



Board of Trustees
Academic Affairs Committee
September 22, 2020
1:15pm
[Via Zoom](#)

Information Item

AAC – 5 Update on Research and Engagement

Background Information

The Office of Research and Engagement provides support and strategic direction to faculty, staff and students for research and creative endeavors resulting in scholarship, innovation, community and economic engagement leading to knowledge, student, and regional transformation.

External Funding

FY20 awards *exceeded last year’s record total and exceeded our target with award dollars increasing by \$2,786,747 or 7.0%*. Federal awards still make up the majority of the awards (56.2%), with state contracts at 18.4%, subawards from other educational/research institutions at 13.1%, nonprofits at 6.1%, foundations at 2.3%, and business and industry at 1.6%. This award total surpasses the last nine fiscal year figures and contributes to a six-year stretch of impressive growth in research funding. *From FY 2015 to FY 2020, funding increased by 40%*.

	7-1-19 to 6-30-20		7-1-18 to 6-30-19	
SUBMISSIONS	Number	Amount	Number	Amount
	515	\$152,457,983	479	\$172,710,862
AWARDS	Number	Amount	Number	Amount
	293	\$42,449,246	285	\$39,662,499

The university’s largest new awards in FY 2020 include:

- [\\$15.6M and \\$6.1M projects](#) funded by the U.S. Department of Education to improve educational opportunities and academic outcomes for disadvantaged and low-income

students across NC, SC, and Georgia and to partner with Piedmont school districts on teacher training;

- A [\\$2.2M project](#) funded by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services to train clinical psychologists experiencing economic disadvantage to serve primary care settings and medically underserved communities; and
- Four projects, each over \$1M and three funded by the National Institutes of Health, to investigate the [mechanics of mutation](#), the [adaptive evolution of bacterial genomes](#), and the [development of type one diabetes](#).

Responding to COVID-19

Despite the disruption this spring due to COVID-19, we have found ways to support faculty, staff, and students to continue existing research as well as respond directly to the challenges of the pandemic. (See <https://research.uncg.edu/spotlight/researchers-adapt-in-face-of-pandemic/> for a review)

We launched a new website, *Keep Researching* (<https://keepresearching.uncg.edu/>), and established a process in order to review research and scholarship plans with the goal of continuing/launching research/scholarship that could be done safely within the current COVID-19 local, state and UNC system guidelines. To date we have reviewed plans from approximately 150 different research faculty/student teams who are safely conducting all forms of research and scholarship.

With CARES Act monies, the North Carolina General Assembly allocated funds to the NC Policy Collaboratory to fund investigations related to COVID-19. One of these grants was awarded to ***Dr. Seth Armah and Dr. Maryanne Perrin (Nutrition)*** for their project entitled "Nutrition and COVID-19 in North Carolina." This study focuses on the largely unknown impact of nutrition on health outcomes in individuals infected with the COVID-19 virus. They will examine the potential contribution of selenium and zinc to the severity of COVID-19 infection. Another of these grants was awarded to ***Dr. Tetyana Ignatova (Nanoscience, Joint School of Nanoscience and Nanoengineering)*** who, with additional funding from Pennsylvania State University, is developing a handheld device for home use that can detect whether or not a person has been infected ("RAPID: Collaborative Research: One-Step Express Test for Presymptomatic Detection to Prevent COVID-19 Spread").

Finally, the ***Center for Housing and Community Studies and the Center for New North Carolinians*** collaborated to secure a grant from the NC Healthcare Association that leverages their deep community partnerships to expand their response to COVID-19-impacted communities by addressing gaps in health and social resources.

Enhancing Student Success

UNCG continues to leverage external funding to support evidence-based approaches to enhancing student success. These include:

- The U.S. Department of Education awarded a \$1.4 million TRiO Student Support Services Program grant, making the 50th anniversary of this program at UNCG.
- The [Division of Student Success](#), was also awarded a new \$1.6 million SSS STEM Health grant. Both grants support students from low-income, first-generation, or under-represented minority backgrounds, as well as students with disabilities. Students in these programs receive supplemental academic support, including tutoring, advising, and skills development.
- The Division of Student Success also received the U.S. Department of Education's [Gaining Early Awareness and Readiness for Undergraduate Programs \(GEAR UP\)](#) grant to work closely with first-year students who graduated from target North Carolina high schools, coaching them on the transition from high school to college, and helping them navigate their first year.
- A \$1 million Scholarships in Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (S-STEM) grant from the National Science Foundation will provide continuing funding for the [Science Technology, and Math Preparations Scholarships \(STAMPS\)](#) led by an interdisciplinary group of faculty.
- The National Science Foundation has also awarded ***Dr. Maia Popova (Chemistry and Biochemistry)*** a \$345,000 grant to study and improve chemistry instruction at the undergraduate level, especially in the area of learning and communicating with graphic representations.



Jim Coleman, Provost and Executive
Vice Chancellor