UM Faculty Survey on Research Support Needs

Preliminary Report for Full-time and Assistant Prof. rank respondents only (N=19)

Conducted by the Research and Scholarship Committee of the Faculty Senate and the URC

March-April 2012

1. What are the primary factors that currently limit your ability to engage in or expand your extramural research? Please be specific.

Text Response	Coding
Scholarship is not sufficiently valued, and therefore promoted, in my college, both internally, and in external communications. This is very obvious when you look at the typical teaching load, which is 75% teaching and 25% research. The lack of an effective PhD program that aims at teaching people how to do research as a full time, day to day activity as opposed to the current focus, credentialing part time students. I do social science research, and our IRB hinders this kind of research more than did my previous institution. For instance, they seem to require the review of ALL instruments for protocols that have already been determined by them to be exempt. They are not keeping up with current trends in human subjects research and need to attend some conferences to see what leading institutions are doing. This is a serious concern.	S-CA, T-Tch, S-UA
1. Time management. I've essentially taught a new course almost every semester since I've been here.	T, T-Tch
Lots of time spent on teaching, developing new courses and curricula. advising, involving undergrads in research (they all need extensive training and supervision before any actual research gets done; this is very good experience for their careers, and students are more and more finding that it is essential for getting a job or into grad school), committee work, undergrad advising, writing recommendation letters for students, dealing with annual reappointment process every year when untenured (takes a lot of time to be done adequately; I wonder why this can't be done every 2 years, at least once during the pre-tenure period, to save some paper-pushing time). Also, before any actual research can be done, there is also a large burden on science faculty to manage their lab spaces, handle orders, deal with budgeting, maintain equipment, keep track of safety training, managing chemical inventories, etc. Many of these tasks can be done by a paid lab technician, but in order to have that assistance, you need a big grant. So to have the support in the lab to help you get a big grant, you need one--chicken/egg problem. The tenure-stream FTE faculty numbers in my (and probably other) departments have been cut approximately in HALF in the past 10-15 years, while undergrad and grad enrollments have approximately doubled at the same time. So faculty need to teach larger and larger (or more) classes, often without any TA support, and to handle more advisees, more undergrads in the lab, etc. Hiring more (woefully underpaid) adjuncts is NOT a good way to solve this problem, at least if we want to continue to provide high-quality undergraduate education at UMaine. We simply need more tenure-stream faculty hires, and we need to replace faculty who retire. MAFES funding used to be a steady support of substantial research funding, including even enough money for technicians, but those budgets have been slashed. Additionally, basic preventive building maintenance is often left undone. It seems that no one has responsibility for keeping the buildings in good operating shape. This has resulted in floods and leaks in many labs across campus, leading to a very significant loss of faculty and research student time and money, further limiting the ability to get research done.	T-Tch, T-Serv, T-B, S-staff, F-Fac, F-GS, F-Eq, F-Un, F-staff

Startup packages are often too small to get the initial boost needed to create the foundation for building a robust research program in those crucial years between postdoc and landing a first large NIH or NSF grant. Startup funding for a lab technician would help tremendously in this regard, but I think that's unheard of at UMaine.	
Lack of other faculty with the expertise needed to teach the courses I teach so that I can buy myself out of teaching to make time for more research. Currently, I cannot apply for any additional funding because I can't argue that I would have the time to do the work (and that is something that places like NSF take into consideration when reviewing a proposal).	T-Tch
Not enough funding opportunities and support	F-O
Lack of sufficient number of colleagues with NIH-level funding. This limits out ability to 1) recruit graduate students and post-doctoral fellows, 2) acquire and efficiently use a wide range of cutting-edge equipment that requires daily use to make it cost-efficient, 3) apply for NIH training grants and project grants and infrastructure grants that generally require 4-5 R01-funded PIs to be competitive, 4) create a network of laboratories for sharing ideas and technical advice. Mediocre support from ORSP, especially in post-award management. Mediocre administrative support for managing budgets within department.	S-Peer, F-GS, F-Eq, Opport-Fac, S-UA, S-CA, S-grant admin
I do behavioral research and technical development that requires strong pilot data for submitting viable grants to funding agencies like NIH and NSF. I can usually perform this research with the assistance of undergraduate research assistants but without funding for their positions, it is hard to do the leg work necessary for obtaining major extramural grants. I currently have several grants and they were possible because I had this support to get the pilot data. However, without additional campus support for undergrad research, I am worried about future grants. As the university wants to increase Undergrad research opportunities, and since they both greatly benefit the student in learning tools and useful skills, as well as opening the door to large grants, I think this is a win-win that the university should be putting more funds towards.	F-GS, F-Un, S-stdts
1. Time and resources to generate preliminary data in support of an idea potentially suitable for funding. 2. Teaching/administrative load that does not account for the research-related teaching and facility maintenance.	T, F-Un, T-tch, T-serv, S-staff
Time and connections to other faculty interested in collaborating. As a junior faculty member, it can be difficult to reach out to those I have not worked with before.	T, S-peer
Stable, long-term funding for technical staff. It is extremely difficult to run a research program without at least one technician who is hard-money funded so that their job is secure despite the ups and downs of grant funding. Otherwise researchers risk having to hire and layoff according to the unpredictable nature of grant awards and losing the continuity of skills and expertise that a long-term employee provides, not to mention the quality employees that stable jobs attract. Lack of appropriate field equipment at the University research farms to carry out field trials in the proper manner that is representative of farm situations and allows rigorous experimental design.	F-Un, S-staff, F-Eq
Located off the Orono campus so access to students to participate in	--

research is limited.	
The biggest barrier is that there are relatively few sponsors of business research that I am aware of. In addition to that, we teach a lot of classes that are relatively large and the senior faculty have limited experiences doing sponsored research.	F-O, T-Tch, S-peers
1. My own failure to say no to new and exciting projects that ultimately take up the time I could be putting into research. 2. My perceived limitations in setting up a good research design - and failure to think anyone else would be interested in what I do. It sounds funny, but having a consultant who would come into my office and help me organize space and create a more efficient use of my time would be like giving me gold. Now pair that with a personalized consultation to review key aspects of my research study design and I'd be in heaven!	T, S-data
Access to data bases necessary to do significant business research. Mainly the WRDS data bases such as COMPUSTAT, EXECU-COMP and the KLD. Similarly, access to journals such as the Journal of Operation Management and International Journal of Operations management and many others are just not available. While I understand these data bases are expensive, they are pretty important in conducting business research. Teaching M-W-F is also an obstacle to research. As you may know we are the Land Grant for the state and THE ONLY SCHOOL in the system that teaches M-W-F; this is both an impediment to research and difficult for working students to accommodate in their busy working schedules. Technology: in the business school we do not have networked computers. Thus, we have no easy way to back up our data. We all scramble to find different methods to back up our computers.	Equip-access, F-Eq
1. Heavy teaching load (at 75% teaching, I currently teach 6 fairly time intensive graduate level courses per year 2. Lack of a coordinated UMaine Interdisciplinary Research Center (IRC) to aid faculty (especially new faculty) with seeking compatible funding opportunities, writing grants, etc. Especially for new faculty members, the ORSP office provides very MINIMAL support to faculty. At the most, they will email new faculty a budget spreadsheet to complete on their own. Other research institutions offer a much higher level of support for faculty through some sort of IRC. 3. In some instances, my department is excluded from being eligible to apply for university level funding opportunities. This is a frustrating barrier for us in the [unit].	T-Tch, S-UA, S-FO, S-prop prep, F-Un [need: IDC return]
Teaching, advising grad students, answering the endless stream of emails, reviewing manuscripts, being AE, lack of funding opportunities, heavy administrative duties, inability to recruit high quality grad students	T-Tch, T-Serv, F-O, Q-GS
Time to conduct the research in addition to other job requirements and identifying and securing funding to conduct research.	T, S-FO
Balancing time commitments to service and teaching, versus research. Decaying infrastructure, and inability to find non-university resources to replace failing equipment or to build/renovate for biosecure, appropriate work space.	T-Tch, T-Serv, F-Eq, F-Ext
Too much time focused on other areas outside of research. For my group, it is less the teaching load, but more the logistics of running the program we work for. It would be helpful to have people who took care of the logistics	T, S-staff

who understood the importance of research.	

Statistic	Value
Total Responses	19

2. What are the most helpful factors that currently support your research effort? Please be specific.

Text Response	Coding
A thesis master's degree program that gives me students; A PhD program in the department I cooperate in (not my home college).	S-Stdts
1. Support within the department, from previous and current chairs, and other faculty members.	S-CA, S-peers
Some very good grad students--many of whom were actually trained at UMaine as undergrads. Motivated, smart, hard-working grad and undergrad students. MAFES funding, INBRE funding, and other small but very helpful internal grants. Funding for equipment service contracts. Pretty good numbers of teaching assistantships. Lots of flexiblity and freedom to pursue interesting avenues of research. Help from friendly senior faculty in writing grants. Good ideas on improving research and teaching, to make both more efficient, from CETA.	Q-GS, F-GS, S-peers
It is relatively easy to use the PARS system to upload and submit proposals (as compared to places I have been at before). That means that the administrative/logistics of actually submitting the proposal is not a time-consuming deterrent to submitting a proposal.	S-UA
Excellent support from MEIF for salary for research positions and for service contracts for common equipment items. Presence of several dynamic and research-focused faculty members on campus. Vibrant GSBS community and graduate program. Teaching assistantships for graduate students. Good support for IACUC and small animal research.	F-Ext, S-peers, F-GS
Having sufficient lab space is critical for conducting the behavioral research that I do. This is important and needs to be considered for expansion. Having lab support is important, through both undergrads and grad students. Finally, the ability to receive some return of indirects would be incredibly useful for helping to support the lab and help with point one (above).The university has occasionally done this and I argue that more return would make for better opportunity for faculty to get additional extramural grants.	[needs: F-Eq, IDC-return]
1. Excellent atmosphere within the Department and with selected collaborators across campus. 2. Graduate student efforts.	S-CA, S-peers, S-GS
Colleagues who approach me with an opportunity for collaboration.	S-peers
University research farms - the access to land, equipment and staff to carry out field research. Individual Hatch funds - small as they are, they provide flexibility for purchases that can't always be included in a particular grant, and for initial experiments that lead to full grant proposals.	F-Eq, F-Un
Because I am located off campus, am well connected to community expertise and resources.	S-ext orgs
The biggest factors that support my research are the databases the library subscribes to (though they are relatively limited) and the funding of travel to conferences supplied by my dean.	L, F-Tr, S-CA
Administration encouragement, the tenure process, and internal start-up funding.	S-CA, F-Un

Access to other research Universities Library and data bases. Without that I would not have be able to obtain the data necessary for my publications, and continued research interests.	L, S-ext orgs
I have utilized my previous connections with colleagues at other institutions and my participation in national interdisciplinary conferences to learn about funding opportunities and generate research collaboratives.	S-peers ext
Departmental grad assistantships, faculty willing to collaborate	F-GS, S-peers
Multi-state research efforts are most helpful.	S-ext orgs, S-peers ext
Small in-house grants that help start new projects. Interest of multiple entities at UM in supporting interdisciplinary research. Improvements in ORSP that are facilitating our role in preparation/managing grants: thanks! CETA actually helps with research efforts, too, by fostering connections	F-Un, S-UA, S-peers, S-prop prep, S-grant admin, Opport-Fac
Colleagues who are interested in research	S-peers

Statistic	Value
Total Responses	18

3. What other supports do you need from the University or your College/ Unit to engage in or expand your extramural research?

Text Response	Coding
Support for grant writing.	S-prop prep
1. More teaching assistant positions. We would be able to train and evaluate more graduate students, and improve our research productivity. Currently, most graduate students typically start out as research assistants, and need to be trained to do the research. This can take six months to a year, which is significant portion of a two to three year research grant / contract. 2. Need better support for proposal preparation and report writing. In particular, faculty wasted too much time with the paper work - such as uploading documents, budget, budget justifications, etc. Additionally, it would be better	F-GS, S-prop prep, T-B,
Please see fixes suggested above.	--
It would be useful to have more support staff to help with the preparation of budgets. It would also be useful to have a staff person who compiled information about funding opportunities in different areas and sent those out periodically to faculty/staff in those areas.	S-prop prep, S-FO
Enough time and Research assistant to help me conduct research	T, F-GS
See above. Greater support for faculty lines, grants administration.	F-Fac, S-grant admin
See above on return of indirects. It would also be nice for more undergrad and grad research assistantships.	IDC-return, F-GS
Additional technical staff to help with data generation and laboratory management. Additional funding for undergraduate workers.	F-Staff, S-stdts
It would be helpful if there were a website that served as a clearinghouse for projects looking for partners.	S-FO
Stable funding for technical staff - even if for partial positions - to insure continuity of skills and expertise over funding ups and downs Funding for research and field equipment at the University research farms. These cannot be purchased through grants but are essential for proper and efficient implementation of field research trials. To foster more grant activity, I'd suggest the University consider directing a portion of the indirects charged in grants to the individual, department, or even College responsible for the grant. Most other institutions have some such mechanism to recognize and allocate funds to the individuals and units generating research funds.	F-staff, F-Eq, IDC-return
Administrative assistant time	S-staff
Extramural research in the business school would require linking us with other units or someone to identify opportunities and train junior faculty on extramural grant writing.	Opport-fac, S-prop prep
Continue to provide software, IT support, and the opportunities to work with others.	F-Eq, Opport-Fac
Technology- Please, please, please put computers in classrooms- and networks in buildings. In my career as a college professor, this is the 5th school I have been at and the ONLY one that doesn't have networked	F-Eq, Equip Access

computers or computers in the classroom. This is a huge limiting factor for researchers. If forces us to have laptops which are neither as powerful or capable as desktops in pure computing power. Access to the Wharton Research Databases (COMPUTSTA, EXECUTCOM and KLD).	
1. I would like to see the development of an Interdisciplinary Research Center (IRC) to aid faculty (especially new faculty) with seeking compatible funding opportunities, writing grants, designing a budget, etc. The IRC should also offer mentorship and training opportunities in regards to study design, methodology, and advanced statistical techniques (e.g., stats camp sessions re: SEM, HLM, longitudinal SEM, etc.) and should promote collaboration between Departments. 2. My Department should re-evaluate its current teaching-research loads and percentage distributions in order to meet the changing trend of the University towards becoming a higher-level research institution.	S-UA, S-FO, S-prop prep, S-data, T-tch
better support staff, more available assistantships	S-staff, F-GS
It would be great to have a grants person who could both help to identify grants and support in with making sure the details of the grants are attended to	S-FO, S-prop prep

Statistic	Value
Total Responses	17

4. Other suggestions?

Text Response	Coding
It pains me very much that our institution does not value the production of knowledge more than it does.	Expect, S-UA
More money needs to be spent on supporting the research enterprise if we are to increase our research status and are to be able to attract top-notch students and faculty. This involves both assistantships, as well as facilities and technologies supporting cutting edge research.	F-Un, F-GS, F-Eq
Please offer more structured mentorship for new faculty in which new faculty are formally matched with experienced research faculty who can help them with the development of their research agenda. The Rising Tide promotion and tenure workshops are fine, but they do not provide formal mentorship, which is what a lot of the new faculty desire (and is typical of a larger, research based institution). Please offer advanced statistical training opportunities and on-going stats work groups for new faculty members is all disciplines. Please provide funding for advanced stats software packages for all new faculty. In particular, please provide a University site license for SPSS for all social science departments.	S-peers, S-data

Statistic	Value
Total Responses	3

5. Are you currently supported as a PI or Co-PI on an externally-funded research grant?

#	Answer		Response	%
1	Yes		13	68%
2	No		6	32%
	Total		19	100%

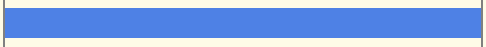
Statistic	Value
Min Value	1
Max Value	2
Mean	1.32
Variance	0.23
Standard Deviation	0.48
Total Responses	19

6. Please indicate your current position:

#	Answer		Response	%
1	Faculty member		19	100%
2	Professional Staff		0	0%
	Total		19	100%

Statistic	Value
Min Value	1
Max Value	1
Mean	1.00
Variance	0.00
Standard Deviation	0.00
Total Responses	19

7. Indicate your position type:

#	Answer		Response	%
1	Full time position		19	100%
2	Part time position		0	0%
	Total		19	100%

Statistic	Value
Min Value	1
Max Value	1
Mean	1.00
Variance	0.00
Standard Deviation	0.00
Total Responses	19

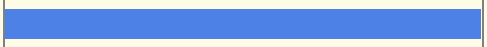
8. Please indicate your unit of employment. Check all that apply if a joint appointment.

#	Answer		Response	%
1	College of Business, Public Policy and Health		2	11%
2	College of Education and Human Development		3	16%
3	College of Engineering		1	5%
4	College of Liberal Arts and Sciences		2	11%
5	College of Natural Sciences, Forestry and Agriculture		8	42%
6	Cooperative Extension		4	21%
7	Other (Research Units)		0	0%

Other (Research Units)

Statistic	Value
Min Value	1
Max Value	6
Total Responses	19

9. If faculty, please indicate your current position and rank. (If staff, please skip this question.)

#	Answer		Response	%
1	Non-tenure track faculty: Research Faculty		0	0%
2	Non-tenure track faculty: Instructor / Lecturer		0	0%
3	Tenure-track faculty: Assistant Professor		19	100%
4	Tenure-track faculty: Associate Professor		0	0%
5	Tenure-track faculty: Professor		0	0%
	Total		19	100%

Statistic	Value
Min Value	3
Max Value	3
Mean	3.00
Variance	0.00
Standard Deviation	0.00
Total Responses	19