



Enhancing Research Capacity: The Department Perspective

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Understanding the GMU Context

- Public University with 30,000+ students
- Established in 1972 as free-standing university in Northern Virginia
- Recently classified as research-extensive university



Understanding the Social Work Department's Context

Second year in new, multidisciplinary College of Health & Human Services:

- School of Nursing
- Department of Health Administration & Policy
- Department of Global & Community Health
- Department of Social Work
- Center for Chronic Illness & Disability
- Center for Health Policy, Research & Ethics



Attributes of Department of Social Work

- Long-standing BSW Program
- Recently accredited MSW Program (2006)
- PhD program under development (2011)
- 12 full-time faculty and 2 admin staff



Challenges

- Rapidly evolving expectations for externally funded research
- Faculty unprepared for change
- Little existing infrastructure
- Growth depends on success in meeting new demands



College-Level Supports

- Hiring of Associate Dean for Research
- Financial incentive program for grants sought/received (temporary)
- 15% course buyout (temporary)
- Access to additional statistical packages, including training
- Consultation and grant review for faculty



College-Level Supports (Cont'd)

- All new faculty allocated 50% time for research
- All new faculty must seek tenure on the basis of "genuine excellence" in research
- Flexible workload planning for tenured and non-tenure track faculty
- Semester study leave for junior faculty



College-Level Supports (Cont'd)

- Workshops: grant skills, research skills, specific topics & potential partnerships
- College-wide Research Day
- Consistent & persistent message: Status and resources depend on external funding and enrollment



Department-Level Efforts

- In-service day with IASWR
- Faculty-initiated writing circle and grants group
- Fridays designated as "writing day"
- Research sharing/round robin at faculty meetings



Department-Level Efforts (Cont'd)

- BSW group independent study
- \$ invested in faculty attendance at research trainings/workshops
- Research a priority in hiring new faculty
- P&T meetings with tenure track faculty: review accomplishments & reinforce expectations



Successes

- Approximately half of faculty submitted grant proposals last year
- Submissions exceeded \$1 million
- Four proposals funded



Ongoing Issues & Challenges

- Increase number and size of funded proposals
- Strengthen mentoring
- Increase interdisciplinary collaborations
- Integrate research with teaching, service and practice
- Value scholarship



Things to Remember

- Change is developmental
- It's the climate, stupid!
- Faculty morale is critical
- Don't lose sight of strengths
- Remember the carrot!