

UNIVERSITY OF LOUISIANA

MONROE

March 27, 2007

To: Dr. Stephen Richters, Provost
Via: Dr. Virginia Eaton, Director, Graduate Studies and Research
Re: ULM Faculty Grants Program

ULM Research Council

Proposal for a ULM Faculty Grants Program

In ULM's Mission Statement, research is listed as a core principle and is identified as a means of giving the University a competitive advantage. Each academic department is challenged to be actively engaged in research. In recent years, the University has made laudable progress to expand research opportunities and experiences for students through programs such as the Emerging Scholars Program and the Annual Student Research Symposium. However, faculty emphasis remains on external funding for research funding and support. The ULM Research Council recommends that an in-house Faculty Grants Program be reestablished with a goal of aiding faculty with small grants for pilot projects, exploratory research, useful equipment or supplies, and other similar support that is difficult to obtain through state or federal programs.

While the Research Council recognizes that budget uncertainties make planning for such a program difficult, it is clear that small investments have generated strong, positive results for student research. We propose that a portion of the indirect costs recovered by the University from external grants be dedicated to a Faculty Grants Program. In the past year (2005-2006), the University received approximately \$550,000 in indirect costs, not including Medicaid funds. Under the proposed plan, about half of these funds will be returned to the PIs, departments, colleges, and Graduate Studies. Therefore, if you were to dedicate 10% of your office's share of these indirect costs, \$25,000 to \$30,000 could be allocated to a grants program. By using a percentage of each year's indirect costs, the program could fluctuate so that you would not be committed to a specific absolute amount.

Over the years, the Research Council has had significant discussions about the previous iterations of the various in-house faculty grants programs. We therefore make the following recommendations for the new Faculty Grants Program:

1. Maximum grants should be small so that more grants can be awarded. We recommend an initial limit of \$2,500. For a \$30,000 program, at least 12 grants could be awarded.

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2. At this point, with limited funds, we envision this program to give preference to tenure-track faculty early in their careers or other faculty that can justify support that would otherwise be difficult to obtain. Faculty with significant current funding should be discouraged from applying.
3. Since the STAP program provides significant support for teaching-related activities, the Faculty Grants Program should emphasize research projects or other scholarly activity not supportable by STAP.
4. Since the initial program will be small, we recommend an open competition among all applicants.
5. To further this cause, the Research Council offers its services to facilitate the administration of the Faculty Grants Program.

Thank you for considering this proposal.