



UNIVERSITY OF
NORTHERN COLORADO

Office of Research
Office of Sponsored Programs

UNC Research Plan 2012-2015 Final Report

prepared by
the AVP for Research & Sponsored Programs
and the Research Advisory Council
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INTRODUCTION

The UNC Research Plan — *Enhancement of Research, Scholarship, Creative Works, and Grant Activity: 2012-2015* — established goals and strategies that were intended to contribute to the enhancement of Research, Scholarship, Creative Works (RSCW) at UNC. The 2012-2015 UNC Research Plan, along with annual updates and other research reports and statistics are available on the Office of Research website: www.unco.edu/research/about-us/reports-statistics/.

This final report summarizes activities and outcomes at UNC over the past four years related to the 2012-2015 UNC Research plan. The report is organized by the goals set forth in the 2012-2015 plan, reiterating each goal followed by a summary of the outcomes. Links to supplementary materials are referenced throughout this report. Finally, this report serves as the launching point for the next plan, [UNC Strategic Research Plan 2017-2020](#), which will be published later this year.

SECTION 1. Investment in Faculty Scholars

Goal 1: Faculty Workload in RSCW and Grant Activity

Goal 1:	Adjust faculty workload to allow for time to make meaningful progress in scholarly endeavors.
Need:	UNC faculty members typically teach three three-credit-hour courses each semester (loads are higher in several programs) and regularly have significant advisement, service, and other responsibilities as well; insufficient time remains for serious commitments to RSCW. Similarly, many academic chairs and directors, and a number of staff members, have aspirations in RSCW but limited time to engage in these endeavors.
Strategy:	Develop a three-year plan for addressing workload such that interested, motivated, and RSCW-productive faculty can move closer to the model of teaching six credit hours each semester and investing two days per week in RSCW. Differentiated workload, as defined in Board Policy, will be a central element of this plan. Another tactic will be to examine prospects for banking credit hours for credit-generating individualized courses (e.g., 422/522, 699, and 799 courses). A third approach is for Academic Affairs to reserve a pool of roll-forward funds for part-time instructor costs that permit the reassignment of faculty selected in their college or Library to take on a concentrated scholarly load. A fourth approach will be to offer summer salary to identified RSCW-productive faculty members who cannot take a reassignment during the academic year due to challenges in finding instructional replacements. Additional approaches that emerge as viable options will also be considered.
Participants:	Assistant Vice President for Research (AVPR); Research Advisory Council; Deans of the Graduate School, Colleges, and Library; Chairs and Directors; Provost; Faculty
Target Date:	May 2012 for Year 1 of Three-Year Plan (feedback obtained during the period of open comment will be used to generate this initiative); May 2013 for Years 2 and 3

Outcomes:

a. **Faculty Reassignment for RSCW program:** Pilot program started in 2012. Moved from “pilot” status to permanent program in 2014. Currently funded for ~20 faculty awards per year (\$120,000). Approximately 1/3 of grantees went on to submit one or more grant proposals in the first two years.

b. **Recommendations for Implementing Differentiated Workload for Faculty:** Recommendations for Implementing Differentiated Workload (DWL) were published March 2013. Some schools and departments have incorporated some level of differentiated workload. Colleges are collecting data on DWL; Graduate Council subcommittee looking at DWL.

Goal 2: Early-Career Faculty Support for Research, Scholarship, Creative Works, and Grant Activity

Goal 2:	Depending on the specific needs within an academic program, offer early-career faculty members with significant RSCW commitments a reduced instructional load for two semesters sometime over their first three years at UNC to allow them to get their RSCW up and running. For example, a new tenure-track assistant professor might teach a regular load during fall of the first year and two three-credit-hour courses (or an appropriately elevated RSCW load depending on academic unit arrangements) during spring semester, with a similar arrangement during the second year in residence.
Need:	Early-career faculty members have serious time constraints due to the need to develop courses. Obviously, delivering high-quality instruction is a top priority for these individuals, yet it is also crucial that they develop, from the outset, a coherent and vibrant RSCW program. RSCW accomplishments during this period affect the trajectory of future work, and furthermore, it takes considerable time to produce products for prestigious outlets and venues (accomplishments necessary for tenure and promotion).
Strategy:	In consultation with chairs, directors, and deans, determine whether adjustments can be made and what barriers exist for implementing a temporarily reduced instructional load for early career faculty members. When departments and schools cannot reduce the instructional load of new faculty, investigate whether a pool of roll-forward funds can be reserved to offer some compensation over the summer for new faculty members to devote extended time on RSCW.
Participants:	AVPR, Deans, Chairs and Directors, Provost
Target Date:	December 2015

Outcomes:

[Guidelines for Startup Packages for New Faculty with Assignments in](#)

RSCW: A new policy for startup packages was published in June 2013 to “(1) assist new faculty members in obtaining the necessary equipment and appropriate workload to develop a strong capacity for research, scholarship, and creative works (RSCW); and (2) recruit highly qualified teacher/scholars with RSCW agendas.” Policy includes provisions for reduced instructional load: “New faculty may take the equivalent of six credit hours of reassignment for purposes of investing time in RSCW during their first two years of employment. Deans need to include these costs for adjunct replacements within their annual adjunct requests.”

SECTION II. Clarification of Rewards and Expectations for Accomplishments in RSCW and Grant Activity

Goal 3: Faculty Evaluation

Goal 3:	Examine the faculty evaluation system for its support of RSCW and grant writing.
Need:	The faculty evaluation system is an important review process that affects the efforts of individual faculty members. The system in its various forms—codification, written guidelines at program-area and college/Library levels, and implementation procedures—should be equitable, generally coherent, and deliberate in recognition of and reward for exemplary RSCW and grant activity (including grant writing and leadership in funded projects). The system should also accommodate variations in RSCW load and be inclusive of the range of high-quality RSCW conducted by faculty members across the University.
Strategy:	The Research Advisory Council will conduct an analysis of the faculty evaluation system related to RSCW and grant writing. The review might include interviews with deans, chairs, directors, and members of Faculty Senate and an appraisal of written guidelines and procedures for annual review, comprehensive review, and tenure and promotion.
Participants:	Research Advisory Council, AVPR, Deans, Chairs and Directors, Faculty
Target Date:	May 2014

Outcomes:

The RAC conducted a preliminary analysis of college criteria for faculty evaluation. The group had initial impressions but [decided to wait](#) for more systematic work due to Faculty Senate’s concurrent analysis of the faculty evaluation system.

SECTION III. Upgrading of the Infrastructure

Goal 4: Resources for Support of RSCW

Goal 4:	Inventory current programs that support the RSCW of faculty, staff, and students so as to optimize investments.
Need:	Greater transparency is needed about the resources that are being invested in RSCW on campus (e.g., in terms of time; space; graduate assistantships; mini-grants; materials, supplies, and equipment; service and maintenance agreements for instrumentation; internal maintenance activities) and their distribution across programs and units. In addition, the effectiveness of programs should be regularly considered with regard to impact, alignment with strategic goals, duplication, limitations, and desirability of revisions.
Strategy:	Create a data base of centralized campus resources and funds for the support of RSCW. Conduct an internal analysis of the effectiveness and duplication of programs and allocations. Ask chairs and directors about specific needs regarding RSCW in their units and determine whether any unmet needs can be addressed. Summarize needs that are not well addressed by current expenditures and seek guidance from the Provost on their inclusion in the University’s annual budget process.
Participants:	AVPR, Research Advisory Council, OSP, Provost
Target Date:	December 2014

Outcomes:

a. [Summer Support Initiative \(SSI\)](#): The SSI program continues to support faculty RSCW during summer months. Current funding level is \$120,000 per year.

b. **Provost Award for Travel (PAT)** and **RDFD program**: Previous to FY2015, \$300,000 was budgeted. The budget was reduced in FY2015 to \$270,000 to allow for Pilot Fund for Faculty Publications. The FY2016 budget was increased to \$290,000, and the FY2017 budget was increased to ~\$307,000. The ASATS program for faculty travel was eliminated at the end of FY2015 due to fiscal constraints, putting additional pressure on the PAT program.

c. **New Projects Program (NPP)**: The NPP program traditionally was funded at \$20,000 per year. The FY2016 & FY2017 budgets were increased to \$60,000.

d. **Fund for Faculty Publications**: A pilot program was initiated in FY2015, with a budget of \$30,000. Only about <\$10,000 of proposals were submitted, all of which were funded. The Fund for Faculty Publications was transitioned to a permanent program in FY2016 with a budget of \$10,000. The FY2017 budget was increased to \$12,500.

Goal 5: Resources for Individual Capacity Building for Externally-Funded Projects

Goal 5:	Support faculty members in developing the professional accomplishments, publication records, and skills necessary for obtaining external funds.
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Need:	Reductions in state funds for higher education are expected to continue and escalate and will result in a finite resource base for all operations at the University, including RSCW. Other public universities are facing similar financial restrictions, and the review process for grant, fellowship, and contract dollars is exceedingly competitive. Although it is crucial for UNC to augment internal funds for RSCW with external resources, there are many distinct challenges, among them being the needs to invest in faculty and staff over the span of their careers such that they become progressively competitive in external reviews; to design incentives that foster an interest in writing applications for grants, fellowships, and contracts; and to help scholars continue to make incremental progress in their RSCW while also motivating them to take risks in seeking external funds.
Strategy:	Determine effectiveness of existing programs and services and needs for intensified support for faculty and staff. Ongoing accomplishments in RSCW are necessary for individuals to be considered competitive in national reviews, therefore flexible initiatives should continue to be implemented that permit faculty and staff members at various stages in their career to conduct RSCW. In addition, incentives need to be offered for faculty and staff members to engage in grant writing. Incentives might include a reassignment from a course, summer salary, matching funds for grant applications, and recognition during the faculty and staff evaluation process. Similarly, faculty and staff members may benefit from specific services while preparing applications for external funds, such as assistance with conceptualization, peer review, access to boilerplate material, grant tips, etc. Finally, the implementation of a formal mentoring system, whereby early-career researchers are paired with successful grant writers, will be considered.
Participants:	AVPR, OSP Director, CETL, Provost, Deans, Faculty
Target Date:	December 2014

Outcomes:

- a. **Sponsored Research Fellows (SRF) program:** The Sponsored Research Fellows (SRF) program was initiated in 2012. A class of 11 SRFs were selected, and the the program from 2013-2015. The first cohort program SRFs submitted a total of 17 proposals. A second cohort of five SRFs were selected through a competitive application process. The program started in 2015 is currently ongoing.
- b. **Hanover Research support:** A contract with Hanover Research for support on proposal development, writing, and funding prospecting was started in January 2015. More than 24 projects have been completed to date. Two projects resulted awards totaling over \$1.42M.
- c. **CETL Workshops:** OSP provides opportunities for members of the UNC community to become familiar with and develop skills in project development, proposal writing, and award management.

Goal 6: Startup Funds for Faculty

Goal 6:	Inventory start-up funds for new faculty members to permit effective resource allocation.
Need:	Early-career faculty members often require significant start-up funds for laboratory equipment, musical instruments, software, graduate assistants, research-related travel, facilities renovations, materials and supplies, etc.
Strategy:	Obtain information about sources of funds and procedures for offering tangible support to new faculty (e.g., with regard to laboratory equipment, instruments, supplies).
Participants:	AVPR, Deans, Chairs and Directors, OSP Director, Provost
Target Date:	Annually in May Beginning 2014

Outcomes: See ‘Goal 2’ above.

Goal 7: Visibility of RSCW at UNC

Goal 7:	Disseminate accomplishments of faculty, students, and staff in RSCW.
Need:	Faculty, staff, and students are in many cases accomplished scholars but not adequately recognized for their exemplary contributions within the university or externally as part of a tactical campaign for marketing these achievements.
Strategy:	Consult with Marketing and the Provost on how to disseminate information about the accomplishments of faculty, staff, and students. Possible media for dissemination include a research magazine, university website, publicity regarding major awards and honors, etc.
Participants:	AVPR, Marketing and University Relations, Education Innovation Institute, Provost
Target Date:	Annually in May Beginning 2013

Outcomes:

a. **UNC research sampler magazine:** *Discoveries in the Public Interest* was published in 2013. Next steps: evaluate the need for an updated research sampler booklet. If such a need is identified, the process of producing new research sampler will be initiated.

b. **News releases and UNC Today items:** Office of Research and OSP actively promote RSCW in coordination with media relations. Research-related news items are tagged and automatically appear in the “Research News” feed on the Office of Research [website](#).

c. Office of Research [website](#) was completely restructured and updated in December 2016.

Goal 8: Accomplishments of Faculty, Staff, and Students in RSCW

Goal 8:	Develop an online data collection and formatting system for aggregating the accomplishments of faculty in RSCW.
Need:	With the exception of OSP, which accurately monitors grant submissions and awards, the University does not have a well-established, centralized data base for recording faculty scholarly accomplishments (e.g., numbers of articles in peer reviewed journals, national presentations, books, recitals and performances, national awards and honors).
Strategy:	Develop a data collection system for monitoring annual accomplishments in RSCW. Annually report on these accomplishments by rank, college, etc. Also include OSP data in annual reports.
Participants:	AVPR, OSP Director, Information Management and Technology, University Assessment, Dean of the Library and other Deans, Faculty
Target Date:	May 2014

Outcomes: Digital Measures: Digital Measures (DM) was implemented and will be used for faculty evaluation. The DM system will allow access to a database of faculty RSCW accomplishments (scholarly output and grant activity) that can be accessed by UNC leadership, allowing for efficient promotion of UNC RSCW (see 7). NEXT STEPS: Use DM to collect data on RSCW output for annual reporting.

SECTION IV. Fostering the RSCW of UNC Students

Goal 9: Support for RSCW in Students

Goal 9:	Identify learning goals for students in RSCW, and develop appropriate goals and strategies for supporting the acquisition of skills and dispositions related to RSCW.
Need:	Involvement of students in RSCW appears to be an institutional strength at UNC, however, more systematic information is needed to document current initiatives and achievements.
Strategy:	Identify available data regarding initiatives and achievements of students in RSCW. Establish learning goals for students in RSCW. Determine appropriate administrative support for RSCW of students, which might include small grants for students or for teams of faculty and students; early identification of undergraduate students with exceptional academic potential and an interest in RSCW; provision of high-quality and competitive assistantships for graduate students; and support for undergraduate and graduate students in making presentations and publishing papers. Analyze faculty workload and rewards for faculty mentors of student RSCW.
Participants:	AVPR; Research Advisory Council; Dean of the Graduate School; Dean of University College; Other Deans, Chairs and Directors; Office of Undergraduate Research Faculty Fellow for Undergraduate Research; Director of the Center for Honors, Scholars, and Leadership; Director of the McNair Scholarship Program; CETL; Graduate Council; and Undergraduate Council
Target Date:	Annually in May Beginning 2014

Outcomes: Office of Undergraduate Research (OUR) is now co-located with the Office of Research in Kepner Hall. The pool for UG research grants was increased in FY2016 by \$10,000.

SECTION V. Signature Areas for Investment

Goal 10: Identification of Institutional Strengths in RSCW and Grant Activity

Goal 10:	Identify signature areas as focused domains of outstanding achievement in RSCW and grant activity.
Need:	The University has several areas that could be elevated for prominence. Having visible signature areas based in solid accomplishments in RSCW is a common element of an institution’s portfolio.
Strategy:	Identify signature areas based on the University’s capacity, history, reputation, prospect for external funding, and potential contribution to the community and society. These signature areas need input from faculty and staff with strong disciplinary orientations as well those
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	with interdisciplinary perspectives. Signature areas should be defined such that they allow the University to achieve recognition as a leader in Colorado, the United States, and the world. During the process of identification, signature areas will be analyzed for appropriate institutional support (e.g., whether these areas should be part of existing or new centers or institutes, draw from multidisciplinary teams of faculty, and result in a new faculty position with a disciplinary or interdisciplinary orientation). The themes of existing centers and institutes with strong RSCW ties may be candidates for identification as signature areas, either as standing units or potentially as blended configurations. However, it’s also possible that the investigation will yield new themes that extend the institutional portfolio in novel ways. In addition, the activities of existing centers and institutes should be examined periodically in accordance with Academic Affairs policies, and University standards should be followed when establishing new centers and institutes. Signature areas will need to be integrated into fund-raising efforts.
Participants:	AVPR, Provost, Research Advisory Council, Deans, Directors of centers and institutes in Academic Affairs, Chairs and Directors of academic programs, OSP, Faculty
Target Date:	May 2014

Outcomes:

- a. **Center and Institute Policy:** Current policy from 2006 was circulated among Deans, AVPs, and directors of existing UNC centers and institutes to obtain feedback on needed revisions before the procedures are implemented.
- b. **MAST and UNCCRI (formerly RMCRI):** Two centers with distinguished records of external support, the MAST Institute and UNCCRI, underwent new chartering procedures to clarify goals and ensure adequate funding.

SECTION VI. Sponsored Research, Scholarship, and Creative Works

Goal 11: Support and Impediments Related to Seeking Grants, Contracts, and Fellowships and Implementing Externally Funded Projects

Goal 11:	Develop and implement a plan for increasing effective support and for addressing impediments related to seeking and implementing externally funded projects.
Need:	Grant, contract, and fellowship funds are increasingly vital to the University because they offset the direct expenses of RSCW projects, elevate the RSCW reputation of the institution, and provide F&A resources for faculty work in the form of internal awards for professional travel and mini-grants.
Strategy:	OSP Director will develop and implement a plan for determining factors that facilitate preparation of proposals and administration of externally funded projects and other circumstances that serve as barriers. The review will include a consideration of support and potential challenges in proposal writing and project administration at various levels, including those within academic programs, colleges, and university offices. Information can be gleaned from deans; chairs and directors; and selected faculty and staff. Relevant policies will be communicated and, when necessary, formalized for externally funded endeavors (e.g., incentives for obtaining external funds; criteria for deciding when OSP vs. the UNC Foundation should be contacted regarding support for proposals).
Participants:	AVPR, OSP Director, Deans, Chairs and Directors, Faculty and Staff, UNC Foundation
Target Date:	December 2013

Outcomes:

- a. Restructuring of OSP responsibilities: The organization of OSP was restructured in 2015 to better align with UNC’s research strategic goals, and to enhance cross-training among OSP staff.
- b. OSP Staff Training: OSP staff attend training workshops and professional development meetings as opportunities arise on a continual basis.
- c. OSP Survey: The Social Research Lab at UNC conducted a customer satisfaction survey on behalf of the Office of Research and OSP. Survey results and an action plan are available on the Office of Research [website](#).

Goal 12: Outreach to Faculty and Staff Regarding Grant, Contract, and Fellowship Opportunities

<p>Goal 12: Need:</p>	<p>Augment outreach efforts to faculty and staff members in obtaining grants and fellowships. OSP regularly distributes information about calls for proposals to individuals and groups with potentially relevant interests, however, for a variety of reasons, including time constraints recognized in other goals herein, targeted faculty and staff do not necessarily attend to these calls. In addition, many faculty and staff members are unaware of how they might collaborate with others in meaningful projects that could be externally funded, and</p>
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<p>Strategy:</p>	<p>how they might develop expertise expected by peer reviewers and project managers of grant and fellowship funds.</p> <p>OSP Director will develop and implement an outreach plan. A variety of strategies might be considered, several of which are currently employed. For example, OSP staff might meet with deans and faculty in departments and schools, hold office hours in central locations on campus, advise faculty and staff of grant, contract, and fellowship opportunities, offer tips on ways to increase the likelihood of receiving external funding, and inform new faculty of OSP services (perhaps during new faculty orientations). Also, OSP staff might continue to offer workshops in grant writing and other kinds of applications (e.g., for fellowships), using a range of formats and specific topics. Emphasis will be on follow through after initial contacts are made by or with OSP. In addition, with assistance from the AVPR and the Research Advisory Council, OSP will facilitate the formation of interdisciplinary teams of individuals with interests in initiatives that have good prospects for external funding.</p>
<p>Participants: Target Date:</p>	<p>AVPR, OSP Director, Research Advisory Council, CETL, Faculty and Staff</p> <p>Annually in August</p>

Outcomes:

- a. Grant writing workshops: Grant writing workshops and other professional development opportunities will continue to be offered to faculty and staff.
- b. CETL training: New CETL training workshops started in Fall 2015, and are planned to be offered every semester in the future.

SECTION VII. Meta-Planning Considerations

Goal 13: System-Wide Issues

Goal 13:	Evaluate the need for changes in priorities from year to year and assess the implementation of initiatives, including repercussions of changes in one domain for other operations.
Need:	Based on annual progress, funding levels, and conditions on campus and in the community, some goals will be more important or achievable than others. Priorities need to be reconsidered periodically to ensure that resources are deployed effectively and are in keeping with UNC's strategic planning efforts. Reverberations across domains also need to be considered. For instance, a shift in workload in favor of an amplified RSCW assignment creates an arrangement that should be represented in an agreed-upon workload plan and evaluated appropriately. In other words, an intensified focus in RSCW should, as with other workloads, be tied to accountability and rewards. Therefore, an analysis of the faculty evaluation process should consider potential revisions to workload and criteria for faculty evaluation. Ripple effects will need to be considered for changes in other areas. Finally, it will be worthwhile to establish a series of desired RSCW outcomes (e.g., perhaps focusing on publications, grant submissions, and success rate on extramural proposals) and to try to tie changes in practices to changes in RSCW outcomes.
Strategy:	The Research Advisory Council will establish priorities annually that are informed by UNC's strategic planning and consider the implications of pending changes in one area for other relevant domains of activity. The group will also determine outcomes and monitor progress.
Participants:	AVPR, Research Advisory Council, others as appropriate
Target Date:	Annually in May Beginning 2013

Outcomes: Evaluate the needs for changes in priorities from year to year, and assess the implementation of initiatives, including repercussions of changes in one domain for other operations.