

December 8, 2014

All Faculty, administrators and principal investigators,

In April 2014, Interim President Mark Hussey, Acting Vice Chancellor and Dean William Dugas and Vice Chancellor and Dean Kathy Banks announced the creation of the Research Development Fund (RDF) as a part of the new distribution plan for collected F&A earnings from sponsored grants and contracts. As the designated members of the RDF Management Committee, we would like to share the Implementation Principles for the RDF with the campus community.

The RDF Advisory Committee, as described in the Implementation Principles, will help to draft the Guidelines for the funding mechanisms including deadlines, process and procedures. They will be distributing those as they become developed and approved. We will also be launching a web site dedicated to the RDF as a resource for the community.

We are enthusiastic and fully supportive of the RDF as a tool to enhance the research enterprise at Texas A&M.



Glen A. Laine
Vice President for Research
Texas A&M University



Craig L. Nessler
Director
Texas A&M AgriLife Research



Dimitris C. Lagoudas
Deputy Director
Texas A&M Engineering Experiment Station



Allison C. Rice-Ficht
Interim Vice President for Research
Texas A&M Health Science Center

Research Development Fund (RDF) Implementation Principles

Texas A&M AgriLife Research (Brazos County)
Texas A&M Engineering Experiment Station
Texas A&M University Health Science Center (Brazos County)
Texas A&M University (Brazos County)

The intention of the Research Development Fund (RDF) is to make strategic investments for the good of the Brazos county-based Texas A&M research enterprise, regardless of which unit administers the research project. There is a clear expectation for growth of the research enterprise and the RDF will fund initiatives or programs or to acquire infrastructure, facilities or equipment that secure or enhance our competitive advantage, especially to secure federally-funded research projects.

These investments are likely to be:

- Strategic investments in core research facilities and equipment and their initial operation
- Strategic investments in the creation of new core facilities or renovations of current physical assets
- Strategic investments in research development and support for exceptionally large projects

Successful proposals will need to identify defined targets and even timelines for increased federal support and those that might garner other competitive extramural grants. The inclusion of private, state and industrial partners will be considered if it enhances the competitiveness of proposals and the programs going forward. While support of individual projects, shared cores and related infrastructure are key to the overall research enterprise, the RDF will not be funding operations, maintenance or other on-going expenses, except in unusual circumstances.

It is anticipated that these successful new initiatives will be multi- and interdisciplinary and will build on strengths, but there is no formal requirement for “teams” of investigators. The RDF is looking to provide funds that will put a program “over the top” and is not meant to build, seed or bridge existing initiatives.

The RDF Advisory Committee will receive the proposals and ideas for funding and give their assessments to the RDF Management Committee. The RDF-AC should broadly represent many units on campus* and will be appointed by the Council of Principal Investigators. The RDF-AC will elect its own chair and each member will serve a two-year term. When needed, the RDF-AC will consult with others on campus in formulating their assessments of proposals. The RDF-AC will help to draft Guidelines for the funding mechanism including deadlines, application process, recommendations for matching and/or cost sharing and proposal routing through departments and colleges and forward these Guidelines to the Management Committee for endorsement and then approval by the Executive Oversight Committee.

The RDF Management Committee will allocate and manage the RDF with a process that calls upon input and proposals from various campus stakeholders as formalized through the RDF Advisory Committee (RDF-AC*). The RDF Management Committee members include the Chief Research Officers of Texas A&M AgriLife Research, Texas A&M Engineering Experiment Station, Texas A&M University and the Texas A&M University Health Science Center.

The Executive Oversight Committee will provide an annual evaluation of the effectiveness of the Research Development Fund. Members: Vice Chancellor for Agriculture, Vice Chancellor for Engineering, Executive Vice President and CEO of the Health Science Center and Executive Vice President and Provost.

* These others groups might include the Council of Deans, the Executive Committee of the Distinguished Professors, the University Research Council and/or the Faculty Senate as appropriate.