MEMORANDUM TO: Deans and Associate Deans for Research

FROM: Mary Ellen Mazey, Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs
      John M. Mason, Vice President for Research

SUBJECT: Startup guidelines and verbiage for offer letters

November 18, 2010

When new faculty start-up funds are provided by any unit of the university, specific outcome expectations for scholarship and research support shall be outlined in candidate’s official offer letter. If central administration funds are provided as part of the package, the offer letter must be approved by the Provost and the Office of the Vice President for Research (OVPR) prior to making an official offer to the candidate.

Sample research output metrics to be cited in the offer letter should include:

- Identification of targeted grant support or comparable funding (respective college/school productivity metric) within 3 years of hire.
- Identification of college/school specific valued scholarly output.
- Both teaching and research expectations are to be identified (and what constitutes an overload where applicable).

Where possible, startup funding should be aligned with University Strategic Interdisciplinary Research Initiatives. Startup funding amounts will be predicated on recovery of indirect costs from externally-sponsored projects. To monitor the implementation of the start-up funds, particular accounting requirements are recommended:

- Funds should be targeted for expenditure through a specific time limit (e.g., 3 year expiration date or balances revert to source).
- Funds from a startup pool will be maintained in the OVPR and expended along with respective unit funds.
- Funds identified for specific pieces of research equipment will be audited and best pricing information will be provided as necessary. Note: salaries, staff, students, and office supplies/equipment must be borne by the local/unit funding.
- It is expected that the recovery of start-up investment will occur via external grants/contracts and the respective expenditures would be generated within a 3 to 5 year time line.
- Startup funds from central administration will be limited to 1/3 of the total requested research equipment support.

It is anticipated that the startup process will be reviewed annually with the Deans via regular Provost Council meetings. Subsequent modifications are envisioned as experience is gained in measuring the success of providing startup funding for new faculty joining Auburn University.