

ABSTRACT: 2016 ELAM Institutional Action Project Symposium

Project Title: Realizing the Potential of the Research Division of the UMHS

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Collaborators: Philip Zazove, Judy Connelly, Jim Walters, Jill Bowdler

Background, Challenge or Opportunity: The Department of Family Medicine at the University of Michigan has an outstanding research division. This has partly been achieved by a recent significant expansion in which we hired 5 very promising junior faculty. However, the rapid expansion has presented challenges.

Purpose/Objectives: On February 1, 2016, I was appointed Associate Chair of Research in the department and charged with balancing the division budget while supporting our entire faculty in their efforts to be successful and productive researchers.

Methods/Approach: In order to rebalance staffing and budget for the department after our significant expansion, we are focusing on both reducing expenses and increasing revenue. Expenses will be reduced while simultaneously increasing research administrative support staff. This will be accomplished primarily by limiting our support for unfunded research for all faculty and internally funded research for senior faculty. Going forward, core division funds will be redirected toward administrative staff that support grant submissions; research assistants for specific projects will be paid off of grants or startup funds.

From a revenue perspective, we are focusing on increasing indirect revenue to support administrative staff effort. The primary approach involves implementing a pre-submission proposal review process to increase our funding hit rate for federal grants. Since we started offering pre-submission review as part of a pilot project, 4 out of the 6 reviewed proposals have been funded. Going forward, we will be requiring all major proposals to go through pre-submission review. In addition, we are diversifying our funding sources by contracting with non-traditional funders such as industry partners.

A third pillar of the division optimization plan involves developing a strategic focus. Currently we have a wide variety of disparate research with little overlap. We have committed to developing a core of mixed methods expertise and have deferred faculty hires that do not currently contribute to the mixed methods strategic focus. I am working closely with a leadership coach to continue to develop the strategic focus around a content area related to mixed methods research.

Outcomes and Evaluation Strategy: There are several critical outcomes related to research productivity, faculty satisfaction and financial stability. Primary Outcome - funded federal grant direct dollars. Secondary Outcomes - Funding hit rate on proposals that go through pre-submission review. Funded indirect dollars from all sources Progress toward a balanced budget over the next 2 years.



Realizing the Potential of the Research Division of the Department of Family Medicine

Caroline R. Richardson, MD University of Michigan Department of Family Medicine

Background

- The University of Michigan Department of Family Medicine Research Division is the largest family medicine research group in the country after a recent expansion that involved hiring 7 Assistant Professors and 3 post-docs along with an senior mixed methods expert.
- Despite the large and talented faculty, the division is underfunded. Significant decrease in funding over the last 5 years. Only 2 funded RO1s, \$2,000,000. in federal grants for 19 faculty.
- Large annual budget deficit is draining money from clinical and educational missions. Approximately \$1,000,000 annual deficit due to funding support staff who are mostly engaged in unfunded research and grant submission support.
- Junior Faculty need mentoring and support to write K grants and RO1's to get tenure. MICHHR, the University of Michigan CTSA, has bootcamps for K grants and RO1s that dramatically increase funding hit rates.
- As the newly appointed Associate Chair of Research, I have been tasked with increasing grant funding and decreasing the deficit for the division.

Academic Rank	N
Professor	6
Assoc Professor	5
Asst Professor	7
Adjunct Professor	1
Post-Docs	3
Total	22

Collaborators

Philip Zazove - Chair, Department of Family Medicine
 Matt Bazzani – Chief Department Administrator
 Judy Connelly – Research Grant Administrator
 Jim Walters - Executive Coach
 Jill Bowdler - Administrative Coordinator



Challenges

- Primary: Culture of negativity and independence.
- Senior Faculty doing their own thing, unfunded.
- Junior faculty lack mentorship and collaborative environment.
- Poor funding climate – but this is improving.

Objective / Outcomes

- Improve research division financial status
 - Large Externally Funded Grant Direct \$
 - Indirect \$ from grants and contracts
 - Annual Budget Deficit – goal = balanced budget
- Improve faculty satisfaction and success
 - Existing Faculty Satisfaction Survey measures
 - Junior Faculty successfully promoted
 - Faculty retention rates

Methods

Culture Change:

- Focus on strength and potential rather than fear / gloom and doom of funding issues.
- Support and reward collaborative efforts
- Increased transparency in terms of financial situation
- Engage all faculty in the transformation of the division

Reducing Expenses:

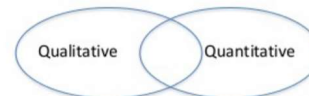
- Hiring Freeze on Junior Faculty
- Two senior Faculty Retiring
- Unfunded Non-Tenured Faculty on Notice
- Decreased support for unfunded research
- Decreased support for internal pilot grant funding for senior faculty.

Increasing Revenue:

- Mandatory Internal Mock Grant Reviews for all major external submissions.
- Investment in an additional grant administrator and administrative assistant.
- Improve marketing / visibility of research via social media and streamline grant submission information flow by hiring an informatics and social media support person
- Diversify funding sources – industry contracts.

Core Focus – Mixed Methods

- Mixed methods research integrates qualitative and quantitative data to answer research questions related to patient experience, dissemination and implementation, and other complex processes.
- We recently hired the leading expert in mixed methods research and a number of faculty have been working with him to develop their mixed methods skills.
- This new mixed-methods core is conducting seminars that are attracting an international audience and generating revenue.
- Perhaps more importantly – they have given the division a strategic focus that can support larger funding initiatives (program project grants etc.).



Successes To Date

1. Recently Funded Grants

PI	TYPE	TOTAL DIRECTS
Zazove	R33	\$ 1,203,292.00
Fetters	Contract	\$ 58,629.00
Sen	RO1	\$ 126,008.00
Buis	RO1	\$ 2,437,040.00
Chang	K23	\$ 623,750.00
TOTAL		\$ 4,448,719.00

2. New Faculty Hires

- 1 offer out to a post-doc with mixed methods expertise
- additional potential hires deferred.

3. Administrative / Operations Change

- posted positions for 3 admin staff
- additional grant administrator
- informatics / database / social media expert
- administrative assistant

4. Mandatory Mock review program

- Logistics, workflow and forms created and distributed to all research faculty
- First round required mock reviews for June submissions

Future directions

- Expand the scope of the Mixed Methods Group
- Develop junior talent into funded independent investigators
- Increase support staff for grant submissions
- Decrease support staff for unfunded research
- Selective new faculty hires to continue slower expansion

Presented at the 2016 ELAM leadership forum