

**March 21, 2012**

**Guidelines for the Use of Research Incentive Funds (RIF) to  
Support Research in the College of Education**

**Current Practice**

Currently, a portion of RIF income is used to support the College Research Office. No change is anticipated in this practice. The Office provides pre- and post-award assistance for projects and this involves support for staff positions, equipment, supplies, and occasional professional development for staff members. The RIF dollars constitute a very small proportion of the cost of operating this office. The Office receives the majority of its support from general funds provided by the College and the Office of the Vice President for Research.

**New Uses of RIF**

1. Seed Funding for Promising Research Ideas. Funds will be provided for the Faculty Research Initiation Grants (RIG) program. These funds support faculty members as they build new research areas toward the goal of procuring external funding. The Associate Dean works with a faculty Research Advisory Committee (RAC) to review and fund proposals.
2. Incentives/Rewards for Previous Success. The College will return some funds to Principal Investigators (PI's) based on a step function tied to the magnitude of awards in the previous period. Such money will be placed in a cost center for use by PI's to support their future research. The RAC will be invited to help with the design of this program.
3. College-level infrastructure. The College will invest in professional staff members who will provide new pre- and post-award support. These staff members will be initially funded (in some cases on a part time basis) with RIF dollars and will also be available, as appropriate, to be written into externally funded grants by PI's. They will have expertise in one or more of the following areas:

*Research Design and Methods* – Support for expertise in research design and statistical methods for proposal development.

*Web-based Research Tools* – Support for expertise in web-based data display and other technology programming, including data management

*Proposal Writing* -- Assistance in the preparation of clear, crisp proposal narratives that effectively convey the goals of a project.

*Post-Award Grant Management* – Support for post-award management in the grants office.

4. Start-Up for New Faculty. Support for new faculty hires so that the College can make competitive offers and to assist the new hires in their efforts to build strong research programs.
5. Department/Center Support. Resources for the departments and centers funded with recurring PSU general funds (in proportion to the level of sponsored project activity) to help them cover the costs of research that are incurred at the department/center level.

### **Process for Decision Making**

The Associate Dean will work with PI's to make sure existing RIF commitments for FY 2011-2012 are honored. The remaining funds will be available for the uses listed above. The Associate Dean will consult with the RAC to design the incentive program, review RIG program proposals, and assign priorities for the College-level infrastructure professional support positions. The Associate Dean, with the advice of the RAC, will administer the distribution of the RIF and will provide a clear accounting of how the funds have been distributed and what funds remain to be carried over into the next fiscal year.

The Associate Dean will advise the Dean each spring about what the projected distribution will be to each department/center so that these expected revenues can be factored into the department/center budget building process for the following fiscal year.

Guidance from the Faculty Council will be sought on at least an annual basis regarding the use of RIF dollars and the design of the program.