

**RESOLUTION TO ENHANCE AND MODERNIZE THE RESEARCH ENTERPRISE
AT
THE COLLEGE AT OLD WESTBURY**

BACKGROUND:

The research endeavor benefits faculty scholarship, active student curricular and extracurricular engagement in applied learning opportunities, and the larger community in multiple ways. The SUNY Old Westbury administration, the SUNY Research Foundation (SUNY-RF) the Office of Research Sponsored Programs (ORSP), the Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee (IACUC), the Institutional Review Board (IRB), and the Faculty Development Grant (FDG) committees are currently the responsible parties dedicated to carrying out the operations necessary for supporting and achieving excellence in research activities at the College.

There are, however, a number of specific areas where the infrastructural support for research activities and innovation at Old Westbury is constrained, does not facilitate the achievement of excellence in the research endeavor, and also does not meet current structures and standards at comparable SUNY and non-SUNY institutions.

These can be broadly classified into three areas:

I - Extramural and intramural research grant-related issues and constraints

II - Approval process and tracking of research proposals, expenditures, administrative approvals, and Software issues and constraints, and

III - Support for research infrastructure support, oversight, maintenance, and modernization.

This Resolution outlines the aforementioned issues and offers suggestions to ameliorate these problems in an effort to support the enhancement and modernization of the research endeavor on campus.

RATIONALE:

The Faculty, Staff, and Students are the main constituents that serve to raise the profile of the College as they are the main campus producers of research that benefit our local communities, professional fields, and communities abroad as consumers of our campus research activities, innovations, products, new technology inventions, patents, etc.

The work that the College administration, the ORSP (Office of Research Sponsored Programs), the SUNY-RF (SUNY- Research Foundation), the IRB (the Institutional Review Board), and the IACUC (Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee), and the FDG (Faculty Development Grant) Committees have done for the College during these challenging times is much appreciated. However, many of the problems and constraints existed prior to the time of the pandemic, and many of those issues were exacerbated by it.

The specific issues are outlined below serve as the rationale for the **WHEAREAS** clauses that follow:

I. EXTRAMURAL AND INTRAMURAL RESEARCH GRANT-RELATED ISSUES/CONSTRAINTS:

- a. There is no clear or transparent centralized process that informs Faculty, Staff, and Students how indirect costs acquired from extramural funding are used, reallocated, and/or charged back to balance the financial business of the College.
- b. There is no clear or transparent process for the *allocation* of a set percentage of indirect costs acquired from extramural funding to:
 - be used for stimulating intramural grants (e.g., FDG) at the College
 - be set aside for equipment repairs and service contracts; and
 - develop a research supply emergency fund.
- c. There is no clear or transparent process for annual funding *allocations* (from sources other than from extramural funding) to be used for stimulating FDG grants at the College;
- d. The annual schedule of the *solicitation* for the FDG application cycle is variable; sometimes occurs both Fall and Spring semesters but sometimes only once in the academic year; and often occurs too late within a given semester
- e. There are often significant delays in the FDG award *notification* process which impedes the timely implementation and completion of FDG funded research.
- f. There are often significant delays in the *review* of FDG or other funded projects, which again impedes the timely implementation and completion of funded research
- g. Once an FDG is awarded, the utilization of funds is hindered at multiple points such as:
 - substantial delays in obtaining funds from administration to conduct research activities in a timely manner, and
 - unclear processes to obtain and confirm quotes and/or purchases, and
 - unclear administrative approvals to order and purchase research supplies and equipment.
 - Inability to identify approval agents or track approval processes

These inconsistencies in the intermural funding process have consistently hampered the ability to conduct initial research in a timely manner and thereby reduced the ability to obtain pilot data to augment the efforts for additional extramural funding; and as well set back effective participation in applied learning activities.

II. APPROVAL PROCESS AND TRACKING OF RESEARCH PROPOSALS, EXPENDITURES, AND ADMINISTRATIVE APPROVALS AND SOFTWARE

- a. There is no clear or transparent system to *track* the administrative approval process of Local Approval Forms and Grant Submissions; and
- b. There is no clear or transparent system to *track* purchase orders for research supplies/consumables, equipment, and software; and
- c. There is no clear or transparent system to *track* the approval process of the IRB and the IACUC research proposals; and
- d. There is no clear, transparent, or modern software/technology system in place to streamline the IRB proposal review process so as to facilitate:
 - requests for expedited reviews,
 - timely reviews that allow research to be approved and conducted within a single semester. (This time-factor is essential for student-led research)
 - efficient response to queries and approvals to conduct meaningful research on campus; and
- e. While there is a clear and transparent system in place for the IACUC to streamline the review of submitted research proposals, IACUC lacks a modern software/technology system for reviewing research proposals

The aforementioned issues prevent Faculty, Staff, and Students from actively engaging in research during the Fall and Spring semesters, which, as detailed above, directly reduces the research output from the campus and further hinders the Faculty, Staff, and Students' ability to obtain critical pilot data to apply for both intramural and extramural funding opportunities; and the prioritization of Student curricular and extracurricular engagement in applied learning and research activities given their unique and often restricted timelines; and

III. SUPPORT FOR RESEARCH INFRASTRUCTURE SUPPORT, OVERSIGHT, MAINTENANCE, AND MODERNIZATION:

- a. The computer, wet, and dry laboratory spaces are in need of modernization and currently are not effectively or strategically managed
- b. Currently the IRB and the IACUC lack an oversight committee to assess, evaluate and facilitate resolution of issues which arise in those committees.

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WHEREAS there are issues and constraints that exist in extramural and intramural research grant-related activities as detailed in the Rational section of this Resolution, and

WHEREAS there are issues and constraints in approval processes; tracking research proposals; expenditures, and administrative approvals; and lack of appropriate software to facilitate these processes, as detailed in the Rational section of this Resolution, and

WHEREAS there are concerns and constraints in the support, oversight, maintenance, and modernization of research activities, as detailed in the Rational section of this Resolution.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Faculty Senate set up a **Taskforce to Enhance and Modernize the Research Enterprise at Old Westbury** which will include members from the Faculty Senate Executive Committee, the IRB, the IACUC, the IT Department, the IT Governance Committee, the Research Space Committee, the ORSP Director, representatives of the Administration, five faculty members who will be representatives from the Natural and Physical Sciences, the Social and Behavioral Sciences, Humanities and the Arts, Business, and Education; and representation from the SGA.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the **Taskforce to Enhance and Modernize the Research Enterprise at Old Westbury** in consultation with SUNY Old Westbury Administration, the ORSP, the IACUC, the IRB, and the FDG committees, deliberate and commit to exploring the formation of a Standing Committee on Enhancing Research to provide consistent oversight related the issues as detailed and others that may arise. The Standing Committee will regularly evaluate and assess the research needs, issues, and concerns raised by Faculty, Staff, and Students to facilitate research activities on campus and to plan for future growth in the research endeavors at Old Westbury.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the **Taskforce** work with the SUNY Old Westbury administration to institute *clear and transparent processes* for the annual allocations of funds to support FDGs; the proportionate allocation of extramural funding for stimulating FDGs; allocations of indirect funds for equipment repairs and service contracts; and allocations for a research supply emergency fund, and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the **Taskforce** collaboratively work with SUNY Old Westbury administration, the ORSP, and the FDG Committee to set up earlier and more consistent FDG *application* cycles and timely *notification* dates to facilitate Faculty's ability to complete purchase orders, begin conducting research, and facilitate the timely engagement with Staff and Students in curricular and extracurricular applied learning opportunities, and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the **Taskforce** in consultation with SUNY Old Westbury IT Department, work with the administration, the ORSP, the IACUC, the IRB, and the FDG committees to acquire or develop the equipment/software/technology necessary for IRB and IACUC to *transparently and efficiently process* all types of research proposals submitted (ranging from exemptions, expedited reviews, full reviews etc.)

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the **Taskforce** work with SUNY Old Westbury administration and the ORSP to conduct an assessment of the labor demands placed on the IRB and the IACUC who are volunteer faculty that oversee the review of all of the submitted research proposals, and, using a 'best practices' approach, facilitate a more efficient research proposal review process for all research-related campus constituents, while ensuring that all relevant ethical standards are upheld.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the **Taskforce**, in consultation SUNY Old Westbury IT Department, work with the Administration, ORSP and other related departments to develop the software/technology infrastructure necessary to modernize the College's *purchase order, request and approval, and tracking* system to facilitate and expedite the acquisition of equipment and monies necessary for the implementation of the research process, and

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the **Taskforce** to Enhance and Modernize the Research Enterprise at Old Westbury work with SUNY Old Westbury Administration and related bodies to obtain feedback on research needs, such as space, facilities and maintenance, across all disciplines on campus to facilitate equitable distribution and sharing of current resources.

Resolution Submitted to the Faculty Senate Executive Committee on 04/23/2021

Sponsored by: The Psychology Department – School of Arts & Sciences;

Endorsed by: XX