**Facilitating Research – Integration and Interdisciplinary Collaboration**

**Interdisciplinary Collaboration**

Research is not a solo process. Many areas of research require input from multiple disciplines and perspectives, where the integration of ideas gives rise to new knowledge, new solutions, and new practices. Examples of supports for interdisciplinary collaboration at Auburn include:

* **The Intramural Grants Program (IGP) – 2018 Interdisciplinary Team Research Grant**: Support for research that will significantly advance multiple research fields and help increase the competitiveness for funding in areas requiring multidisciplinary collaboration. The research project must be conducted by at least two investigators from different disciplines (at least two different departments) that will generate pilot data, be used for joint publications, and support the capacity of the interdisciplinary team to secure subsequent external funding.
* **Interdisciplinary Research Clusters:** In Fall 2014, we launched Auburn University's first Strategic Hiring Initiative, with most of the new faculty hired within this initiative in fall 2015 and fall 2016. This initiative is designed to align Auburn's research with funding trends, strengthen the faculty, and enhance the University's research performance. We are moving forward with 5 interdisciplinary clusters that, collectively, engage faculty across all of Auburn’s schools and colleges: (1) [Health Disparities](http://auburn.edu/academic/provost/healthdisparities.php), (2) [Pharmaceutical Engineering](http://auburn.edu/academic/provost/pharm_eng.php), (3) [Climate, Human and Earth Systems Sciences, (4)](http://auburn.edu/academic/provost/CHESS.php) [Omics and Informatics](http://auburn.edu/academic/provost/omics_informatics.php), (5) [Scalable Energy Conversion Science & Technology.](http://auburn.edu/academic/provost/ISEC-S&T.php)
* **The Presidential Awards for Interdisciplinary Research (PAIR)** **program:** Supports ideas that foster creativity, facilitate collaboration, and assist Auburn University in reaching new levels of distinction.  PAIR is intended for investigators who seek to enhance their external research sponsorship through multiple, interdisciplinary collaborations. The 2018 teams receiving PAIR funding:

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| 1 | Additive Manufacturing of Implants and Orthotics |
| 2 | Home Affordability and Prosperity in Rural America |
| 3 | Working toward establishment of a Center of Neuroscience |
| 4 | Mobile Mitochondria Laboratory |
| 5 | Interdisciplinary Rural African-American Aging Research |
| 6 | Alabama Carbon Dioxide Utilization and Storage Center. |
| 7 | Extra-virgin Olive Oil and Alzheimer’s Disease |
| 8 | Drugs from Dirt: Development and Characterization of Novel Antimicrobial Compounds. |
| 9 | Climate Information Services for Decision Making |
| 10 | Emerging Contaminants Research Team |
| 11 | AU-NASH Research team, working on treatment of liver disease |

* **AAES-AIR (new AAES Award for Interdisciplinary Research):** The purpose of AAES-AIR is to foster interdisciplinary research collaborations between AAES faculty members (teams can include nonAAES collaborators). Interdisciplinary research teams are expected to define an innovative interdisciplinary research project that addresses an important issue related to the mission of AAES. The interdisciplinary research is expected to lead to the development of competitive proposals for extramural funding.
* **This is Research Faculty Symposium**: Each fall this 1-day event permits faculty to learn about each other’s work through Auburn Talks, an interactive poster session, research roundtables, and information on research supports. The next faculty symposium is October 23 at the Student Center. Also this year we have the Creative Scholarship Showcase at the Jule Collins smith Museum (9/28-10/14).
* **Centers and Institutes:** Auburn has a range of centers and institutes that support interdisciplinary collaboration. Most can be found at <https://cws.auburn.edu/OVPR/pm/centersinstitutes>
* **The Office of Proposal Services and Faculty Support**: Provides Collaboration Corner (205 Foy), assistance with proposal development and review, trainings, AU Shuttle program, PIVOT (finding funding; finding collaborators), and many other supports.

***Discussion Questions***

1. What are you doing within your colleges/schools to support and reward interdisciplinary collaborative research?
2. Are there good models you are aware of that foster development of interdisciplinary teams?
3. What are the benefits and the challenges you have experienced in facilitating interdisciplinary team activities?
4. What supports/incentives are still needed that would help faculty form and manage interdisciplinary collaborations?

**Integration**

Integration of roles promotes a high level of engagement and capacity to expend and receive energy needed to be effective across roles. The amount and kind of integration will vary across faculty according to their interests, needs, and context. Examples of supports for integration at Auburn:

* Undergraduate Research Fellowship program – engages faculty mentors in ways that link their research and teaching.
* *Biggio Center* (Preparing Future Faculty program; New Faculty Scholars program)
* The Office of the Vice President for University Outreach: *Competitive Outreach Scholarship Grants* and other supports for publicly engaged scholarship.
* The *This is Research* Faculty Symposium has hosted sessions addressing the integration of teaching and research, and served as a forum for faculty to share experiences with each other.

***Discussion Questions***

1. In your colleges/schools, do you offer specific opportunities that support faculty members’ efforts to integrate their research, teaching and/or outreach roles?
2. Are there ways within and across units that we could increase opportunities for faculty to dialogue about role integration, as well as receive mentoring in role integration?
3. What other supports/incentives are needed that would help faculty integrate roles?

Provost’s 2018 Fall Academic Leadership Retreat- presentation by Jennifer Kerpelman, Interim Vice President for Research