

Goal 2: Excellence in Research, Scholarship, and Creative Activity

B. Provide support for scholarly activity and external funding

Grant matching funds and bridge funding

There should be campus-wide policies for matching funds for grant proposals and bridge funding for faculty between grants. This is especially important since many proposals are submitted only shortly before the funding agency deadlines.

Committee: Jan Froelich, Sherry Queener [chair], Ann Rabie, Guatam Vemuri, and Etta Ward.

Current Status

- Although many types of grants require institutional matching funds, IUPUI lacks a single source for this type of help. No formal mechanism to guide requests or distribution of funds exists.
- Using returned or unused fellowship money, the Graduate Office has offered matching funds for proposals that directly provide programs or support for students. This mechanism has been used to support Graduate Assistance in Areas of National Need (GAANN) grants in Biochemistry, Chemistry, and Physics over the last six years; matching funds from this source have also been used by the School of Nursing as loan money for graduate students.
- Bridge funding is available to selected investigators via school or campus programs, but the funding is inadequate to meet the full need and the timing is less than ideal, since investigators may have to wait months for the campus review cycle. Some departments maintain internal funds to help bridge gaps in external funding, but coverage is spotty.

Recommendations

- Faculty considering writing grant proposals that involve matching funds should have assurance up front that the appropriate match from the institution will be available.
- Matching funds could come from two sources: the current matching funds from the Graduate Office could continue for those proposals that will support graduate students, and a different fund could be created to offer matches that provide infrastructure or other items that support the research mission directly.
- Bridge funding should be available to faculty members with outstanding track records in attracting research funding.
- Consider creating a mechanism to allow requests for bridge funding to be dealt with more quickly than is now the case.

Implementation

- Internal planning should start now so that the funds can be identified to support the above recommendations during the next fiscal year.
- The matching funds available through the Graduate Office should be more widely advertised to the faculty most likely to write proposals that would benefit from this type of match.
- The Office of the Vice Chancellor for Research has developed a new program called Release Time for Research (RTR), which enables investigators to buy out of two courses a year or to receive a summer salary in return for developing and submitting a proposal for external funding within a year of receiving the RTR. The program will be available by the end of 2007.
- The Office of the Vice Chancellor for Research has developed a matching internal funding program with Purdue-West Lafayette to strengthen research ties between the two campuses and to facilitate applied, translational research initiatives. This program launches in 2008.

(Revised October 28, 2007)