

## Mitigating the Threats to the SMPH Research Enterprise

As you know, we are enduring a deep and prolonged downturn in the NIH budget. Based on my recent discussions with federal legislators, I do not believe we will see a substantial recovery for at least several years. From this perspective, it is imperative that we do all that we can to buffer the impact this will have on our faculty and our collective research mission.

I want to outline briefly some of the steps the dean's office will take during the current academic year in our efforts to support research to the greatest extent possible, within the constraints of available resources. These items will be discussed in more detail, and the opportunity for questions and discussion will be made available at the annual Fall SMPH Faculty Meeting on October 28. I encourage all interested parties to attend and participate in that meeting.

- 1) **Strategic Planning for the Basic Sciences.** Our strategic plan for the transformation into a school of medicine and public health focused considerable attention on clinical and translational science. We must now target the basic sciences, and define our goals and priorities, as well as the strategies for achieving them. During this academic year, we will begin the process of developing a new strategic plan to address the future of the basic sciences in the School of Medicine and Public Health. Preliminary work groups will be formed in the fall, and the formal launch of the process will take place at a retreat in the winter.
- 2) **Support for the Research Mission from UW Health.** I am pleased to announce that through the ongoing generous support from UW Medical Foundation, coupled with a new program of support from UW Hospitals and Clinics (the "Academic Advancement Agreement," or "AAA"), we now have funds available to launch a new program which will support the "carry over" of research programs that have temporarily lost their funding, but appear to be well positioned to recover it in the near term. Unfortunately, our needs far outstrip the available resources, and we will activate a thoughtful process for identifying those grants which offer the greatest potential for re-funding. More details about this program will be forthcoming from Rick Moss, our Senior Associate Dean for Basic Research, Biotechnology, and Graduate Studies.

The AAA will also provide funds that will allow us to expand our support for new faculty "start-up" packages. For now, we will be concentrating this support in the ongoing recruitment of new department chairs, as well as in selected new faculty recruitments in departments that have not experienced recent new chair packages.

- 3) **Rodent Per Diem Charges.** Through the outstanding efforts of Rick Moss and the leaders of our animal care program (LAR), we have dramatically increased the efficiency and cost effectiveness of housing rodents in LAR facilities. There have been no increases in rodent per diems in the past three years, and we now are in a position to reduce charges for rodent housing, in effect passing on savings to our investigators. However, we are concerned that with the current low NIH funding rates, the pool of investigators may shrink, leading to an increase in the fixed costs/per cage and thereby erasing our current cost savings. For this reason, we will provide a one year “rebate” on rodent cage costs, thereby reducing the per diem to \$0.89/cage, effective July 1, 2013. We will reassess at the end of the year with the hope that we will be able to extend this rebate for another year. In the meantime, this should help buffer, albeit to a modest degree, some of the across-the-board budget cuts that have been imposed on many grants.
  
- 4) **Salary Recovery Guidelines.** Last year the SMPH distributed salary recovery guidelines, which include the expectation that investigators will place 35% salary recovery on their first RO1, and that senior faculty will seek to maintain 50% of their salary on extramural grants.

Over time, modular grants which have been successfully renewed have also absorbed successive across-the-board budget cuts. For a faculty member with a single RO1, 35% salary recovery on a grant with a reduced budget may pose a real challenge in covering the other costs that are necessary for the successful completion of the work (and the successful competitive renewal of the grant). Thus, we will temporarily reduce the expectation for salary recovery from a first or single RO1 to 30%. In addition, we will also allow department chairs to consider requesting, on a case-by-case basis, a modification of this guideline.

I look forward to further discussion of these and other pending plans for addressing our current challenges in supporting our research mission. I am confident that we can weather this storm, and emerge in an even stronger position as we continue our evolution as one of the nation’s premier academic health centers.