Faculty Research Incentives and Rewards

1. Goal

To support faculty pursuit of excellence in scholarship, as well as success in obtaining external funding to develop and support programs of research and creative activity.

2. Strategy

Initiate a program of merit-based faculty research incentives and rewards on the Norman Campus that provide predictable benefits based upon achieving specific measurable outcomes.

3. Rationale and Concept

The Aspire 2020 Action Team on Incentives and Rewards noted that faculty view research incentives as consisting of three components: (a) the intrinsic fulfillment associated with pursuing scholarship and achieving outcomes such as papers published, productions and works created and performed, and students mentored; (b) additional financial compensation and (c) resources to support their programs of scholarship. Although faculty overwhelmingly noted the importance of (a) and (c), the latter for which the Faculty Challenge Grant and other programs are being created in response, personal financial incentives and rewards cannot be excluded and indeed are used by many other universities as part of their intrinsic merit-based incentives and rewards system.

4. Possible Program Structure

It is important to emphasize that no formal research incentive program has yet been created for the Norman Campus; rather, the items listed below are being studied for possible implementation as part of the Aspire 2020 process.

With regard to incentives for externally funding research, the following are being considered:

- **Cash Prizes for Obtaining Grants of Significant Size or Stature.** Faculty who receive, as principal investigator, certain nationally-competitive, peer-reviewed grant proposal awards (e.g., NSF IGERT, CAREER and center grants; NIH Pioneer and R01 awards; NIST science building construction awards; DoEd, DOE and DOD centers of excellence awards) will be given a one-time stipend of $10,000 that may be used as salary (fringe benefits provided separately), discretionary internal funding, or a 50-50 combination of the two.

- **Salary Replacement Program.** Norman campus faculty tend to budget academic year salary release (where allowed by the funding agency) only up to the level required by the department for teaching release. The Norman campus could institute a program in which 50% of any academic year salary replacement, generated by a faculty member above and beyond that required for course release, would be made available to the faculty member either as supplemental pay or as unrestricted research funds. Similarly, faculty might be able to pay themselves for more than 12 months depending upon the agency in question.

- **Post Doctoral Matching Program.** The Norman Campus is notably deficient in the number of post doctoral researchers supported, and this fact was confirmed by a number of Aspire 2020 participants, who noted that institutional support for post docs as a key incentive for research productivity. The Office of the Vice President for Research is considering instituting a post doc matching program in which 1/3rd of the salary and benefits is provided by the University and the other 2/3rds is provided by the funding agency.

With regard to other incentives, including those for disciplines that may receive little external funding, the following are being considered:

- **Book and Monograph Awards.** Any faculty member whose peer-reviewed scholarly book or monograph wins an award from a national professional organization could be given a $2500 cash prize.

- **Citation Awards.** Cash prizes could be awarded to OU authors within the top 10 cited articles published within the last five years in the categories of Science Citation, Social Science Citation, and Arts and Humanities Citation (as indexed on Web of Science).

- **Juried Creative, Performance and Exhibition Awards.** Similar to the Book and Monograph Award, a $2500 prize could be given to exhibits or performances that receive nationally competitive juried awards.

- **Editorships and National Leadership Positions.** A cash prize of $5,000 could be given to faculty who assume chief editorships of prestigious journals or major leadership positions (e.g., presidencies) in national and international scholarly societies.

5. Relationship to Aspire 2020

Objective #3 of Aspire 2020 focuses on the transformation of OU’s research culture as a comprehensive research university. Consistent with that objective, especially the “Incentives” and “Rewards” components, consideration is being given to establishing a number of merit-based financial incentives and rewards that will, in addition to internal funding mechanisms such as the Faculty Challenge Grant Program, enhance the pursuit of scholarly activities by OU faculty and increase OU’s national and international stature.