



Memorandum

Date: January 26, 2021

To: Marilyn Wiley, College of Business Dean
Randy Bomer, College of Education Dean
Hanchen Huang, College of Engineering Dean
Nicole Dash, College of Health and Public Service Dean
Kinshuk, College of Information Dean
Tamara Brown, College of Liberal Arts and Social Sciences Executive Dean
Jana Hawley, College of Merchandising, Hospitality, & Tourism Dean
John Richmond, College of Music Dean
Su Gao, College of Science Dean
Greg Watts, College of Visual Arts and Design Dean
Glennison de Oliveira, Honors College Dean and
Texas Academy of Mathematics & Science Dean
Diane Bruxvoot, Libraries Dean
Wesley Randall, New College at Frisco Dean
Andrea Miller, Mayborn School of Journalism Dean
Victor Prybutok, Toulouse Graduate School Dean
Pia Wood, UNT International Dean

Cc: Neal Smatresk, University President
Jennifer Cowley, University Provost
Scott Belshaw, University Senate Research Committee Chair

From: Mark R. McLellan
Vice President for Research & Innovation

RE: A Faculty-Based Research Roadmap for the future of UNT Research
(Instructions for the process)

Deans:

We have had many discussions over the past year about research but due to COVID19, I delayed pulling the trigger on a formal research planning process to continue our commitment to R1-R-Way. Although we are challenged with less dense operations during this emergency, it has been hard to delay this research planning process any further.

Therefore, by this letter, I formally request that the college leadership and the academic faculty of the college engage with us in a Research Roadmap process that will commence on **February 1st**.

- Draft department reports are due to the VPRI office and deans by **May 1st**.
- Draft college overviews are due to the VPRI Office **July 1st**.

Goal: *Develop a comprehensive plan, called a Research Roadmap, that is built discipline by discipline and college by college for research at UNT. It is critical that this report is expressly built on the future of our disciplines and is a faculty-driven process that includes multidisciplinary opportunities.*

Uses: *The Research Roadmap plan will help shape the directions of investments in everything research related at UNT. The plans will be used by the Office of the President to decide on the prioritization of facilities improvements and program expansions. The plan will be critical in presenting to the legislature a vision worthy of investment, positioning UNT as a true research powerhouse. The plan will assist the deans, provost, and president in their decisions about future faculty hires and will bring clarity to the possibility of cross-college/department hires. The VPRI office will use these plans to direct faculty investments to expand and grow programs, including those that will support our efforts to seek Texas National Research University Fund (NRUF) eligibility status.*

R1-R-Way got us a long way down the path of recognition using our capacity to train PhDs and improve the university approach to supporting research. This next step, the Research Roadmap, asks you to turn to the faculty and ask the critical question:

What is the leading-edge future of research in your discipline and how does the department move to be competitive, unique, and recognized in that new future?

World-class research universities are built on the foundation of strong academic departments with leading faculty research programs. We have constructed a process in the Research Roadmap that starts with the dean calling on the faculty for their vision of their department's research future. Attached is a diagram of our process. It moves on to a college-based integration across departments seeking to identify new linkages and strengthen already established, multidisciplinary partnerships. It then builds to themes and collaborations across colleges with a final university-wide summary.

For this process to be successful, it is critical that it be based primarily on the faculty expectations of the research future of this institution starting with their individual disciplines and then expands to include collaborations and cross-discipline opportunities.

Discipline Implementation Guidance

The Research Roadmap process starts with the academic departments. I ask that each dean take seriously this responsibility and engage their faculty in discussions about the future of the disciplines of the college. The guidance we give you here is minimal but detailed and therefore you have the flexibility to expand this effort beyond these specifics and use aligned processes that you may already have executed or plan to execute to assist with this process. We strongly recommend that you guide each academic department to establish a writing team/task force to accomplish the creation of a report of answers to the ten questions that can be reviewed and debated by the faculty of the discipline.

A first response from each department is due to the college Dean's office and the VPRI office **no later than May 1st**. The response is limited to 10 pages but can be shorter with efficient wording! We will consider this a living document that can be further edited and updated as the department sees opportunities.

Attached is a file with 10 questions posed to the faculty which are designed to help us get a sense of the future direction for research in the disciplines. The questions are related to a traditional SWOT (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats) analysis but also includes additional broader focus. It is essential that all 10 questions are answered in the report. Please realize that all department reports will be available to all UNT faculty to read online.

We suspect for some of your departments, many of the questions will already have been answered by prior processes they have used to plan their future. Other questions may be more profound and require an extensive conversation among the faculty. It is critical that at the end of the day when your departments have submitted their responses to the 10 questions, that they have a true shared ownership and buy-in to this process and in the statements of their future research directions.

We ask that the department report be submitted to the college leadership team and the VPRI office so that it can be shared with other colleges and other departments. We consider these living documents because after seeing the reports out of other academic departments, faculty might find themselves reconsidering some of the directions, programs of the department and needs for new partnerships. At any time following initial submission new versions of department reports would be welcome and can be resubmitted. We ask if resubmitted, reports at the department and college level have appended to their title a version number to the title and make sure it is forwarded to the VPRI Office. Please use the following naming convention for the department reports:

"College Initials"_"Dept Initials"_V# (# is the version number). Example the file name for Biomedical Engineering's first version of their report would be: "CENG_BMEN_V1". Reports to the VPRI Office should be sent to Katie Herring (Katie.Herring@UNT.edu).

Departmental reports including the various draft versions will be posted on a UNT internal web site which will require UNT authentication to access. All faculty of the institution will have access to view these reports as a part of a shared vision for the institution.

College Overview Guidance

At the college level, we are hoping that the reports from each discipline will give a chance for the college leadership to engage with the faculty of their departments and learn about the futures of those disciplines from the faculty experts. The reports first delivered to the colleges are first versions and will be able to be updated with later versions, truly a living document, as discussions and interactions continue after the first submission.

I recommend to deans that you ask representatives of your departments which include both junior and senior faculty members, as well as the chair, to join in a virtual gathering and ask department representatives to share with others, across the college departments - their research futures and insights that have come from this planning process.

I recommend that the Dean of each college assign a college writing team/task force to receive the reports from each of the disciplines and draw from those combined reports insights and opportunities that become obvious from the possibility of interactions partnerships in new directions across the college. The college overview should not replace the department reports but rather augment the picture to include aspect of future research planning outside those covered in the departments. However, as all faculty conducting research at this institution are part of an academic department, we believe that it is the academic department research that holds the soul and future vision for research of this institution.

A first version of college report (limited to no more than 10 pages) is due to the VPRI office by July 1st. but sooner would be welcome. This report should be considered a living document by the college writing teams/task forces who should feel empowered to continue an evolution of their college-based report relying on the preliminary reports coming in from other departments and other colleges.

The current College report will be posted on a UNT internal web site which will require UNT authentication to access. All faculty of the institution will have access to view these reports is a part of a shared vision for the institution.

Please use the following naming convention for the college overview reports:

“College Initials”_“Overview”_V# (# is the version number).

For example, using the College of Music, the 1st version of their overview document will be titled: “COM_Overview_V1”

For deans without specific academic departments, (**Graduate School, Honors International Programs, Library, New College**) I encourage you and your leadership team to think through your role in building UNT into a future powerhouse of research and submit to us a brief (limited to 5 pages) commentary/guidance document due June 1st. This document should lay out how you can play a critical role in and support of, the expansion of research, especially externally supported research, at UNT. Included should be recommended changes for the institution to consider as it advances the goal of creating/supporting world-class research programs.

University Summary

The Dean's will collectively gather with the VPRI office to talk about and explore college strengths and cross college opportunities and collaborations. Similarly, the associate deans for Research from each college will also engage in a cross-college conversation about future directions. Additionally, other offices will be given an opportunity to weigh in and contribute to the broader research focus that is coming together based on the disciplines and colleges perceptions.

The draft reports coming out of each academic department and each college will be considered UNT confidential and secured on a web server that will require UNT authentication to read. Due to the expected transparency and openness including weaknesses and threats, we will not share those reports in that form.

Departments, colleges, and the university will be encouraged to create public documents that reflect the broader vision and sense of opportunity that is also included in these reports.