

Research funds steadily rise

By Andrew LaMar
Of the Emerald

The University's funding for research, which doubled in the past five years and grew by \$4.1 million alone during the last year, now totals \$18.1 million and supports 175 projects, according to a University official.

Dick Hersh, vice president for research, says the University receives additional money for research because more of the faculty's proposals for grants are being accepted. And Hersh believes that "the faculty has earned it."

Until recently, the University was accustomed to getting one of every three proposals accepted, he says, but now the University gets about half of the research grants it requests.

"The faculty is becoming increasingly capable of competing (for research funds) against the best faculty in the U.S.," Hersh says.

About 40 percent of all research funding goes to the sciences and teacher training. But Hersh says that much of the new research money is funding research in the social sciences and the humanities, particularly in exploring better teaching methods.

Nine out of 10 grants for research come from federal sources, Hersh says. Although grants from private sources — such as the Northwest Area and Burlington Northern foundations — have recently increased, they account for less than five percent of the research money.

In addition, Hersh says faculty members are also realizing that research funds are increasingly important to the University's welfare.

He insists, however, that teaching has not taken a back seat to research. In fact, although teaching loads are the same as in the past, he says the faculty has increased its teaching skills as well as its research funding.

"If anything, we've increased our emphasis on teaching the past few years," Hersh says, citing examples such as freshmen seminars and the number of faculty voluntarily teaching lower division courses.

Unlike most states, Oregon does not provide specific funds for research at its state schools, Hersh says.

"All of the studies done about this university's funding suggests we're somewhere between 15 and 25 percent underfunded," he says.

The results of such poor funding are inadequate equipment, a lack of secretarial help and poor facilities, Hersh says.

"Times have been tough here, and it makes more people conscious of the sources of funding," Hersh says. He adds that the University is now more sophisticated in terms of seeking funding and the faculty is more experienced in writing proposals.

According to Hersh, there are three reasons for the increased success of proposals, one being that the younger faculty members are maturing and writing better funding proposals and another reason being that more faculty members are writing such proposals. Lastly, federal agencies have been more generous with research funding during the past year and a half, he says.

The fact that the University stays in close contact with federal officials in Washington, D.C. through in-person visits or phone calls also helps, he says.

The University is currently involved in an intense effort to seek research funding by publishing information about research programs in faculty and alumni newsletters, Hersh says.

Hersh predicts a rise in research funding for the University in the next three years, although it probably won't be as drastic a rise as was the case in the past year, he says.

"If you're working at 95 percent efficiency, it's hard to get to 96 percent efficiency," he says.

The University still needs to broaden its research, but it's probably reaching a saturation point, Hersh says.

"We're very, very productive, and I think we are about as productive as we can be," he says. "Some would say we are achieving far beyond our present level of state support."

Firms answer call for funds

By Michael Fisher
Of the Emerald

For the second straight year, local businesses have answered the University's call for financial assistance by increasing their gifts and pledges to the annual fund.

The gifts and pledges of 63 Eugene and Springfield firms in 1984 amounted to \$48,225 — more than twice that of last year's total, says Thomas Widmer, assistant vice president of Centennial Bank and chair of the University Foundation's area business campaign.

This dramatic increase in local response can be partly attributed to the 46 volunteers who worked on this year's campaign by calling many area businesses asking for donations, Widmer says.

The average contribution by each firm was \$765, which Widmer attributes to the fact that "so many businesses are directly benefited by the presence of the University in this area."

Joseph Farmer, director of the University Foundation, says the volunteers this year were given better training and information about the University's history and programs.

"I think the University is beginning to

market itself better," Farmer says. "We're becoming more successful at showing the local community and outside areas the ways that we are excelling."

About half the contributions this year were unrestricted in use, allowing the University to use them at its discretion. The rest were earmarked by the donors for use in specific areas, such as athletics and the business school.

"The main thrust of the annual fund is to attract unrestricted funds and donors who will contribute from year to year," Farmer says.

The Foundation has been responsible for the major portion of donors to the University, Farmer adds.

Brian Sullivan of Group W Cable, one of the businesses contributing this year, attributes the increase in gifts and pledges to "a heightening awareness within the business community of the contributions of the University to this area."

The business also has several alumni who advocate support of the college, Sullivan says.

Farmer says he hopes the business campaign "allows (alumni and businesses) to stay in touch with the University. I think we'll see that marriage between the two continue to grow."

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