

**STRATEGIC GRANT SEEKING
MARCH 2, 2004
MINUTES**

The first meeting of the Strategic Grant Seeking Task Force was called to order by Dr. Marty Giddings, Chairperson. In attendance were: Dr. Stephen Lahr, Dr. Mark Fenster, Ms. Jean Arambula, Dr. Tayloe Harding, Dr. Tom Manning, Ms. Deborah Davis, Dr. David Hedgepeth, Dr. Mary Watson, and Dr. Marsha Krotseng.

The meeting began with a discussion of members' experiences with VSU grants and contracts. Subsequently, Dr. Krotseng charged the committee to develop a set of recommendations by April 26, 2004. Dr. Giddings handed out copies of the charge, task force membership, and a summary of components of the VSU Strategic Plan that relate to Grants and Contracts (G/C). Dr. Watson presented a report of the current level of grant activity at VSU as well as the number of faculty members and academic units that were involved in grant writing during the same period of time. Over the past five years, the total grant funding level at VSU has remained at approximately \$6 million.

The floor was opened for questions, suggestions, and comments related to how to proceed as a Task Force. Suggestions were made and a number of concerns were voiced about the grant writing process itself as well as related procedures. Among problems that were presented were difficulties in dealing with the management component of grant writing and the lack of administrative support for the grant writing process. It is apparent that there is variation in the level of grant writing across academic units. Dr. Krotseng asked if Dr. Watson would provide the number of students involved in campus grants and contracts.

Needs of the Office of Grants and Contracts were also noted. Dr. Giddings raised the issue of the need for increased staff and funding for the office. Additionally, grant-related travel funds are needed, particularly in terms of federal grants. A number of task force members indicated that a faculty member's ability to write grants should be considered in hiring decisions. Also noted was the importance of grant writing in relation to faculty retention. The grant writing issue likewise is related to Promotion/Tenure decisions in terms of a faculty member's accountability to the university. Task Force members would like to see a larger priority placed on obtaining grants throughout the university. With more emphasis and priority on obtaining grants, it was felt that the university could be proactive in obtaining larger monetary grants.

The College of Education has posted RFP's on their website, and a discussion was held about this type of initiative. Dr. Watson presented an article on "Benchmarking" and indicated that the article is applicable to VSU and to the work of the Task Force. She will send the article to all Task Force Members. Dr. Giddings raised the issue of where we go from here. Since multiple concerns and issues were presented, it was felt that the Task Force would meet again in two weeks to develop some specific recommendations.

Several suggestions were presented such as a Shopping List approach to developing priority areas for grant writing and developing a system of rewards for grant writers. The importance of changing the overall VSU culture was underscored several times, as was the need to differentiate short-term and longer-term goals. Likewise, the issue of where grant writing fits into the current teaching mission of VSU also was raised.

Members will be contacted regarding a possible time for a meeting to be held within the next weeks. Members are asked to consider “next steps” for the Task Force, and are asked to visit the Grants & Contracts web-site in terms of resources that currently are available.

Brenda Kelley, Department Secretary, Division of Social Work
Marty Giddings, Director of Social Work
March 5, 2004