

DIRECTOR'S COMMENTS

In FY08, University of Massachusetts Amherst Principal Investigators once again exceeded the achievements of previous years, both in proposals submitted and awards received. Our faculty researchers and scholars submitted proposals with a total dollar value more than 13% over that of FY07 proposals. Over 15% of proposals submitted were as proposed subcontracts with partnering institutions; 50% of those partnering proposals were with other colleges and universities and 21% with industry. Though these two types of sponsors represent the largest proportion of our collaborative proposals, principal investigators are also working with diverse sponsors from all categories including health agencies, the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, other states, institutes and associations, non-profits and others. Clearly, the University of Massachusetts Amherst faculty has far-reaching collaborations and expertise that is highly regarded among peer research organizations and sponsors alike.

FY08 sponsored project funding reached a new high of over \$135 million, an increase of 3% in dollars awarded and 5% in the number of awards. Seventeen percent of the awards and 10% of the dollars were received as subcontracts under a prime sponsor from sources as varied as the proposals submitted. UMass, in turn, contracted out almost \$13M in 136 subawards to subcontractors in FY08. This level of subcontracting, both received and initiated, reflects the kind of critical cooperative connections that our faculty has built and maintains with other institutions and agencies.

Interdisciplinary activity is another notable characteristic of sponsored activities in FY08, seen in both proposals and awards and often between apparently unlikely partners. We found that Chemical Engineering worked with Art; Veterinary and Animal Sciences collaborated with Sociology and Mathematics/Statistics; Nursing paired up with Computer Science, as did Political Science and Linguistics; Food Science and Polymer Science worked together; so did Mechanical Engineering and Psychology; and Physics and Microbiology, and the list goes on. These team efforts represent an impressive interconnectedness between UMass Amherst Colleges and their faculty.

Last year we reported that electronic proposal processing was well underway through the federally-mandated Grants.gov initiative. This year the number of proposals submitted electronically was up 13% to 903, nearly half the number of all proposals submitted. Many of these proposals were submitted, as in previous years, via email, sponsor websites, or Grants.gov. However, several of them were transmitted as a data-only stream using the Grants Application Management System (GAMS) "system-to-system" interface. Once we analyze the results from currently participating pilot departments, we anticipate working with more and more departments in a controlled roll-out of GAMS. Toward that end, we will be offering training throughout the fall and spring as well as inviting faculty and staff to explore "About GAMS" and various on-line demonstrations and tutorials posted on the webpage at www.umass.edu/research/ogca/era. The Research Area appreciates the tremendous cooperation, feedback and enthusiasm we have received from those who have participated thus far. Thank you.

OGCA's training and education programs continue to evolve. The Workplace Learning and Development series has been met with great enthusiasm. Even our most experienced business managers have said that they enjoyed the series and have learned a lot from them. We hope that principal investigators and department heads continue to encourage their staff to attend. The OGCA brown bag lunch series was very popular this past year, and we asked the campus research community for suggestions on topics for future brown bag discussions. Because of the tremendous response we received, the topic list for this coming year is packed full of hot topics, some new and some repeats of popular sessions last year. We look forward to another successful year of interacting with faculty and staff on areas that are of particular interest or concern. Please refer to the OGCA website for the upcoming schedule and let us know if there is a topic you would like to have covered.

FUNDING SOURCES AND TRENDS

The dollar amount of proposals to all categories of sponsor except the Commonwealth of Massachusetts increased significantly this year. This trend is also true of the sources of awarded dollars, except that awards from Private Non-Profit sponsors decreased 10% from FY07, though the number of awards received from this category was higher in FY08. This is in contrast to FY07 where both categories saw the largest increases. Therefore, this depression may simply be a matter of being in mid-cycle for awards, and it is worth noting that the Private Non-Profit sector still constitutes 14% of the total dollars received. Federal funding increased 15% over FY07 and represented 69% of the overall funding, up 7.5% from last year. Industry sponsorship rose 6% to stay at a steady 10% of the total dollar amount received.

In managing the administrative side of sponsored activity, OGCA is proud to partner with UMass staff and faculty whose scholarship, research and teaching is both internally and externally recognized for its quality. The active connections and collaborations between departments is evident in the pattern of the campus's pursuit and receipt of sponsored funding. As part of the research community, OGCA continues to evaluate and initiate changes that will further our goals for using less paper, increasing efficiency and providing better service in support of our productive and successful faculty. We look forward to continuing to position ourselves so that we may make a contribution to the success and prestige of the University of Massachusetts-Amherst.

Carol Sprague, Director
Office of Grant and Contract Administration