

Washington Advisory Group Recommends Research Road Map for UT Permian Basin

The University of Texas of the Permian Basin has four strategic initiatives it is pursuing for the future—Growth, Research, Quality, and Partnerships. The University is making significant progress in each of these areas. We believe that there are some factual errors in the Washington Advisory Group (WAG) report in the areas of faculty research productivity and in teaching loads. For example, the April 2004 Texas Higher Education Coordinating Report on Research and Development reported that UT Permian Basin realized a 38% increase in research and development funding compared to the statewide average of 27% for the four years reported of universities with enrollments of less than 5,000. While faculty have achieved considerable success in recent years in strengthening research, we are not satisfied and are implementing recommendations by the Washington Advisory Group in creating a road map for future research growth at the institution.

The Washington Advisory Group has recommended a goal of \$4 million in annual externally-funded research for the year 2010. We believe that, while this is a stretch goal, it can be achieved and will use the WAG recommendations to create a road map to reach the goal. Some of UT Permian Basin's strengths, recognized by WAG, will be developed for future research. These include the scholarship by faculty in the disciplines of:

- Business Administration
- Bilingual Education
- Chemistry, specifically cited was research in biomass to fuel conversion conducted by Chemistry researchers under the sponsorship of the University's Center for Energy and Economic Diversification and with grant funding from the state's Advanced Technology Program.
- Computer Science
- The John Ben Sheppard Public Leadership Institute

The WAG consultants also cited the University's Art facilities as being "one of the best of its kind at any university in the country." Another area where UT Permian Basin was cited as a regional and national leader was in Distance Education, especially web-based instruction.

The road map for research enhancement recommended by the WAG consultants contains the major elements:

- Strengthening the research support services of the University's Office of Sponsored Programs.
- Development of a Faculty Hiring Plan to "focus on developing strong research, creative, and educational priority programs."
- Completion of the current effort to revise the University's policies for promotion and tenure, annual faculty evaluation, and research support to clarify research expectations for all faculty members and to provide clear accountability.
- Revamping strategic plans to "ensure space and facilities become central to such a plan." This is needed to provide for various space needs, including the need for modern, well-equipped research space. The need for a science and technology building was noted long before this report was undertaken, and a facility planned to meet this need is ready to be presented to legislators.