

MEMORANDUM

TO: See Distribution Below*

FROM: Ralph Faudree

DATE: March 9, 2004

RE: Areas of Focus/ Areas of Excellence

In several venues over the last several months, I have tried to articulate the importance of developing areas of focus that respond to our urban research mission. Simultaneously, I have tried to articulate the importance of supporting basic research activities that respond to our larger university mission. To move each of these areas forward, I am forming teams with objectives as follows.

Areas of Research Focus

Two years ago, we began the long process of identifying areas of research focus as a means of augmenting teaching experiences, encouraging success in research and creative activities, creating on and off-campus interdisciplinary partnerships, developing faculty synergy, and enhancing the university's reputation. Each team will have responsibility for:

- choosing a name for the area of focus;
- developing the mission and scope for the area of focus;
- determining which faculty or faculty groups should be included in activities within the area of focus internal and external to the University;
- developing an integrated plan for the area of focus;
- developing a Web site that details activities of the faculty;
- choosing colloquia speakers (see the section entitled Colloquia).

Areas of Research Excellence

The University is committed to the support of areas of excellence in basic research. These areas of excellence are clearly fundamental to the University's mission, and are intertwined with high quality teaching, student and faculty recruitment and retention, national reputation, etc. Therefore, I am forming four basic research committees in the areas of creative arts; humanities; social sciences; science, engineering and mathematics and with responsibilities as follows:

determining which faculty or faculty groups should be included in activities within the area of excellence;
choosing colloquia speakers (see the section entitled Colloquia).

Colloquia

This year, I would like to institute faculty colloquia centered on the areas of research focus and research excellence. The morning session prior to Faculty Convocation will be our first opportunity to allow the faculty to discuss their projects. The week before the Fall term will be another such opportunity.

Our current plan is to have four or five speakers talk about their projects in twenty to thirty minute segments on April 22, the day Faculty Convocation is scheduled. Then, beginning a week prior to the beginning of the Fall semester, we would begin a series of seminars (hopefully attended by faculty and students alike) that highlight the work of the faculty.

I will greatly appreciate your feedback on these, and any other ideas you may have, about developing our research program.

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