
Strategic Vision & Tactical Plan

2023-2028

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

ORSP will embody best in class: We will seek to set the benchmark that others in higher education research pursue in order to best serve our faculty, staff, and students.

Why a strategic vision?

As the Division of Research & Sponsored Programs (ORSP) evolves and transforms to accommodate the needs of the University of Denver research community, it must do so in a way that not only allows our division to continue to contribute to the common good, but focus on sustainable growth, the future of research at DU, and supporting our valued community. ORSP will accomplish this by embodying best in class: We will seek to set the benchmark that others in higher education research pursue in order to best serve our faculty, staff, and students.

Growth

Research, scholarship, and creative work at the University of Denver have grown exponentially over the past decade, with expenditures more than doubling from just under \$20 million to a forecasted climb above \$45 million by June 2023. For the current fiscal year (FY23), new awards are expected to reach between \$60 and \$70 million. The backlog of unexpended awards has risen above \$65 million for the first time in University history.

Likewise, the number of faculty, staff, and students actively engaged in research, scholarship, and creative work has increased dramatically in the last 10 years. The number of principal investigators (PIs) has almost tripled during this time to 287. The number of our graduate research assistants (GRAs) has also grown exponentially to over 172 from less than 40 in FY13. These are just a few metrics related to personnel.

In addition, we feel it is essential to acknowledge that post-pandemic faculty and staff feel exhausted. Given that, in combination with increased federal administrative burdens—such as financial oversight, open data exchange requirements, and foreign influence regulations—our priority must be to streamline processes, increase compliance, and create an environment in which all individuals—regardless of demographic, rank, and discipline—can thrive.

Research Benchmarking Study

This benchmarking study is a qualitative way to assess sufficient resources dedicated to the management of grants and evaluate our performance based on peer data. Retrospectively we conducted this measurement backwards to 2013 and are committed to doing this every August moving forward.

The ratio of external funding per FTE (supporting pre-award, contracting, financial oversight and compliance) was assessed. Based on the listening tour and other external data, ORSP seeks to keep the ratio between \$4.3 to 4.6M per FTE for optimal performance. In fiscal year 2023, ORSP was at \$6.0M/FTE.

Benchmarking data for division-level personnel is not well published as that of peers. Reflection on DU's best operating on campus research centers and institutes revealed a need to have dedicated administrative resources for high volume research units. The new Research Centers and Institute policy provides additional F&A back to those large research groups to support additional local grant administration support using expenditure thresholds.

Monitoring review and revise turnaround for human subjects, animal, and biological control protocols against peer standards is essential benchmarking. We are committed to doing this benchmarking as a routine monitoring to sustain high performance standards.

The DU research community will be subject to changes in regulations in the the years ahead as our research volume crosses federal thresholds and the types of sponsors and mechanisms diversify. Faculty will need greater support to meet new federal requirements for open access data standards and cyber security. Benchmarking against peers for research support is no longer simply within ORSP and we need to monitor resources available in other key units such as the Library and IT.

The Future

DU and its research, scholarship, and creative work output are on a clear and consistent upward growth trajectory. Through a multi-year initiative, the University aims to leverage this growth in research to leap higher in the U.S. News and World Report university rankings. Growth of annual expenditures in research and development (R&D) from external sponsors in the range of \$60 to \$70 million would support such a jump, and current trends in performance suggest that this level of annual expenditures is possible in the next three to five years. The number of PhD students and postdoctoral fellows are also expected to increase during this time. These are metrics monitored by the Carnegie Classification and have the attention of the Board of Trustees.

More importantly, these metrics are the backbone on which a thriving research enterprise is built. Through the hiring of an external honorifics communication coordinator, our goal is to celebrate our faculty successes and impacts by nominating and awarding prestigious external honorifics and other recognitions. More than 70 faculty members on campus have been identified as eligible for these honorifics and it should be our goal to raise their visibility.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This plan is our response to faculty, staff, and students. It is an acknowledgement that we heard them, and an outline of how we will tackle their concerns and issues.

Our Community Asked for a Plan

In addition to our past and future expected growth, we reached out to the research, scholarship, and creative work community to inform how best to support them today and into this exciting future. Stakeholders asked for a clear, written strategic vision and a plan that acknowledges the realities while transparently and boldly setting forth a vision and objectives.

As a division, we were asked to organize ourselves to support clarity of purpose, to be adaptable to support rapid scalability, and to shift from a reactive to a proactive mindset. In this document you will find both a strategic vision – looking forward to the next five years – and a tactical plan for how we will get there. This strategic vision articulates our clear dedication to research, scholarship and creative work – funded and unfunded.

Who is this for?

This strategic vision and tactical plan are designed to support our research community. Outlining how we plan to scale and manage growth in ORSP over the coming years will create transparency in order to effectively partner with the provost, deans, and department chairs.

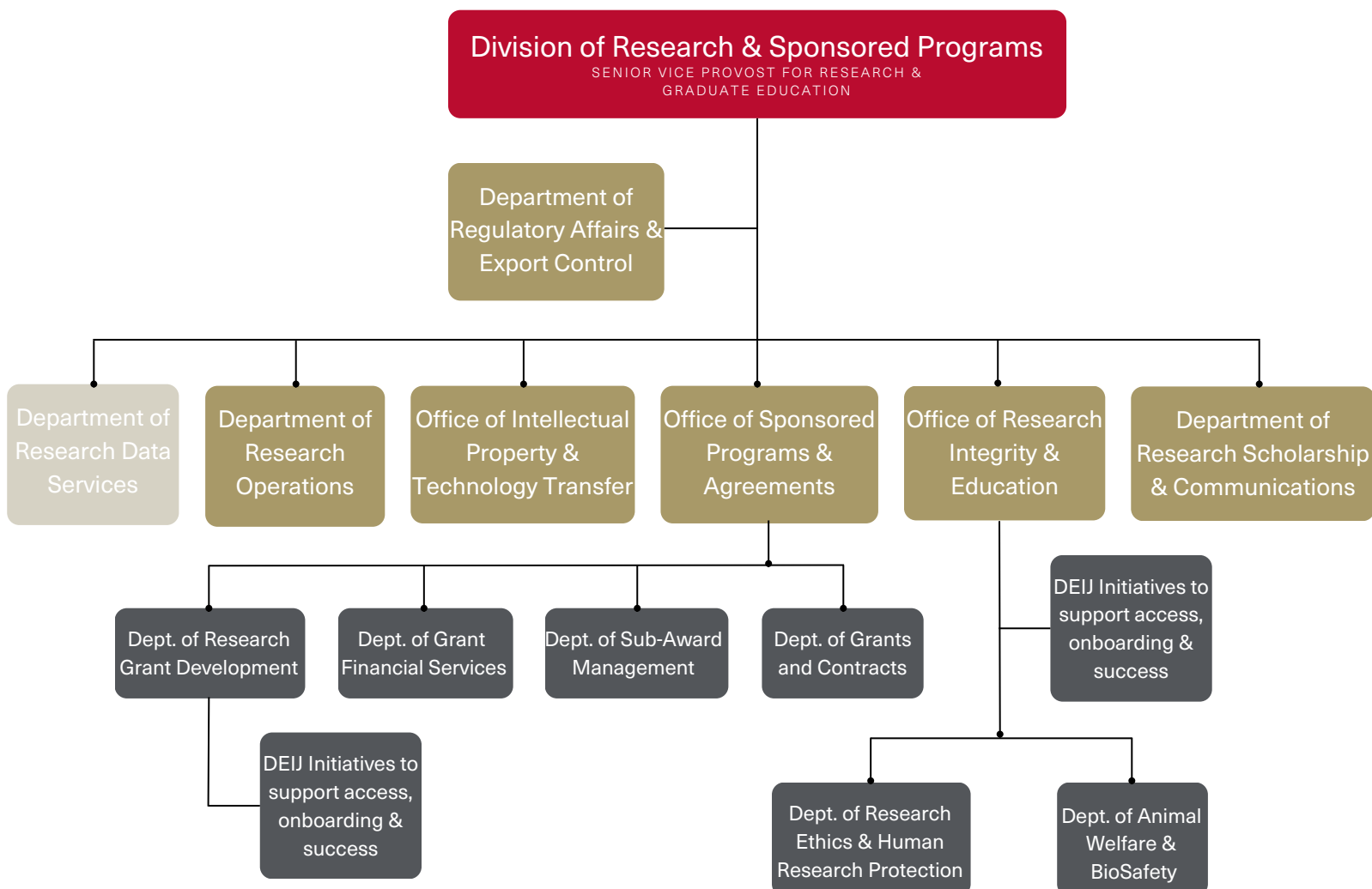
Developing improved and new programs and processes will allow research administrators to feel more supported and, in turn, allow them to better support their departments' principal investigators. Offering innovative, just-in-time training will improve faculty access; additional resources to support faculty over the entire project life cycle; and simple, reliable points of contact will provide research administrators and principal investigators with the information they need to be most successful. Building a shared vision and departmental goals will lay the groundwork for trust, openness, and connectedness within ORSP. All of these activities will set the stage for the division to move to a more proactive approach.

Through our listening tour in the fall of 2022, we heard what our stakeholders had to say – the good and the bad. This plan is our response to faculty, staff, and students, an acknowledgement that we heard them, and an outline of how we will tackle their concerns and issues.

NEW ORSP STRUCTURE

Over the years the Office of Research and Sponsored Programs (ORSP) has expanded, introducing additional offices under its original name. This expansion, while adding value, has also led to confusion, especially for new employees, students, and external sponsors. With great excitement, we propose to establish a modern organizational structure that integrates our commitment to Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, Accessibility, and Justice principles, both funded and unfunded ORSP activities, adaptable scalability, enhanced accessibility, career growth for our employees, and comprehensive support for all researchers and innovators across the university.

This starts by renaming ORSP as the Division of Research & Sponsored Programs. Next, we will establish directors to lead the Offices of Research Operations, Intellectual Property and Technology Transfer, Sponsored Programs and Agreements, Research Integrity and Education, Research and Scholarship Communications, as well as a collaborative department of Research Data Services. Each office will be supported by multiple departments led by managers, such as the Departments of Research Ethics and Human Research Protections, Animal Welfare and Biosafety, Research Grant Development, Sub Award Management, Grants and Contracts, Regulatory Compliance and Export Control and Financial Services. Many of these departments initially will only have one or two employees, but this structure will support rapid growth as needed.



Our Vision

The Office of Research and Sponsored Programs will be a proactive partner for faculty, students, and staff to achieve sustainable transformation and growth of research, scholarship, and creative work by enabling them to focus on the discoveries, innovation, thought leadership, and commercialization of their passions.



Our Mission

The mission of the Office of Research and Sponsored Programs is to provide best in class support services, thereby advancing the University of Denver's engagement in research, scholarship, and creative work, as well as the positive impact it has on the learning environment and the broader community.

Our Values

1

Respect

2

Integrity

3

Accountability

4

Teamwork

5

**Diversity, Equity,
Inclusion & Justice**

6

Growth Mindset

TACTICAL PLAN GOALS

The mission of ORSP is to be best in class.

To achieve this, ORSP will develop and implement strategies to achieve the following goals:

01

Provide Top Tier Service

- Increase the quality and number of services provided to those we partner with
 - Faster, more reliable, more personalized response
- Maintain flexible scalability of ORSP to match both University and research growth
- Develop and provide materials for easy access to research information

02

Enhance Communication

- Between ORSP and stakeholders
- Between ORSP and larger DU community
- Between different departments of ORSP

03

Embrace Modernization & Automation

- Developing clear and specific policies enabling everyone to understand ORSP processes and procedures
- Thoughtful tracking of operations so that information is consistently and reliably maintained
- Where possible, using systems to provide automatic oversight and reminders

TACTICAL PLAN: PHASE 1

Below is a unit breakdown of items from the tactical plan that are complete (Phase 1).

| ORSP Unit | Activity / Project |
|--|--|
| Senior Vice Provost for Research and Graduate Education | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Relaunch SPARC • Infrastructure improvements in psychology, anthropology, NSM & GSSW • Post-doc support & salary matching program • GRA stipends • Increased PROF funding <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Hiring - External Honorifics Coordinator |
| Operations | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hiring <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ IT Analyst ◦ Export Control Officer • InfoEd <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ COI incorporation • Process mapping <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Research hiring matrix ◦ Legal – changes to review process • Regulatory compliance and export control <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Simplified and consolidated policy process ◦ Conducted in-depth review and update to all existing policies and engaged stakeholders to draft new policy ◦ Streamlined and simplified export screening process |
| Communications | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Build/launch training library • Build/launch policy library • Build/launch “Share Your Accomplishments” form • Student research promotion - 2 campaigns complete • Hiring - Web Design Intern |

TACTICAL PLAN

Phase 1

| ORSP Unit | Activity / Project |
|--|--|
| Sponsored Programs & Agreements | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Hiring<ul style="list-style-type: none">◦ 3 grant administrators complete◦ Temp agency contract for grant administrators• Restructured SPA into departments• Key policy trainings• New proposal and submission guidelines |
| Research Integrity & Education | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• CITI SSO Integration• Created and implemented a new IRB Next Report Due process to streamline extension of ongoing IRB protocols• InfoEd FCOI Module• Hiring - 2 complete• Stipends for IBC, IRB & IACUC faculty members |
| Intellectual Property & Technology Transfer | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Hiring: Half time research-related agreements officer• Standing meetings with Office of General Counsel's (OGC) contracts team• Audit and clean-up of records discrepancies between OIPTT and outside counsel records• Initial audit of all OIPTT records and record restoration within Wellspring-Sophia• Rollout of SSO and automated integrations to support future access to OIPTT records• Revision of OIPTT request forms• Creation and rollout of unified request form• Creation of process with OGC contract team to create and approve templated research-related agreements and clauses• Stood-up new workflow and request tracking system• Initiated DU-RITE |

TACTICAL PLAN: PHASE 2

Below is a unit breakdown of items from the tactical plan that are in progress (Phase 2).

| ORSP Unit | Activity / Project |
|---|---|
| All ORSP | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Site visits to 4 universities known for best-in-class grant support |
| Senior Vice Provost for Research and Graduate Education | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Refresh policies and associate FAQ• Re-start lunches with young faculty |
| Operations | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• InfoEd<ul style="list-style-type: none">◦ Reduce burden◦ Refinement◦ Sub-award management module• Process mapping<ul style="list-style-type: none">◦ Centralized chemical inventories◦ Space inventory survey◦ Procurement – grants module for Kronos – streamline• Data Security Group |
| Communications | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Academic Analytics website development and launch• Honorifics website development and launch• On-demand trainings (3 per quarter)• Promotion of faculty accomplishments• Promotion of student research• Website overhaul |

TACTICAL PLAN

Phase 2

| ORSP Unit | Activity / Project |
|-----------|--------------------|
|-----------|--------------------|

Sponsored Programs & Agreements

- Hiring: New pre-award director
- Policy updates
- Improving invoicing systems for accounts receivable
- Automation and transparency of all federally reported expenditures data
- Divisional partnerships for streamlining and maximum effectiveness

Research Integrity & Education

- Hiring
- Maximizing IRBNet functionality
 - Smart forms – IRB, IACUC, and IBC applications
 - CITI Training integration
- Conduct an internal IRB self-audit and an external audit to prepare for AAHRPP Accreditation
- SMART IRB

Intellectual Property & Technology Transfer

- Hiring: Half-time administrative position
- Clean-up of all OIPTT records (within and outside of Wellspring-Sophia)
- Create and populate community-accessible repository for joint OIPTT/OGC-approved research-related agreements and clauses templates
- Improve status, processing, and invention docket visibility for the DU community
- Scale additional services available to the DU community
- Continue to simplify and streamline request intake

CONCLUSION

Through this strategic vision and tactical plan, ORSP will be the proactive partner faculty, students, and staff need to achieve their research, scholarship, and creative work ambitions.

This will serve as the foundation that allows ORSP to provide best-in-class services and support advancing the research, scholarship, and creative work engine of the University of Denver. As ORSP grows and continues to improve, the tactical plan will be adjusted and updated on an annual basis to meet the ambitious goals we have laid out.

We invite anyone reading this plan to bring up concerns about compliance and inconsistencies. We also hope to hear from you any improvements or innovative, novel ideas to make this an exceptional place to do research, scholarship, and creative work. Please feel free to contact anyone on the ORSP team with your comments. Additionally, you can always reach out to orspadmin@du.edu.

The Division of Research and Sponsored Programs will be a proactive partner for faculty, students, and staff to achieve sustainable transformation and growth of research, scholarship, and creative work by enabling them to focus on the discoveries, innovation, thought leadership, and public and economic benefit.

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We thank you for your continued support in our efforts to make ORSP best in class.

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