

## **PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATORS RESEARCH INCENTIVES PROGRAM**

### **OVERVIEW**

To recognize and reward UB faculty who are successful in competing for external support, the University will extend additional financial incentives to principal investigators (PIs). To this end the Vice President for Research (VPR) announces a new program to encourage all UB faculty to expand the base of sponsored funding by providing a percentage of Facilities & Administration (F&A) cost recovery funds back to the investigators as a recognition for their success and as a means of sharing future revenue earned by their research programs. These funds may be spent at the discretion of the PI on research related activities and are intended to catalyze expansion of the university's research enterprise. This program is one in a series of initiatives aimed at increasing funded research over the next five years.

### **ELEMENTS OF THE PROGRAM**

Effective in July 1, 2006, 3% of indirect cost recovery (F&A) funds generated by principal investigators in the prior fiscal year will be returned to an account in the name of that investigator beginning in FY07. For PIs that produce incentive funds with less than \$500.00 annually, these funds will be pooled in one department account where the PIs can charge their corresponding incentive revenue. These distributions are in addition to the 12% F&A return that will continue to be made to the deans consistent with current university policy. The incentive funds may be used for any allowable research expense except salary payments directly to the investigator. The funds will not expire and may be rolled over from year to year until they have been expended. Funds will be managed solely by the investigator. The funds can be used to start new research ventures or to enhance current research projects.

The resources supporting this initiative are unrestricted institutional discretionary funds. The decision to allocate them represents a tradeoff against the purpose for which these funds have been returned to the institution – to defray the university's real costs of supporting and sponsoring research. It is the university's intention to implement this program within a larger framework that ensures the full impact of this investment for the building of our research funding base. Accordingly, these funds will be allocated with the following understandings:

- This program is experimental and is implemented with the expectation that its costs will be supported by expanded indirect cost recovery income within three years. The program will be evaluated at that time to determine whether it will continue or be modified.
- If a principal investigator shares PI status on a grant with other principal investigators, the attribution of indirect costs earned by that grant will be shared as indicated at the time of grant submission. For those shared grants where the degree of effort have not been determined, the Vice President for Research will

survey the principal investigators and establish the shares to be allocated for each active multi-investigator grant.

- Principal Investigator shares will be allocated through the offices of the Dean and Department Chairs where the principal investigator holds primary appointment when the following conditions are met:
  - The School/College has a clearly articulated policy approved by the Provost for recovery and appropriate distribution of salary offset funds (IFR) from sponsored programs consistent with university principles, policies and processes for the use of salary offset funds.
  - The School/College and Department can demonstrate that their faculty are generating reasonable levels of salary offset revenue when compared with determined peers (or have a plan in place to improve those revenue levels over time).
  - The individual investigator is complying with School or College salary recovery policy and has no other funding arrangement in place by prior negotiation that would serve the same purpose as these incentive awards.
- While these funds may be spent at the discretion of the principal investigator, the investigator is encouraged to spend them in a timely fashion and for the research purpose of positioning the investigator more effectively to attract additional research support. Faculty working together in areas of strategic strength or other multi-investigator research initiatives are encouraged to pool their individual shares and invest jointly in their efforts.
- The PI share funds can be spent on any allowable research item except direct supplement to their salaries. Funds unspent at the point of a faculty member's departure will revert to the PI's primary department for expenditure.

## CONCLUSION

This policy addresses the key institutional goal of increasing UB's sponsored research income by **60%** over the next five years by assuming that sharing of F&A return with principal investigators will stimulate increased research activity. The UB research community has consistently maintained that this form of incentive is critical to encouraging the research enterprise. Over the next few years, this program will be implemented in the full expectation of this outcome. After this three year period, we will take stock of its impact and determine whether and how this incentive program will continue.