

# **UTK Faculty Research Incentive Plan**

(Final Draft)

As the state's flagship comprehensive research institution, one stated mission is to advance the community of learning by engaging in scientific research, humanistic scholarship, and artistic creation. To incentivize and grow the University of Tennessee, Knoxville (UTK)'s research base, faculty will have the opportunity to supplement their UT salary through the UTK Faculty Research Incentive Plan (RIP).

## **PURPOSE**

The purpose of the RIP is to enhance the quantity and quality of externally funded research by incentivizing faculty. The mechanism for doing so is to provide a salary supplement in the form of a yearly bonus for faculty who are effective in securing extramural funds while maintaining their other scholarly responsibilities.

With the continual reduction of State funds to support the University mission, externally funded research is one of the few revenue streams that can be used to strengthen the funding base. It is commonly used to support the UTK mission by providing equipment, funding for undergraduate and graduate students, and faculty recovery, as well as facilities and administrative costs (F&A), to name a few.

The RIP is particularly relevant as a recruitment tool and means of retaining highly productive faculty in economic times where faculty salaries are not keeping up with the increased productivity of these faculty or the salaries of their peers at other institutions. Additionally, it is implemented to stimulate scholarly activity associated with performing externally funded research in all units.

## **BACKGROUND**

Within many UTK units, it is generally expected that faculty will actively participate in extramural research funding through grants and contracts and recover a part of their salary on these research contracts when possible. This salary recovery is based in part on the belief that the faculty provide a service to those contracts that are conducted and that these charges are appropriate.

It is known that different colleges, departments, centers, institutes, and other units use a variety of fiscal models that are impacted by operating revenues and expenses, formulas for F&A recovery and return, and strategic objectives; therefore, units within UTK will be permitted to establish criteria for implementing their own customized plans if desired. The overarching goals are to

- Increase the quality and quantity of externally funded research,
- Increase funding for graduate research assistants, and
- Increase scholarly publications and activities.

The RIP should also have in place checks and balances for assuring that high quality teaching, MS/PhD student productivity, and service activity engagement are maintained.

## **IMPLEMENTATION**

At the end of the fiscal year, each faculty member will be evaluated to determine if eligibility requirements have been met. If so, and contingent upon availability of resources within the unit, and continued employment of the faculty member, an incentive payment would be provided in the fall semester. The additional pay is determined on the basis of the following criteria:

- Discretionary funds available within the unit as determined by the dean, director, or head.
- The faculty member has met expectations in the categories of teaching, research, MS/PhD production, and scholarly service for a previous number of years as determined by the unit. Evidence of meeting these criteria is the annual faculty evaluation. For faculty with less than that number of years of record at UTK, the faculty member must have met expectations for all years at UTK.
- Written recommendation of the Department Head or Center Director and approval of the Dean; or in the case of a University level center, written recommendation of the Center Director and Vice Chancellor of Research or their designees.
- The payment is subject to withholding for appropriate taxes and benefits.

Models used to calculate the incentive pay will be developed by Department Heads or Center Directors and must be approved by their Dean, the Vice Chancellor of Research, and the Campus Compensation Committee. In the case of University level centers, the models used to calculate the incentive pay will be developed by the Center Directors and must be approved by their Dean, the Vice Chancellor of Research, and the Campus Compensation Committee. Each model must be clearly defined and communicated to the faculty and must be consistently applied across the faculty in the unit. The models may incentivize based on a combination of RIF and/or salary recovery and should include an upper limit. The incentive pay is limited to 20% of the 9 month pay for 9 month employees and 20% of the 12 month pay for 12 month employees. The UTK Chancellor can amend this policy to modify approval paths and percentage pay restrictions.

The faculty member may request that all, or a portion, of the incentive payment be transferred to a research support fund in lieu of a salary payment.