



**President's Advisory Committee on Institutional Resource Modeling**  
**Research Working Group**

**Drivers:**

1. Greater multi/cross-disciplinary and cross-institutional approach to developing research, scholarly and creative activities
2. A more diversified and actively pursued portfolio of external funding sources
3. Available pre- and post-grant support
4. An enhanced grant-seeking culture

**Assumptions:**

1. Incentives, including seed money, are in place for grant seekers working across disciplines
  - Relates to Driver 1
2. Structures are in place for working across disciplines, including sharing of ideas
  - Relates to Driver 1
3. Staff time is available for:
  - a. Education of potential grant seekers in identifying sources and the nature of the process
  - b. Support for potential grant seekers in identifying sources
  - Relates to Drivers 2 and 3
4. Staff time is available for post-award support for grant recipients
  - Relates to Driver 3
5. Staff time is available for assistance with developing proposals
  - Relates to Driver 3
6. Faculty release time is available for all stages of the grant process
  - Relates to Driver 3
7. Internal support (non-personnel), including travel support, is available during the grant seeking process
  - Relates to Driver 3
8. Relevant faculty documents (unit evaluation plans, letters of offer, start-up packages, etc.) and touch points (new faculty orientation, onboarding, mentoring, etc.) reflect the importance of grant seeking at Western to support, where possible and appropriate, research, scholarly and creative activity
  - Relates to Driver 4
9. The level of teaching workload, where possible and appropriate, reflects the importance of grant seeking
  - Relates to Driver 4
10. Granting agencies will maintain behavior and/or Western will be able to respond to changes in granting agency behavior
  - Externality
11. A positive relationship exists between the amount of internal support and dollars of grants received
  - For modeling purposes
12. A positive relationship exists between the number of proposals submitted and the number of grants received
  - For modeling purposes

## **Research Working Group**

### ***Setting the Context for Our Work***

This working group's role is to identify the drivers of increased internal support and grant revenue, two objectives listed in Western's strategic plan, and to provide information regarding the costs involved with these drivers, so the University can understand the resources needed to meet these goals.

The working group understands the difference between grant activity and its accompanying revenue and productivity more generally in the areas of research, scholarship, and creative activity. Although an objective in Western's strategic plan relates to general productivity, considering drivers of such productivity was not the working group's charge. Such productivity is directly related to college- and department-level evaluation plans for faculty, which define the proper types and levels of research, scholarship, and creative activity expected from Western's faculty. These documents are very discipline-specific and are driven by the faculty's understanding of norms in their disciplines and the amount of time faculty at Western are expected to devote to research, scholarship, and creative activity.

Also, it's important to note that grant activity is not the same as the involvement of students in research, scholarship, and creative activity as a method of increasing academic excellence, one of the three themes in the strategic plan. Such student involvement is a highlight of a Western education in certain disciplines and is an important part of the engagement of students in their own education that Western seeks. It is likely that increased grant support will lead to more involvement of students in research, scholarship, and creative activity, at both the undergraduate and graduate level. Again, however, the working group was not charged with discovering the drivers of student engagement.

An increase in grant activity does not necessarily imply an increase in research productivity. A relatively small percentage of Western faculty write proposals, and those proposals have been submitted to a small number of granting agencies (public and private). It is likely that many current researchers and producers of important scholarship and creative activity are unaware of potential sources of funds to support that work. These sources can be public funders of traditional research grants, such as the National Science Foundation, the National Institutes of Health, the National Endowment for the Arts, and the National Endowment for the Humanities, just to name a few of the well-known federal funding agencies. Sources also include corporations and private foundations that provide funding for philanthropic grants through the Western Foundation.

To take advantage of such opportunities, faculty need support of various types—time, seed money, and staff support for identifying funding sources, navigating the proposal process, and fulfilling the grant terms when they are successful, to name a few of the obvious types. The working group has identified these major sources and the relationship between such support and increased grant revenue. Although the working group, in addition to the other working groups formed by the President's Advisory Committee on Institutional Resource Modeling, is not working in a vacuum, its charge—and indeed the committee's charge—is not to make resource allocation decisions, but rather to support such decisions by showing the investments needed to reach the goals listed in the strategic plan. Resource allocation decisions will be made through the University's regular budget process.

Name Driver	<i>Cross Boundary Investigations</i>   Greater multi/cross-disciplinary and cross-institutional approach to developing research, scholarly and creative activities.	
Expected Impact	Currently many granting agencies are rewarding such approaches with relatively large grants. Increasing this mindset at the University will allow for greater participation in grant seeking and under current conditions more funds for the same amount of activity, both of which should increase grant revenue.	
Confidence Level	<b>High</b>	Current agency behavior is clear. Logically working across disciplines should result in faculty from disciplines that have not been active in grant seeking participating to a greater extent than in the past.
<b>KEY ASSUMPTIONS</b>		
	<p><b>Assumption A</b></p> <p><i>Incentives, including seed money, are in place for grant seekers working across disciplines.</i></p>	<p><b>Assumption B</b></p> <p><i>Structures are in place for working across disciplines, including sharing of ideas.</i></p>
Why is this assumption important?	<i>Without incentives there may not be sufficient motivation to move faculty more toward these approaches and away from the traditional disciplinary focus.</i>	<i>Structures for interaction across disciplines, such as AMSEC, Institute for Energy Studies, brown bag and charrette type events, and within the hiring process, create opportunities to identify potential partners for proposals and to support such proposals.</i>
What challenges affect whether this assumption is true?	<i>Besides resources, appropriate incentives need to be identified. Some incentives may lie in control of decentralized and siloed units such as departments and programs.</i>	<i>Faculty are used to working within their disciplines, and many publication outlets are discipline-specific. Faculty will need to learn something about other disciplines.</i>
Complicating Factors (if any)	If agencies reward different approaches, resources put into incentives and structures will be less effective in meeting the goal.	

Name Driver	<i>Sources / A more diversified and actively pursued portfolio of external funding sources.</i>	
Expected Impact	<i>If more sources of funds, both government and philanthropic, are known, understood, and utilized, because of the likely relationship between the number of proposals and the number of grants received, more grants and thus more grant revenue should be earned.</i>	
Confidence Level	<b>High</b>	<i>Well-crafted proposals may have similar success rates no matter the source; even if not, an increased number of applications (and thus more possibilities for success) should result.</i>
<b>KEY ASSUMPTIONS</b>		
	<p><b>Assumption A</b> <i>Staff time is available for education of potential grant seekers in identifying sources and the nature of the process.</i></p>	<p><b>Assumption B</b> <i>Staff time is available for support for potential grant seekers in identifying sources.</i></p>
<i>Why is this assumption important?</i>	<i>Without knowledgeable staff providing education, it will be more difficult for grant seekers to become aware of the variety of external funding sources.</i>	<i>Without support, grant seekers will take more time to identify sources because the specialized knowledge of staff is difficult to duplicate.</i>
<i>What challenges affect whether this assumption is true?</i>	<i>The availability of people with specialized knowledge of all sources of grants is uncertain.</i>	<i>The availability of people with specialized knowledge of all sources of grants is uncertain.</i>
Complicating Factors (if any)	Private foundations and organizations, and government agencies, can alter emphases within their programs, meaning staff must keep up to date. Private and public organizations operate differently, so knowledge in one area may not be transferable.	

Name Driver	<i>Support / Available pre- and post-grant support</i>	
Expected Impact	<i>If more support is available during the proposal process, more faculty, staff, and students are likely to submit proposals, and those proposals will be of higher quality, leading to more success. Post-award support is important in fulfilling the grant’s objectives and will reinforce Western’s reputation among granting agencies.</i>	
Confidence Level	<b>High</b>	<i>Support is a vital factor and has been shown to improve all outcomes.</i>
<b>KEY ASSUMPTIONS</b>		
	<p><b>Assumption A</b>  <i>Staff time is available for:</i>  <i>a. Education of potential grant seekers in identifying sources and the nature of the process.</i>  <i>b. Support for potential grant seekers in identifying sources.</i></p>	<p><b>Assumption B</b>  <i>Staff time is available for post-award support for grant recipients.</i></p>
Why is this assumption important?	<i>Without knowledgeable staff providing education and support, it will be more difficult for grant seekers to become aware of the variety of grant-providing sources and identify appropriate sources for their activity.</i>	<i>Increased grant activity, leading to increases in grants received, will require sufficient staff time to work on post-award accounting and compliance.</i>
What challenges affect whether this assumption is true?	<i>The availability of people with specialized knowledge of all sources of grants is uncertain.</i>	<i>Western needs to identify skills that are necessary for support of varying types of grants and evaluate the institutional support structure.</i>

KEY ASSUMPTIONS		
	<p><b>Assumption C</b>  <i>Staff time is available for assistance with developing proposals.</i></p>	<p><b>Assumption D</b>  <i>Faculty release time is available for all stages of the grant process.</i></p>
<p><i>Why is this assumption important?</i></p>	<p><i>Working in the area of grants is an area of specialized expertise that takes time to develop. Support for new proposal writers is crucial in gaining success relatively quickly for such writers.</i></p>	<p><i>Some proposals can be written and grants fulfilled solely during summer, but many deadlines and due dates will be during the academic year. Without sufficient time for working on proposals and grant activities, faculty will not be able to increase their activity in this area.</i></p>
<p><i>What challenges affect whether this assumption is true?</i></p>	<p><i>Working in the area of grants is a specialization that may be hard to find in the general workforce.</i></p>	<p><i>This type of more ad hoc release time needs to be planned ahead without scheduling problems, yet often the needed time is not known in sufficient time to avoid problems.</i></p>
	<p><b>Assumption E</b>  <i>Internal support (non-personnel), including travel support, is available during the grant seeking process.</i></p>	
<p><i>Why is this assumption important?</i></p>	<p><i>Often in planning a proposal faculty must travel to workshops or home institutions of collaborators. Even without travel, some support such as equipment or funds for trial surveys is needed to enhance the application.</i></p>	
<p><i>What challenges affect whether this assumption is true?</i></p>	<p><i>Some staff time would be necessary to administer these funds.</i></p>	
<p>Complicating Factors (if any)</p>	<p>It's important to note that staff and students also may apply for grants and will need this type of support. Also worth noting is that staff outside of Research and Sponsored Programs, the WWU Foundation, and Business Services may be able to provide support and should be included in communications regarding grants.</p>	

Name Driver	<i>Culture / An enhanced grant-seeking culture</i>	
Expected Impact	<i>If the culture at Western includes more interest in seeking external grants, more faculty, staff, and students will be likely to engage in such activity, leading to more grants received and increased revenue and positively affecting teaching and learning</i>	
Confidence Level	<i>High</i>	<i>Generally there is a strong relationship between the extent to which a culture emphasizes grant seeking, the number of grant proposals made, and the number of grants received. CSE has shown this to be true at Western.</i>
KEY ASSUMPTIONS		
	<b>Assumption A</b> <i>Relevant faculty documents (unit evaluation plans, letters of offer, start-up packages, etc.) and touch points (new faculty orientation, onboarding, mentoring, etc.) reflect the importance of grant seeking at Western to support, where possible and appropriate, research, scholarly and creative activity.</i>	<b>Assumption B</b> <i>The level of teaching workload, where possible and appropriate, reflects the importance of grant seeking.</i>
<i>Why is this assumption important?</i>	<i>Incentives in faculty evaluation and support from more experienced faculty are required to form and maintain a culture that is supportive of grant seeking.</i>	<i>Faculty need time to both write grant proposals and do the proposed work once a grant is made.</i>
<i>What challenges affect whether this assumption is true?</i>	<i>Different levels of organizational control of such documents and touch points, leading to the possibility of different levels of implementation across departments. Proposals may also be seen as pressure from administration.</i>	<i>Systemic changes in workload would need to be considered. Workload is a mandatory subject of collective bargaining.</i>
<b>Complicating Factors</b> (if any)	<i>Implications for the number of tenure-track faculty in the classroom need to be considered. Support for students to participate in grant activity, and specifically underrepresented students, should be considered as important as grant activity increases.</i>	