April 2017

Spring brings change, opportunities and, soon, a summer break

April is always an exciting time on a university campus. Students are gearing up for finals and the transition into the next phase of their studies or their careers. Faculty and staff are finalizing plans to maximize the productivity and restorative value of the up-coming summer…all the while preparing exams, grading term papers, continuing research projects, and attending countless events all over campus. The energy and vibrancy of the OSU community are palpable as I move about the Stillwater and Tulsa campuses. Even with
all of this eager anticipation, we are all aware that these are uncertain times when it comes to state and federal funding of our research enterprise. So, I hope you are encouraged and reassured by the message President Hargis sent to the OSU community (see below). We are very fortunate to be part of a great university where the entire leadership—starting with the President—understands and supports the research mission.

As always, thanks for all you do to make OSU the great research university that it is…and the one that it will become!

Go Pokes!

Kenneth W. Sewell, Ph.D., Vice President for Research

President Hargis pens letter in support of OSU's research mission

As you probably know, the President has released his federal budget priorities. While it is far from a finished budget, it proposes drastic cuts to many areas of research vital to Oklahoma State University’s mission. Such cuts would severely impact OSU’s research in science and innovation.

Federal funding is roughly half of our extramural research support, accordingly, we are taking the White House proposals seriously. If this budget were enacted, we estimate that OSU could experience a 25 percent drop in overall federal funding. We also understand that there is discussion of sharply reducing compensation for indirect costs, which would have serious budget implications for OSU.

Action on the federal budget now moves to Congress. There, we hope that a budget framework will be adopted that maintains existing support for science and innovation. OSU Vice President for Research Kenneth Sewell is monitoring developments and is in close contact with our representatives in Washington, D.C. We are confident that the Oklahoma delegation members see the value in scientific research and in Oklahoma’s research universities, and are optimistic that they will legislate accordingly.

As the Congressional budget process unfolds, I have asked Provost Gary Sandefur and Senior Vice President for Administration and Finance Joe Weaver to work closely with Kenneth as he monitors the situation, and to determine how OSU can best respond. They will keep the campus community informed of any OSU-specific impacts and our response.

I wholeheartedly agree with MIT President Rafael Reif, who stated in a recent letter to his faculty, “America’s strength in science and engineering is central to America’s strength, period. It’s how we keep the nation safe, drive innovation, build infrastructure, power and connect our modern society, restore the environment, create new industries, feed our people, heal the sick – and understand the universe.”

OSU’s ability to contribute to our nation’s strength by fulfilling our land-grant mission depends upon fully integrating research with instruction and outreach. Support of science and innovation is imperative.

Thanks for your contributions to OSU’s scholarly work. I encourage each member of the OSU
Amy Dronberger joins VPR office

The Office of the Vice President for Research welcomes Dr. Amy Dronberger as its new office manager. Dronberger previously worked at the OSU Research Foundation (OSURF) for almost seven and a half years, first joining the staff at the OSU Center for Innovation and Economic Development (now OSURF) as a program manager in 2010. She was the manager of sponsored programs until 2014 when she became innovation manager/faculty liaison for Cowboy Technologies.

Dronberger earned a Bachelor of Science in Animal Science from Kansas State University in 2004. She completed a Master of Science in Animal Science at OSU in 2006 and a Doctor of Philosophy in Agricultural Education in 2013, focusing on rural resilience for communities and agricultural businesses after natural disaster. Read More

OSU Research Matters
Read why . . .

The 2017 issue of OSU Research Matters magazine highlights the work of Dr. Kristen Baum, who studies monarch butterflies and other pollinators, which are at risk from loss of habitat. Her work focuses on reversing that trend. As part of her research lab, she also welcomes and mentors undergraduate researchers and future science teachers. Her effort introduces research to those students and educators to help prepare them for careers in science. Read the 2017 issue and learn about amazing research and researchers at Oklahoma State University. #OSUResearchMatters

Research news

CADRE draws participants from 25 institutions

On April 12, Oklahoma State University hosted the Coalition for Advancing Digital Research & Education (CADRE) conference at the Wes Watkins Center on the OSU-Stillwater campus. The CADRE conference stems from a collaborative, campus-wide initiative jointly led by the OSU Vice President for Research office and OSU Libraries that provides researchers with assistance in all aspects of computational and data-intensive research.
“In the academic research environment, there is a growing reliance on advanced computing and digital resources, but researchers sometimes have difficulty locating these resources, if they even learn of them at all,” said Dr. Dana Brunson, OSU assistant vice president for research cyberinfrastructure and director of the OSU High Performance Computing Center. “The CADRE conference provides a prime opportunity for researchers, librarians and cyberinfrastructure professionals to come together and discuss these resources, which can result in better, faster and more thorough research as well as produce new and exciting collaborations.” Read More

Nicholas Nelsen (center) was presented with an award in a research poster judging at the Oklahoma EPSCoR Research Day at the Capitol. Presenters were (from left) OSU Vice President for Research Dr. Kenneth Sewell, Nelsen’s faculty advisor Dr. Arvind Santhanakrishnan, State Regents Chancellor Dr. Glen Johnson, and Dr. Jerry Malayer, state EPSCoR director and OSU Center for Veterinary Health Sciences associate dean for research.

Niblack Scholar receives Barry Goldwater Scholarship, places at EPSCoR competition

OSU junior Nicholas H. Nelsen has been named a 2017 Barry Goldwater Scholar, one of the most prestigious honors in the nation for students seeking careers in the natural sciences, mathematics, and engineering. Nelsen has an extensive history of undergraduate research at OSU, including as a Niblack Research Scholar. He has researched the fluid dynamics of blood flow in the heart and the mathematics of lung-like fractals. His mentors include Dr. Arvind Santhanakrishnan and Dr. Henry Segerman. Nelsen also won third place in this year's statewide Oklahoma EPSCoR Research Day at the Capitol poster competition. Watch a video (below) of Nelsen describing his Niblack research project. Read More

OSU scientists use Microscopy Lab to advance research

Ph.D. student Radwa Hanafy (right in photo) and Dr. Noha Youssef in the Department of Microbiology and Molecular Genetics work with a peculiar group of fungi that reside in the herbivorous gut. With only eight genera described, this fungal phylum is understudied. As a part of a wider effort to resolve the evolutionary history of the phylum and genera, Hanafy and Dr. Youssef set out on a journey to isolate, characterize, and sequence the genomes of representatives belonging to each of the known genera. Their work relied on the use of instruments available at the OSU Microscopy Laboratory. Read More

VPR’s Nani Pybus recognized for history journal article

Dr. Nani Pybus, manager of the Center for Strategic Proposal Development in the Office of the Vice President for Research, received the Muriel Wright Award from the Oklahoma Historical Society for the best Chronicles of Oklahoma journal article. “’Cyclone’ Jones: Dr. Herbert L. Jones and the
Niblack Research Scholar Interviews

Watch video interviews with 2016-17 undergraduate Niblack Research Scholars. In Focus will regularly feature Niblack scholars, including Nicholas Nelsen (left) and Alicia Aguilar.

Faculty Conversations are a collection of videos of OSU faculty talking about their research. The videos represent a wide cross section of disciplines and novel research projects. Visit the OSU Research website to see the Faculty Conversations collection, including a video featuring Dr. Brett Carver, head of the OSU Wheat Improvement Team.

Origins of Tornado Research in Oklahoma” (Spring 2016 Vol. 94, #1) explores the origins of tornado research in the US conducted by OSU engineering faculty and students in the 1940s -1960s.

Miss a 2017 Research Week VPR Panel?

Watch rebroadcasts of this year’s VPR panels on OStateTV. Search for the panel name.

FEATURED EVENT

May 15-16
358 Human Sciences Building

2nd Annual OSU Statistics Workshop: The workshop is designed to help doctoral students and research faculty become more familiar with cutting edge methods and current issues in empirical research. Social scientists from disciplines such as sociology and psychology as well as applied disciplines such as Human Sciences, Business, and Behavioral Health face similar methodological challenges.

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