

FACT: Meeting Report | September 2017 meeting

Session Name: Faculty/Administrator Collaboration Team (FACT)

Point of Contact: Larry Sutter, Susan Anderson

Working Group Activities/Outcomes/Progress to Date:

This meeting session continued the substantive dialogue that began at the May meeting related to collaborative efforts and the faculty administrator relationship/partnership to achieve overall research program goals within their own institution. The group included reps from University of Washington, Michigan Technological University, and College of Charleston from the previous session.

We shared information about a proposed taskforce based on initial concepts and also the robust discussion at May's meeting. Based on input from this first session, we added a private university to our panel and a representative from Northeastern presented a private university perspective on ideas discussed at our May session.

Agenda/Discussion Points for this Meeting:

- Introductions
- Brief overview of motivations behind this initiative
- Taskforce formation / Goals – Discuss proposed Charter
- Brief summary of first session
- Presentation by Northeastern to augment first session
- Discuss the way forward – challenges and issues, timeline, process

Key Decisions Pending:

Structure and goals moving forward; develop and obtain approval for charter; identify action items; define appropriate roles and representation.

Participation:

Estimated at over 60 participants, including faculty, administrative staff, and federal representatives.

Moving Forward Key Risks/Issues Identified:

Appropriate structure within FDP; selection of action items to maximize engagement and produce responsive outcomes

Meeting Summary:

After providing information on the background and status of this initiative, as well as providing a perspective from a private university (Northeastern) the panel and session attendees engaged in an open dialogue about key areas of faculty and administrator collaboration. The discussion includes areas of successes as well as ongoing challenges in the following areas. These notes highlight areas of opportunities for potential action by FACT.

- 1) ***Faculty Engagement and Communication within Organizations***
Successes include: holding PI luncheons; having direct meetings with faculty senate committees and generally having direct communication with individuals and groups before sending emails; engaging faculty with focus on solutions, and ensuring they see results to assist with faculty finding value in engaging; cataloging key communications with topics and dates is helpful to faculty so they can access at the time needed; inviting faculty to give presentations to admin groups.
Challenges can exist in the way organizations are structured and whether or not this structure helps or hinders and whether there is separation between the research and academic sides of the house.

- 2) ***Increasing & improving faculty representation at FDP***
Successes include: having VPR support in determining FDP Faculty and Admin reps; having faculty reps prepare and disseminate an “FDP Meeting Report” to encourage engagement and then communication back to faculty
Challenges include: how to get faculty to attend FDP; and setting expectations for faculty reps
Opportunities: Look to recruit more faculty reps that have both research and policy interests (i.e., public policy)? Put together a list of suggested characteristics to help people select a faculty rep? This could include a list of experiences that help to be a good FDP faculty rep (e.g., NSF rotator, study sections, review panels, faculty with administrative responsibility and or specializing in the area of science policy).
- 3) ***Heterogeneity of Unit-Level Support at Organizations***
Successes include: consolidating departmental administrators in single reporting stream helped (central administration, local action) as well as ensuring consistency of training across units
Challenges exist around: unequal admin support across campus when some units have excellent, well-trained support and other less so.
- 4) ***Assessment of Research Support Effectiveness***
Challenges include: how do faculty and admin work together with low proposal success rates?
Opportunities: Conduct an assessment/inventory on # of grants submitted per research support staff or something similar (related to the trend for increasing # of proposals submitted for fewer dollars awarded. Assess “yield and value”); and looking at faculty/administrator ratios, number of grants submitter per administrator or faculty, and success rates.
- 5) ***Orientation for Research Administrators***
Successes include: One institution’s effort to create local orientation sessions.
Challenges include: not having a dedicated orientation for research admin staff or VPR office support to create own orientation for departmental staff
Opportunities: Produce a tool to help develop a standard orientation utilizing information from FDP reps as to what faculty and administrators at different institutions identify as key areas for research admin training; and including grad students in orientation and training as well.
- 6) ***Interpreting Research Guidelines***
Challenges include: need for agency-specific proposal checklists that faculty can access just in time during proposal prep and not have to look around for the various email updates; and understanding where burden is coming from, internal or external.
Opportunities include: developing best practices on how institutions are "interpreting" guidelines? As well as best practices on “interpretation” or sample checklists.
- 7) ***General comments***
Challenges include: structure related to support for things like faculty rep at FDP, faculty support, ability to gain faculty engagement.
Opportunities include: providing tools in the above areas, which FDP has a history of being great at, as well as best practices.

Volunteer Opportunities:

There will be an upcoming opportunity to join our email group, and teams of faculty and administrators from FDP member organizations are encouraged to attend our session. It is likely that action items could be separated into subgroups and volunteers for these subgroups will be solicited. This would involve regular subgroup calls and potentially some additional off meeting time to gather and analyze data, write best practice or guide documents, etc.