fund 10/yr = \$250K

Tier 2: \$250K per year for three years to launch an important team; use to set up the research collaboration and fund research to set the team up to win a major proposal. Fund 2/yr, ramp up to a total of \$1.75M/yr.

Total cost: Year 1 \$0.750M; Year 2 \$1.250M; Year 3 and future **Annual Cost \$1.75M/yr**

Need to work out logistics. Suggest an annual RFP and decisions made by a blue-ribbon faculty panel, headed by VPR. Added benefit to those faculty of learning more about what goes on at the university. Expect ROI of 5-10X.

2. Hiring: create a program to encourage cluster hires across schools/colleges (provide 1 faculty position for 2 provided by depts.); requires strategic justification. Requires cross-unit search committees. **Permanent funds required.**

3. Develop programs to help recruit top graduate students. **Annual cost: \$?**

Support research in fields that traditionally have little or no access to external research support

Create programs for small amounts of funding (\$1000-\$5000) to enable travel and other research support. Most appropriately administered at the dean level. **Annual cost: \$?**

Create an environment for research that is supportive and enabling

1. Create a set of policies that seek to decrease administrative burden on faculty and their support staff.

- a. Review existing requirements that create administrative burden; **use existing staff, no new cost**
- b. Require all new policies that create administrative burden to be justified and to document efforts to keep burden to a minimum; **use existing staff, no new cost**
- c. Create a process for new policies that requires input from those affected during the policy development, and a communication and marketing plan for implementation. **use existing staff, no new cost**
- d. Develop a set of time-saving initiatives around process improvement, fund a project manager full-time to manage and implement; **\$300K/yr.**

2. Develop programs to decrease duplication of resources. Develop a funding program to assist in consolidation of redundant facilities and to assist in increasing the professionalism of their operation. Criteria would be ROI in terms of efficiency gains and decreased operations costs. **Annual cost: \$?**

3. Create a plan to cope with the demographics of our faculty and the upcoming wave of retirements

- a. Create attractive alternatives to full-time employment that allow phase-out, for instance, a research-based 40% category or a ramp-down for teaching efforts. **Annual cost: \$?**
- b. Create a plan for start-ups and space. **Annual cost: \$?**

Develop criteria for investment and deinvestment in programs

1. Develop a matrix for assessing new investments/themes: strengths (especially leadership) + growth opportunity + unique niche; Provide funds to invest in such themes. **Annual cost: \$?**
2. Develop a set of criteria for assessing continuation of programs: impact; contribution to the university; future growth opportunities. **use existing staff, no new cost**