



Impact Statement

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Project Title:

The Research Excellence Initiative: College of Liberal Arts and Sciences, University of Kansas

Issue:

Along with my team, I have developed the Research Excellence Initiative (REI) at the University of Kansas in the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences that represents a unique way to support students and faculty as they conduct cutting-edge research across the sciences, arts and humanities. The REI is funded through private philanthropy and provides critical resources to allow students to work side-by-side with our best faculty. We have found that research experiences allow students to acquire strong leadership skills and successful strategies for project management that enable them to be career-ready upon graduation. We also found that students often cite a research experience as having had a major impact on their career trajectories and on their lives, and we find that faculty continue to mentor students long after they graduate.

What has been done:

My team and I have developed an internal foundation within the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences in order to administer the REI.

This process included:

1. Development of an internal document that outlines the guidelines for applying to the REI that is sent to all faculty and students in the College
2. Formation of review panels to select proposals to be funded that consisted of faculty from the sciences, arts, and humanities
3. Collaborations with our budget office to fund research proposals in conjunction with our Endowment Office
4. Production of a first-year report that outlines the impacts of this program, including external grants resulting from these funds, as well as student and faculty research awards
5. Development of a fund-raising strategy to sustain this critical research initiative within the College

Impacts/New Partnerships:

We have built both internal and external partnerships through the REI. For example, we have enabled the College office to build stronger networks across campus that include working more closely with the staff in KU Endowment to help fundraise for this initiative. We have also developed partnerships with KU alumni and current faculty who have contributed named funds to our initiative. Furthermore, we work across other units on campus to provide funding for collaborative projects that include faculty from outside of the College.

Outcome of Project (societal impact/ measure of increased quality of life)

In the 2017-2018 academic year, we awarded \$260,000 in research funds that allowed students to work directly with faculty on research projects. This included awards to directly support research projects, faculty release time from teaching to increase time to support student participation in research, and travel awards to present research at conferences. This has enhanced student training across the sciences, arts, and humanities, and has allowed students to be better prepared for future jobs. Early wins have included the funding of external grants that have already exceeded the initial investment, student research awards at meetings, and grant support for doctoral training. Furthermore, we have solicited over \$1.5 million for future support of this initiative through targeted fundraising efforts.

How has your project been aided by your FSLI experience?

I will begin by stating that FSLI was critical for my advancement to a leadership position. It has made me a better leader, listener, and person. It has been a life-changing experience and one that I credit with helping me to decide to pursue a long-term career in university administration. FSLI has also provided me with the skillsets that enabled me to successfully transition to my associate dean position. It allowed me to lead a large and complicated initiative that involved fundraising, grant management, budget and personnel management, research expertise, and inter-disciplinary perspectives. Most of all, it gave me the toolkit to maximize the skills of my team while creating an environment that fostered creativity, transparency, and support. As a result, we created a fully functioning foundation to support the Research Excellence Initiative in one year's time that has already earned returns that are far greater than the initial investment. I am fortunate to have had the training through FSLI to help me develop an initiative that will enable the research and training of many future students and faculty at the University of Kansas.

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