

A&S Strategic Planning for Research - Sciences Focus Group Meeting (1/16/2024)

Facilitated by: Sally Pusede, Jack Van Horn, and David Parichy (via Zoom)

Present: 14 faculty participants representing various departments in the division

- I. Introduction of facilitators and faculty participants
- II. Comments on focus of today's session from Jack Van Horn (steering committee co-chair) – gathering feedback to inform a Strategic Plan for Research in A&S. The Dean's goals for this process include raising A&S' research profile in a collaborative and transparent way. We can build from previous strategic planning efforts (most recently in 2019) to envision what an ideal research environment in A&S might look like, and steps needed to realize this vision.
 - a. Intention is for this process to be more than a faculty hiring plan.
 - b. Any suggestions for how to improve research environments are welcome.
- III. Feedback from faculty
 - a. Various participants mentioned a need for more staff that can assist with research administration. This would benefit all parts of the research lifecycle from grant writing, to support with drafting figures and graphics (ideally from someone with domain-specific knowledge), to communicating the impact of research to colleagues, donors, and the public, etc. Some avoid applying for major grants because of experiences lacking support in this complex and time-intensive process.
 - b. Faculty participants also advocated for improvements in collaborative research spaces and the technology available to support faculty engaging in research.
 - c. Faculty expressed interest in data storage solutions that are more affordable and effective than Rivanna. Some faculty members in the sciences resort to storing their data with colleagues at other universities – thus giving up ownership
 - d. If A&S had core facility personnel with expert knowledge of research instruments and technology it would improve A&S' research profile among UVA schools and externally (in the community and among peer institutions)
 - e. Desire for change in funding model for core facilities (i.e., considering these facilities to be an investment rather than requiring faculty users to break even)
 - f. Clarification of research spaces and resources that are already available is needed
 - g. Interest expressed in a speaker series featuring science faculty, and/or other venue so faculty can learn about colleagues' research to facilitate collaboration
 - h. More resources needed for graduate student recruitment and postdocs – top-off funds, fellowships, and higher wages. UVA faculty are unable to recruit talented graduate students who have better offers from peer and aspirant institutions
 - i. Graduate students, postdocs, and/or “teaching bank” or “bundling” of teaching requirements into one semester could protect faculty time for research
 - j. Some interest expressed in thematic areas of computing/AI, biotechnology and health, and the interaction between humans and the environment
 - k. Vision of faculty collaborating with videographer, graphic designer, and/or social media specialists to capture the essence and impact of major research projects in new and accessible ways
- IV. Closing – request to take survey coming out next month and town halls in late February