A Research Investment Strategy

Description: UAB is the premier research university in Alabama and ranks among the top 30 universities in terms of competitively awarded federal research dollars. Our research portfolio totals more than $450 million annually and is responsible for over 5,000 university jobs and stipends for 300 graduate students. In order to maintain and improve upon this national prestige and local economic impact, significant investments in recruiting, retention, and infrastructure are critical. Such investments are in keeping with UAB’s mission to excel in scholarship and research and aligned with goals reinforced by UAB’s most recent strategic plan and its scorecard. The demand for such assistance from Deans is significant, to say the least.

All of the allocated funds will be passed through to the University’s requesting units. Subgroups of the Research Advisory Group, augmented as needed, will in most cases provide initial advice and guidance. Final recommendations to the President will be made by the Vice President for Research, the Senior Vice President, and the Provost.

There will be two distinct pools of funds. One pool will be distributed following regularly scheduled “Requests for Applications,” either once or twice a year. A second pool will be held for distribution as needed to respond to opportunities that arise throughout the year. This could involve recruitments, retentions, and matching funds for grant applications.

In most cases, these requests will be for significant funding with appropriate matching commitments from the requesting units. Recruitments and other investments that will help build multidisciplinary programs will be favored.

It is likely that in response to gubernatorial and legislative guidance, a significant pool of funds will be identified for investments in biomedical research that further the economic development of the State.

Outcomes: Investments in research, either for recruitment or infrastructural improvements, will be expected to yield dramatic returns on investments. New faculty will be expected to be bringing significant extramural funding with them or to establish a well-funded program soon after their arrival. This is in keeping with the fiscal data that are integral to the UAB Research and Scholarship Scorecard. High-profile scholarship is also expected. The achievement of these outcomes will be used as measures of success in judging the worthiness of subsequent requests by the sponsoring unit. Infrastructural investments, for instance for a novel technology or to support a core facility, will be expected to substantively further the research programs of multiple investigators and thereby increase productivity measures such as highly visible publications and additional extramural funding.

Organization: The investment program will be overseen by the Vice President for Research, with counsel from the Senior Vice President and Provost.

Assessment Plan: Each recipient will be asked for annual progress reports for three years, with special attention being given to additional extramural funding generated, high impact publications, and other evidence of excellence and leveraging. It is expected that benchmarks defined in the research scorecard will be elevated to reflect our rise in national prominence.

Budget: The budget will be determined once funding from the ASETF is defined and institutional priorities have been set.