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Office of Vice President for Research

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The Office of the Vice President for Research exists to support the external funding initiatives of WMU faculty, students, and staff; to assure compliance with all appropriate federal and state regulations; and to advance the overall research agenda of the University. In 2005-2006 external funding for WMU reached almost $39 million and yet this is just an indicator of the funded and unfunded research and creative activities ongoing at WMU.

Grant applications and administration can be complex and increasingly faculty are reminded of the need for ethics in research and to comply with university and federal regulation. The staff of OVPR is always there to help.

In this special issue of the Inquiry we describe some of the programs and people who make up grant administration at WMU.

Organization
OVPR is located in Walwood Hall on EAST CAMPUS on Oakland Drive. OVPR currently has three Research Officers who assist faculty with Pre-Award (submissions). See page 4 for details. The Research Officers also assist faculty with some post-award issues such as budget adjustments.

In 2005 OVPR added a Technology Transfer Director, Michael Sharer, to our staff. Mike’s role is to assist faculty, staff and their students with intellectual property and commercialization issues. The goal is to increase the commercial impact and value of WMU faculty discoveries and inventions. Over the last year this has necessitated changes in the IP policy, which is currently under review by the Faculty Senate, and in the way OVPR handles industrial contracts. Industrial Contracts are now being handled by Paula Roberts in OVPR. Paula can assist faculty with negotiating these contacts and with the paperwork needed to get university and industry sign-off.

Grant administration and accounting issues are handled by the WMU Grants and Contracts office (www.obf.wmich.edu/grants-contracts/) which is under the Vice President for Business and Finance.

Research Ethics and Compliance are increasingly a part of the research enterprise.

Vicki Janson in OVPR is our compliance specialist. Vicki assists the University with Human Subjects review, Animal Care review and Recombinant DNA review processes. Jim Center in OVPR handles Radiation Safety and Biosafety issues. A revised Misconduct in Research Policy will be reviewed this year by the Faculty Senate. It is highly recommended that all faculty review the Misconduct Policy and talk with their students about Research Misconduct.

What You Should Know:
- All grant and contract submissions require a Project Approval Form prior to submission.
- Do not assume that your project involving human subjects is exempt. Each year several graduate students cannot use their data because they were not reviewed by HSIRB.
- While Grants and Contracts assists the PI with grant accounting, it is highly recommended that PIs keep their own budgets on a spreadsheet or accounting software to avoid over or under spending.
TECHNOLOGY TRANSFER

A substantial amount of research is being conducted at Western Michigan University (WMU). Much of this results in new findings, developments, and discoveries that can benefit society. The transfer of these discoveries to the commercial sector is coordinated through the Intellectual Property and Commercialization ("technology transfer") function. The IP will be managed within the newly created WMU Research Foundation. In order to better understand IP issues and the commercialization process in the university environment, faculty should talk with Michael Sharer (michael.sharer@wmich.edu) as early as possible in the process. For example, public disclosure of discoveries in publications or meetings prior to disclosing these to WMU technology transfer may have a negative effect on commercialization potential.

What is Intellectual Property (IP)?
The principal rights governing the ownership and disposition of new technologies and discoveries are known as "intellectual property" rights, which are derived primarily from legislation and common law granting patents, copyrights, trademarks, and trade secrets legal protections.

HUMAN SUBJECTS REVIEW

The Human Subjects Institutional Review Board (HSIRB) is a local review board, established by the WMU Board of Trustees in accord with federal regulations, to interpret and apply federal regulations, state law, and research sponsor requirements for the use of human subjects in research. The HSIRB is charged with the protection of the rights and welfare of human subjects in research conducted under the aegis of Western Michigan University.

The three basic ethical principles that guide the HSIRB are derived from the Belmont Report. These are with respect for persons, beneficence, and justice. By submitting a protocol to HSIRB:

- Investigators promote the protection of the rights and welfare of research participants.
- Faculty set an example for student researchers.
- Investigators comply with University policy and federal regulations.
- Investigators promote the protection of the rights and welfare of research participants.
- Faculty set an example for student researchers.

Graduate student mentors need to require their students whose research projects include working with human subjects in any way to contact Vicki Janson to determine the need for HSIRB review. If the project does not require HSIRB review, a letter from the OVPR compliance office will be provided. There are cases of students unable to complete their theses because they did not have HSIRB approval. Faculty are likewise reminded to check with HSIRB before beginning human subjects projects.

MISCONDUCT IN RESEARCH

The WMU research misconduct policy applies to all persons affiliated with WMU including faculty, students, trainees, and all members of the research staff. The policy applies to: (a) the conduct of research and/or related activities, whether or not the research is externally funded; (b) the presentation and/or publication of results; (c) the process of applying for funds; (d) the expenditure of project funds; and (e) the fiscal reporting on the use of project funds. Persons found to have committed research misconduct are subject to discipline, up to and including discharge or expulsion. In addition the findings will, where appropriate, be reported to external entities or authorities and the external entity or authority may take additional action. Disciplinary action proceedings shall be in accordance with applicable University policies, codes, procedures, and/or collective bargaining agreements.

This Fall the Faculty Senate will review a revised policy. Please join in the discussion about this important topic.
INTERNAL FUNDING

The University has available a number of opportunities to obtain internal funding for your projects. These funds range from assistance with travel to small project funding. The majority of funding is administered by OVPR but the College of Arts and Sciences and other colleges and departments have provided funding for this purpose in the past.

The major funding opportunities are:

- The Faculty Travel Fund. This year the fund will provide $700 for travel to a meeting.
- Faculty Research and Creative Activities Fund (FRACASF) provides up to $10,000 for research projects.
- PPPE—Preparation, Publication and Presentation Fund provides $500 for related costs.
- Research Development Award Program (RDA) program is a year-long program to prepare junior faculty to achieve external funding.
- Advanced RDA is a new program to help more senior faculty achieve external funding.

See OVPR website/internal funding or Walt Worthy, Internal Funding Coordinator.

FACILITIES AND ADMINISTRATION COSTS

Facilities and Administration costs (F&A) or indirect costs are funds above the direct cost of the project provided to the University to defray some of the costs of maintaining the grant. The University rate is set in a formal process that occurs every few years and takes into account the amount of space used for research and other costs. Currently our full rate is 46% of the direct costs. F&A is important to research at WMU. It pays for about half of the OVPR staff and much of Grants and Contracts. It is University policy that submitted grants must request the full rate unless:

- The project is off campus.
- The agency has a policy or the RFP states a different rate.
- The VP for Research agrees to the reduced rate in advance.

WMU has a generous return policy which gives 40% of the total to the college, department and PI. Last year this returned $1.2 M to these units. These return funds were critically important to research at WMU. They provided cost share, startup costs, travel funds and other needs critical to all researchers. A major goal to improve research at WMU must be to increase the overall percentage of F&A obtained on grants. OVPR has substantially reduced waivers of F&A and we have been negotiating higher F&A rates on industrial contracts.

We need your assistance and understanding of this process.

FINDING IMPORTANT NUMBERS ON OUR WEBSITE

Grants often asks for University identification numbers. In particular the DUNS number is often required. To locate this and other information go to the OVPR website and under Grant Writing click on Required Information (www.wmich.edu/research/importantdata06.html).

For our latest projections on future fringe and graduate rates click on Budget Guidelines (www.wmich.edu/research/budgetguidelines06.html).
GRANT WORKSHOPS

Throughout the year OVPR offers workshops on a variety of topics related to external funding, grant administration and compliance. See the OVPR website calendar for details. http://www.wmich.edu/research/Calendar.htm

OVPR also brings in experts on grant seeking.

David Bauer, president of David G. Bauer Associates, Inc., will be at WMU on Monday, September 11, 2006, to conduct a workshop aimed at helping to improve the grant seeking, writing and proposal processes. Faculty and staff who are interested in attending the workshop should contact Walt Worthy (7-8282).

Topics to be covered include:

- The most sought after speakers: Proposal Ideas: How to develop and evaluate.
- How to analyze the competition.
- Proposal Review: How it works and how to become a reviewer.

Bauer is considered a national expert of grant seeking and he currently has eight books published on this subject. Bauer stresses the importance of doing one’s homework and getting to know the funding source prior to writing a proposal.

- Monday, Sept. 11, 2006
- 8:30a.m. - 11:30 a.m.
- Bernhard Center - 204

David will also provide a luncheon workshop for RDA recipients and a new and recent chairs workshop at 1:30 on September 11.

Additional workshops by OVPR staff this year will include:

- Grant.Gov Submission
- Grant Writing
- FRACASF Grants
- Intellectual Property Information
- RDA Workshops
- Grant Administration (with Grants and Contracts)

See the OVPR calendar. Contact your research officer or Walt Worthy for details or suggestions of workshops you would like OVPR to provide.

GRANTS.GOV

Grants.gov has been created to manage interactions between grant applicants and the federal agencies that manage those funds. With over 900 grants offered by 26 federal agencies, Grants.gov is still in its infancy and will be constantly improving with time. Only the Authorized Organizational Representative (AOR—WMU Research Officer) can be registered on Grants.gov. AOR’s at WMU are Wil Emmert, Rudy Ziehl, and Gina Betcher. PI’s should do the following: (1) from Grants.gov, download and install PureEdge View on your computer; (2) locate funding opportunity, and download application file and instructions from Grants.gov; (3) complete the application file on your computer and forward it to your Research Officer; (4) complete the buck-sheet and obtain requisite signatures; (5) confirm that application has been received by agency and obtain tracking number from appropriate AOR. It can take up to two business days from time of submission to receive an e-mail receipt for the application number. Last minute submissions will not allow time to correct simple errors such as an incorrect DUNS number.

The VP for Research is recommending that submissions to Grants.gov begin at least three days prior to the deadline; that faculty work closely with Research and Sponsored Programs staff to complete needed forms and attachments correctly; conduct careful crosschecks of forms to application instructions; and complete budget negotiations by filling out and securing required signatures on the PAF “bucksheets”, in advance of the proposal deadline.