Fall 9-30-2016

Embracing "Other" Forms of Sponsored Activity: Leadership Perspectives on Building Research Capacity at WMU

Kathy Purnell
Western Michigan University, kathy.purnell@wmich.edu

Follow this and additional works at: http://scholarworks.wmich.edu/acad_leadership

Part of the Educational Leadership Commons

Embracing "Other" Forms of Sponsored Activity: Leadership Perspectives on Building Research Capacity at WMU
Kathy Purnell, Office of the VP for Research

The Project: Leadership Conversations on Research

Rationale: This Academic Leadership Academy Project had the following goals:

- To explore leadership perspectives on "research"
- To help raise awareness of Carnegie Classification metrics regarding "research activity"
- To identify key investments academic leadership deemed essential to advance WMU's standing as a research institution.
- To raise awareness of regulatory definitions of sponsored activity
- To explore initiatives that deans, directors and chairs would be willing to lead, on behalf of their units, in order to advance WMU's standing as a research institution.

Method: 10 face-to-face conversations of about 60-90 minutes in duration.

Participants: All 10 participants were current or former deans, directors or department chairs.

The discussion questions

A. Exploring Views on Research

- What does the term "Research" mean to you?
- What does the term "Research University" mean to you?
- Based on the Carnegie criteria to determine an institution's level of research activity and your views on research, what investments do you feel are critical to advance WMU's standing as a research university?

B. Exploring Opportunities "Other" Sponsored Activity Affords to Build Institutional Research Capacity

- As a dean/director/chair, if you were asked today to lead one sponsored project initiative on behalf of your unit to enhance WMU's standing as a research institution, what would that initiative be?
- What would be your primary concern(s) about serving in this role on behalf of your unit?

Carnegie Classifications on "Research Activity"

The Carnegie classification criteria for research institutions has a methodology which examines the following items to determine the "level of research activity" which occurs at an institution:

- Research & development expenditures in science and engineering
- Research & development expenditures in non-Science and Engineering fields
- Science & Engineering research staff (postdoctoral appointees and other non-faculty research staff with doctorates)
- Doctoral conferrals in humanities fields, social science, STEM and other fields

URL: http://carnegieclassifications.iu.edu/

Metrics Matters: Concerns about identification and measurement of research activity at WMU

-Extensive research activity is occurring but much of it takes place with minimal to no expenditure. It does not readily appear to "fit" into metrics for research activity (Carnegie) and/or it registers as unfunded institutional activity (Federal definition).

-A focus on securing both reputational advances and financial returns to WMU is important to grow WMU's research capacity

On expenditures see: www.nsf.gov/statistics/srvyrdexpenditures/

Advancing WMU's standing as a research institution: critical investments and approaches identified

- Investment in infrastructure for research and collaboration
- Broadcast that we are a research institution (externally) and that WMU expects research to take place at all levels on our campus (from the classroom to advances in disciplines to engaged scholarship
- Invest more heavily in institutional research to mine strengths and strategically position WMU proactively for opportunities
- Cluster hiring to create interdisciplinary teams to advance research in interfacial fields and develop competitive proposals
- More support for program and grant development
- Strategic hires of research faculty
- Investment in intellectual capital development and celebration of intellectual culture.
- Infuse research into recruitment and retention efforts for first generation, underrepresented students, rural and immigrant students
- Postdoctoral and research staff in the social sciences and humanities
- Repurpose underutilized campus space to support research activity
- Develop "brokers"/expand community relations to support WMU's community engagement

Federal regulations on institutional functions and sponsored activities

Major Functions of an Academic Institution

Instruction means the teaching and training activities of an institution.
- *Sponsored instruction and training* means specific instructional or training activity established by grant, contract, or cooperative agreement. For purposes of the cost principles, this activity may be considered a major function even though an institution's accounting treatment may include it in the instruction function.

Departmental research means research, development and scholarly activities that are not organized research and, consequently, are not separately budgeted and accounted for. Departmental research, for purposes of this document, is not considered as a major function, but as a part of the instruction function of the institution.

Organized research means all research and development activities of an institution that are separately budgeted and accounted for. It includes:
(1) *Sponsored research* means all research and development activities that are sponsored by Federal and non-Federal agencies and organizations. This term includes activities involving the training of individuals in research techniques (commonly called research training) where such activities utilize the same facilities as other research and development activities and where such activities are not included in the instruction function.
(2) *University research* means all research and development activities that are separately budgeted and accounted for by the institution under an internal application of institutional funds. University research, for purposes of this document, must be combined with sponsored research under the function of organized research.

Other sponsored activities means programs and projects financed by Federal and non-Federal agencies and organizations which involve the performance of work other than instruction and organized research. Examples of such programs and projects are health service projects and community service programs. However, when any of these activities are undertaken by the institution without outside support, they may be classified as other institutional activities.

Other institutional activities means all activities of an institution except for instruction, departmental research, organized research, and other sponsored activities, as defined in this section; indirect (F&A) cost activities identified in this Appendix paragraph B, Identification and assignment of indirect (F&A) costs; and specialized services facilities described in §200.468 Specialized service facilities.

Source: *Appendix III to Part 200—Indirect (F&A) Costs Identification and Assignment, and Rate Determination for Institutions of Higher Education (IHEs)*

Common university interpretations – Other Sponsored activity

"Other Sponsored Activity" may include*:

- Travel grants
- Support for conferences or seminars
- Support for University public events
- Support for students, staff, or teachers in elementary or secondary schools, or the general public, through outreach-related activities
- Projects that involve faculty, staff, or students in community service activities (where the students are not receiving academic credit for their involvement)
- Support for projects pertaining to library collections and archives and acquisitions
- Programs to enhance institutional resources, including data center expansion, computer enhancements…and many more…

*List adapted from Stanford University's "Do Research" website: https://doresearch.stanford.edu/policies/research-policy-handbook/definitions-and-types-agreements/categories-sponsored-projects

What would you lead on behalf of your peers, our community?

Proposed initiatives to build our research culture and capacity & concerns

- Secure funding to expand the capacity of the department to engage nonprofits and the regional public sector through joint development of databases to facilitate evaluation, system analyses, as well as trainings and other networking events to facilitate joint program development and grantwriting.
- A comprehensive "University Audit" of its structure to assess its capacity to support civic engagement, leverage public private partnerships and expand investments in graduate education.
- Training grants to invest in students for professional development, network, and skill building beyond the curriculum.
- Collaboration with the City of Kalamazoo on a "Smart Cities" initiative.
- Collaboration to unite "splintered collections" where WMU has a component via virtual and traveling resources to advance knowledge of historical figures (WMU partnering with Howard and Harvard collections on Merze Tate)
- Sponsorship of a college-wide conference showcasing WMU strengths in automotive research and techniques
- A partnership summit to invite 4-5 high school students from every county in Michigan to come to campus to learn about health professions, explore programs at WMU and encourage participating students to learn about health equity issues in collaboration with faculty, staff and RSOs.
- Support for advanced fellowships in the Humanities ("Society of fellows")
- Support to link K-12 professionals, Geography, Political Science and History faculty and students to examine best practices in civics instruction

Next steps & acknowledgments

Next steps: All 10 participants identified actionable initiatives in the form of either possible grant or contract proposals, or partnerships that could be leveraged to develop their leadership sponsored projects. OVPR is currently researching and developing a plan and list of potential sponsors for the proposed activities.

Acknowledgments: Thank you to all of the participants from the following units for this first phase of the project: Academic Affairs, Student Activities and Leadership Programs, Division of Multicultural Affairs, The Graduate College, the Department of Political Science, The University Center for the Humanities, CEAS/Center for Advanced Vehicle Design and Simulation, University Libraries and Regional Archives, The Lewis Walker Institute, School of Public Affairs and Administration.

Interested in developing an initiative? Feedback?

**Contact: Kathy Purnell, J.D., Ph.D.
Office of the VP for Research**

Room 231W, Walwood Hall   T: 269-387-8269
Western Michigan University   E: kathy.purnell@wmich.edu