



## **COLLECTIVE FACULTY WORKING GROUP REPORT**

### **Issues/Concerns and Recommendations Regarding Processes that Impact Teaching, Research/Scholarship, and/or Service**

**February 29, 2016**

#### ***Information Technology/COLTT***

1. Computer encryption: Is it necessary to encrypt computers that do not/will not contain student records, confidential or proprietary information?
2. Need administrative access to be able to install software on computers.
3. Secure Doc only allows one user to log in at a time.
4. Very limited IT availability over the weekend and evenings for university classes and events.
5. Long waiting periods for IT services.
6. IT Infrastructure at the Brownsville campus needs attention.
7. Hosting external websites at UTRGV.
8. IT Services connecting campuses needs to be improved (e.g., ITV, etc.).
9. Development of websites for UTRGV. Possibility of hiring an external group to expedite process?
10. A/V issues with speakers in classrooms in addition to adding possible closed captioning functionality.
11. Library and computer access for individuals not employed by the university, but have a contributing relationship or for adjunct faculty. How can this be facilitated/expedited?
12. Limited University services and support for fully distance education students.
13. Offer ITV (interactive video) courses when courses aren't available on both campuses.

#### **Academic Affairs/Faculty Affairs and Diversity**

1. Increase travel and research support/funding.
2. High faculty workload (e.g., teaching load), especially as we move towards becoming an emerging research university.
3. Recognitions, merit or exceptional merit to incentivize faculty to assist in retaining talented faculty.
4. Establish a "STAR" program to incentivize/retain UTRGV faculty.
5. Bridge STARs faculty with current faculty to foster collaborations.
6. Concern regarding creating more doctoral programs.
7. Associate Professors earning less than those being hired as Assistants Professors.
8. Student population is growing at a faster rate than faculty hiring.

9. Status of allocation of IDC funds generated last fiscal year at UTPA?

### **Finance and Administration**

1. Shutdown of accounts during the summer between fiscal years while faculty are trying to purchase items to conduct research creates serious difficulties for researchers.
2. Status of new UTRGV IDC Policy?
3. Develop a step-by-step process regarding how to get contracts approved quickly.
4. Process for building access for students needs to be reviewed. It can take up to 2 months for approvals, even if it is electronic access.
5. Review University processes to check value added at each approval level (grant spending, staff hires, travel etc.)
6. Encountering problems spending grant money due to state rules on federal grants.
7. Sponsored Projects and Grants and Contracts need to collaborate more. In some cases, NSF grant money hasn't been dispersed for 6 months due to back-and-forth between OSP and G&C.

### **Graduate College**

1. Increase funding for graduate student teaching assistantships.
2. The current compensation for assistantships is not competitive relative to comparable institutions.
3. When graduate applications are being reviewed, the staff don't understand Brownsville degree programs.

### **Student Success**

1. Establish a Testing Service Center to proctor exams, thus allowing faculty more availability for research and service.
2. Need to increase focus on student engagement and experiential learning.
3. Need to start tracking electronically degree programs and graduation applications.

### **Human Resources**

1. Review Post Doc salaries and restrictive guidelines, particularly as it relates to limiting the number of years after the degree was earned to be eligible for a Post Doc position at UTRGV.
2. Need a clearly defined process for who is involved in approving staff hires; need to streamline staff hires.
3. Many processes (e.g., website creation, registration, advising etc.) encounter delays because of lack of staff.
4. We need to increase compensation to retain staff.
5. Consider hiring staff on soft money.
6. Medical School is paying staff higher salaries than colleges and there is little room for the college to counteroffer to retain staff.

### **Research, Innovation and Economic Development**

1. Since the IRB only meets once a month, if a submission doesn't get approved the 1<sup>st</sup> time, it gets "stuck" in a process loop and some submissions could be delayed for 2 months or longer. Could

they offer more IRB “open houses” to learn how to properly submit IRBs? Can we purchase the module to allow electronic CVs to be uploaded into the submission? Could we have multiple IRB committees focused on specific research areas (e.g., Social Sciences, Engineering, etc.)? Could the faculty member attend the IRB meetings to answer questions in person?

2. Sponsored Projects and Grants and Contracts need to collaborate more. In some cases, NSF grant money hasn't been dispersed for 6 months due to back-and-forth between OSP and G&C.
3. Create a method to have peers or a committee provide feedback on proposals; they should receive release time depending on how many proposals they review.
4. Develop a repository of all ongoing faculty research projects to increase collaboration across disciplines.
5. Encountering problems spending grant money due to state rules on federal grants.
6. Shutdown of accounts during the summer between fiscal years while faculty are trying to purchase items to conduct research creates serious difficulties for researchers.