

Dear Colleagues,

We are at a unique place and time for UTHSC to grow our research enterprise.

FINANCIAL STRATEGY: In the last communication I outlined the new discretionary resources our faculty practices and partner hospitals are bringing to the table combined with other new state and philanthropy resources. These new academic support funds are, in most cases, continuous annual funds. This places UTHSC in a strong go-forward position from which to make major investments and grow the research enterprise. We remain very cognizant of the federal funding crunch and the possibility of federal budget sequestration if Congress cannot agree on a short-term budget. Despite this, we are convinced now is the time to plan and execute our long-term research strategy.

NEW RESEARCH SERVICES & SUPPORT: In the last year, we have moved to support our research infrastructure in multiple ways.

1. We have developed a Grant Preparation Fund with money available to PIs to pay for sample analysis at our Molecular Resource Center or an outside vendor, services of copy editors and graphic artists, an honorarium available for experts in the field to critique proposals prior to the first submission, and funds for expert consultants to assist in response to a previous grant review.

2. Shortly, you will hear about cores at UAB for transgenic mice and mass spectrophotometry being available to UTHSC faculty.

3. We have established a more transparent and defined procedure to apply for Bridge Funding and to be awarded bridging support. Going forward, we will enlarge this essential pool and expand the criteria as to who can receive internal bridge support.

4. Invested heavily in both the pre-award component of Office of Research and in the IRB.

F&A RETURNS: We will begin returning to each college a portion of the F&As they generated in the prior year. For this current year (FY13), UTHSC will return to each college 3% of what was generated in FY12. In FY 14, we will return 5% of what was generated in FY 13. As a new, substantial incentive, UTHSC will also return one-third of any growth in UTHSC F&As. Growth will be determined by the difference in F&As in FY12 as the base year. As long as there is growth, a third of that growth will be added to the 5% F&A pool for FY14 for distribution to the colleges.

WHY ONLY 3% F&A RETURN OF THE CURRENT POOL? The 3-5% return is our starting point as the other 95-97% is fully deployed in helping to:

- support the research infrastructure such as IACUC, IRB, provide animal care facilities, and keep us in compliance with multiple agencies,
- pay for the faculty research incentive bonus and, in part, support bridge funding,
- support core research facilities,
- support maintenance and infrastructure (heating and cooling, etc.) of all of the research buildings, and
- provide, in part, for the build out of new research space.

RESEARCH FACILITIES: We are in a major growth phase in research facilities.

1. The College of Pharmacy Building is being built out to increase wet lab space.
2. The Translational Science Research Building is under construction.
3. The top floor of the Cancer Research Building will be built out as lab space.
4. The Nash Building and Nash Annex will be renovated over the next 3 years.
5. The Johnson Building will receive modest renovations to update core laboratories.
6. The Coleman Building is slated for laboratory renovation in the next 3 years.

RESEARCH RECRUITING: We have begun aggressively recruiting for new research faculty. The College of Pharmacy and College of Nursing have been given more than 15 slots and resources to recruit new researchers. In the College of Medicine, the Departments of Anatomy & Neuroscience, Physiology, Micro-Immuno-Biochem, Preventive Medicine, and Orthopedics & Biomedical Engineering are all in the process of recruiting 2-4 new researchers per department. Pediatrics will be recruiting at least 8-10 physician-scientists, Medicine's Division of Hem/Onc is in the process of recruiting 3-5 new researchers, and we have begun looking for a new endowed Governor's Chair in Informatics. Dentistry and Allied Health are evaluating research recruits. Particular resources to support these new recruits are identified. Further, as faculty retire, many of those positions will be refilled. We expect our enhanced collaboration with St. Jude and the Oak Ridge National Lab to be major recruiting pluses. This is our best recruiting position in a long time.

LARGE GRANT PROPOSALS: Large grant proposals (multimillion dollar awards extending for multiple years; typically not R01s) are now eligible for support from the Research Council. The Council is willing to consider providing UTHSC support up to a value that is one-third of the F&As the award will bring to UTHSC. We believe a commitment to this effect, that accompanies the original proposal, will enhance success by affirming institution reinvestment.

We have seen substantial success in the clinical enterprise. We are now very well positioned to post steady gains in the research arena as we deploy our resources. I am not suggesting all is rosy, but we are in a very favorable go-forward position in the research enterprise. UTHSC will conduct a town hall on research and finance in the near future.

Together we can grow our research mission.

Steve J. Schwab, MD
Chancellor