**Illinois State**

**University**

Board of

**Trustees**

**Report No. 2014.02/4000.01**

**Grant and Contract**

**Activity Report**

***Introduction***

External funding through grants and contracts plays a major role in the advancement of faculty scholarly activities, student experiential learning, and University outreach. Such activities directly support two of the core values highlighted in *Educating Illinois 2013-2018*: the pursuit of learning and scholarship, and civic engagement. Furthermore, the research, creative activities and educational outreach made possible by such external support are an integral part of all four goals of *Educating Illinois*. External funding is therefore critical to fulfilling the University’s mission.

Sources of external funding include federal agencies, state agencies and private funding sources. Funds are awarded both through competitive and non-competitive processes. It is worthwhile to note that federal initiatives, eliminated by Congress in 2011, are no longer available to support campus projects.

***Executive Summary***

External support for sponsored projects at Illinois State University totaled $17.9 million in FY2013, a decrease of 30% from FY2012. This decrease occurred despite only a 6% decrease in the number of awards, meaning that there was a substantial (25%) decrease in the average amount per award ($80,370 in FY2013 compared to $107,439 in FY2012). Federal awards remained relatively constant despite the sequester, but there were double-digit declines in federal flow-through funds, awards from the State of Illinois and funding from other sources (private foundations, nonprofits, etc.).

The Colleges receiving the most external funding in FY2013 were the College of Education ($7.7 million), the College of Arts & Sciences ($5.4 million) and the College of Applied Science and Technology ($2.9 million). The total number of grant submissions (370) was substantially higher than in FY2012 (301) but the total amount requested was also lower ($47.3 million).

Additionally, in FY2013:

* Submissions included 188 different principal investigators (PIs) from Illinois State University, and funded projects involved 119 different PIs from the campus.
* Indirect funds totaling $1.5 million were awarded through University grants and contracts. Indirect funds provide additional services in support of research, scholarship, and creative expression, plus they support initiatives designed to increase extramural funding.
* Three agencies provided more than half of the total funding: the U.S. Department of Education ($3.3 million), the Illinois State Board of Education ($2.8 million) and the National Science Foundation ($2.3 million).
* The three academic units receiving the highest amount of external funding in FY2013 were the Department of Educational Administration and Foundations ($2.2 million), the Special Education Department ($1.7 million) and the School of Teaching and Learning ($1.6 million).

# *Data Summary*

The following table details sponsored project funding for FY2013 and FY2012. The numbers of awards/submissions are included in parenthesis.

**FY2013** **FY2012**

Total Awards $17,922,697 (223) $25,570,405 (238)

Federal Awards $8,218,852 (36) $8,415,288 (41)

Federal Flow-Through $3,461,734 (33) $4,136,610 (56)

State Awards $2,088,263 (32) $5,531,651 (35)

Other $4,153,848 (122) $7,486,856 (106)

Submissions $47,394,494 (370) $51,383,059 (301)

Total Indirect Funds Awarded $1,499,522 $2,182,367

***Current Initiatives***

In FY2014-2015, Illinois State University will continue several programs that are designed to improve the success rate of proposal submissions, and to encourage higher levels of submission. Each of these initiatives is aligned with the Strategic Plan for Research, Scholarship and Creative Expression.

1. ***Cross-Disciplinary Grant Development Program.*** The Cross-Disciplinary Grant Development Program supports the development of competitive external grant proposals for research that crosses disciplinary boundaries. Many of the higher-level problems confronting society can only be solved through the collective contribution of scholars from very different disciplines. Typically, one of the difficulties of cross-disciplinary initiatives is the lack of opportunities for scholars from different fields to collaborate and pursue ideas that might otherwise be constrained by disciplinary silos. This program helps remedy such deficiencies by funding cross-disciplinary grant development with the aim of encouraging teams of faculty from across campus to develop major grant proposals for submission to external funding agencies.
2. ***Grant Writing Mentorship Program.*** The Grant Writing Mentorship Program catalyzes the development of highly competitive external grant proposals by providing individualized mentorship and training to faculty without extensive grant writing experience. These can be new, pre-tenure faculty members or tenured faculty members who have not secured external funding. This program pairs a faculty member with little grant writing experience (i.e. the mentee) with a senior faculty member who has demonstrated expertise and success in securing funding (i.e. the mentor). The goal is to address two fundamental difficulties facing faculty in their efforts to establish an externally funded research program: i) a lack of time to develop major research proposals, particularly when faced with the challenge of developing new courses, and ii) a lack of experience in writing competitive grant proposals. The program remedies the first difficulty by providing funds to purchase release from a single course, thereby freeing time that the mentee can use to write a proposal. The program remedies the second difficulty by providing the mentee with an experienced, seasoned mentor who can help guide the development of the proposal.
3. ***Undergraduate Research Awards.*** The objective of the Undergraduate Research Award Program is to provide intensive research experiences for undergraduate students in all disciplines whether disciplinary, cross-disciplinary or educational in focus. Students participating in the Undergraduate Research Award Program engage in meaningful, substantive research projects, working closely with faculty mentors. This program promotes a longstanding value of the research mission at Illinois State University, which places a premium on active collaboration among faculty and students in a variety of scholarly and creative endeavors. Scholarship, research, and creative expression provide valuable and, often, life-changing educational experiences for undergraduate students. Opportunities for substantive research experiences are also an effective mechanism for recruiting and retaining talented undergraduates, and are indispensable in preparing students for graduate programs.

***Additional Ongoing Activities***:

* Post-declination Support Program. This program provides PIs who have been declined for funding with feedback on reviewer comments, and provides guidance for the revision and subsequent resubmission of the proposal.
* Travel Award Program. Funds are provided to support faculty travel to meet with agency program officers. Meetings are arranged and coordinated by the Research and Sponsored Programs and Government Relations offices.
* Faculty Publication/Exhibit Support Program. Matching funds are provided in support of publication charges, open access fees and exhibition fees for publications/exhibits resulting from research and creative activities.
* Individual Counseling. Representatives of Research and Sponsored Programs meet with individual faculty members to explore funding opportunities, to provide training and to explore additional ways that the Office can provide faculty with support for research and creative activities.
* Research Infrastructure Review. In 2012, the National Council of University Research Administrators (NCURA) completed a peer review of Illinois State University’s institutional infrastructure and core operations for research administration. The recommendations detailed in this report are currently being implemented.
* Strategic Plan for Research, Scholarship, and Creative Expression at Illinois State University. In conjunction with the Research Infrastructure Review, the recommendations of the strategic plan, developed in 2009 by the University Research Committee, are being implemented where possible.
* Intellectual Property Policy and Procedure Review. The Intellectual Property Committee has been revising current policies and procedures regarding University intellectual property. The Intellectual Property/Export Control (IPEC) officer (search in progress) will be a major contributor to this process.
* Export Control Policy. The IPEC officer will also work with the Export Control Committee to develop and implement the University’s Export Control Policy.

***New Initiatives***:

1. ***Creation of a Research Center, Phase I.***A major goal of the Strategic Plan for Research, Scholarship, and Creative Expression is the creation of a University Center for Research. The proposal for the Center, drafted by the University Research Council (URC) in 2012, calls for co-locating the Office of Research and Sponsored Programs with Grants Accounting. The NCURA Peer Review also strongly supports this co-location as a way to improve and streamline the grant administration process. Planning for this co-location is underway, and is anticipated to occur in 2014 when the Research and Sponsored Programs office moves to Uptown Crossing.
2. ***CAREER Grant Travel Program.*** The Faculty Early Career Development (CAREER) Program of the National Science Foundation supports junior faculty who exemplify the role of teacher-scholars through the integration of education and research. The CAREER Grant Travel Program is designed to stimulate the submission of CAREER proposals from a broad range of disciplines across the University, and to maximize the competitiveness of these proposals. Faculty members who are planning to submit a CAREER proposal will travel to Alexandria, VA and meet with NSF Program Officers to discuss their plans for research and educational activities.
3. ***Research Training Sessions with CTLT.*** The Research and Sponsored Programs office will partner with the Center for Teaching and Learning Technology (CTLT) to deliver research and grant related professional development workshops for faculty and staff.
4. ***Planning for Research Center, Phase II.*** The second phase in the creation of the University Center for Research is to combine other existing offices associated with the research enterprise into a single location. During 2014, the planning process for renovating the Honors Building into the University Center for Research will commence. The goal will be to have the building serve as the central resource for research-related administrative and training activities.
5. ***Expanding Involvement in the Council of Undergraduate Research.*** In 2012, Illinois State University became an institutional member of the Council of Undergraduate Research (CUR), an organization created in 1978 to promote research opportunities for undergraduates at principally undergraduate institutions. Many academic units at Illinois State University have a rich tradition of promoting undergraduate research, but an increased involvement of faculty, students, and administrators in CUR will help broaden the undergraduate research enterprise on campus.