PI ARTICLE: Popular Research Metrics

There are several research metrics that we track in our office on a monthly and annual basis that provide a window into research activity on the Resident Instruction (non-GTRI) side at Georgia Tech. We are looking for trends and patterns on both a seasonal and annual year-over-year basis. We combine historical results with current data to create projections that will help us with both short-term operational and long-term strategic decisions. The metrics that we use consist of high level metrics and those more specific to Grants and Contracts (G&C).

HIGH-LEVEL METRICS

- Proposals: in order to get the money, we first have to ask for the money. A driver of award funding, growth in proposals may serve as a good indicator for growth in awards, as well as a measure of faculty activity and workload for central sponsored programs offices.
- Awards: this represents dollars awarded to Georgia Tech for the purpose of conducting research. Given the importance of the research enterprise at GT, sponsored research supports our mission, creates opportunities for faculty and students, provides a valuable source of funding, and enhances the reputation and prestige of the institution.
- Award Dollars by Sponsor: understanding where we get our funds from helps us to understanding funding concentration and where we may get the most audit scrutiny. The more dollars we receive from individual sponsors, the more vulnerable we are to decreases in funding from those sources.
- Direct Expenditures: these are expenses such as salary, fringe, travel, materials & supplies, etc. that are charged directly to sponsors. Expenditure growth typically lags award growth. Costs which directly benefit sponsored awards should be charged to these awards so that we can be fully reimbursed for the work we do on behalf of the sponsor.
- Indirect Expenditures (a.k.a. overhead, F&A, IDC). These costs represent the facilities and administration costs incurred by GT to support the research enterprise. The facilities components include buildings, equipment, debt financing, operations and maintenance, and library costs. Administrative components include general administration, departmental administration, and sponsored projects administration costs. We are reimbursed for these costs via the application of the appropriate F&A cost reimbursement rate to the appropriate direct cost base for each individual award.

G&C SPECIFIC METRICS

- Effective F&A Cost Reimbursement: while we negotiate F&A reimbursement rates with the federal government, this does not always equate to what we receive from sponsors. The effective rate represents the ratio of collected indirect cost reimbursement relative to a direct cost base. Universities always have effective rates which are below their negotiated rates due in large part to cost sharing, F&A waivers, and sponsors who set fixed rates below our negotiated rates.
- Cost Sharing: these represent costs incurred on behalf of sponsored awards that are not borne by the sponsor. These are dollars that we never recover from the sponsor, and if salary is cost shared, we do not recover salary, fringe benefits, and F&A costs.
- Cost Transfers: these are transfers of dollars from one funding source to another after the initial charge has been recorded. There are very specific rules related to cost transfers, and the volume of transfers (specifically those beyond 90 days) and dollars transferred are heavily scrutinized.
- Project Accounting (set up, billing, reporting, close-out, journal activity): these are metrics we use to evaluate the number of awards set up in our Workday system, invoicing counts and dollars, financial reports submitted to our sponsors, award close outs, and the number of accounting journals done in the system.

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