

To: Faculty  
From: Martina Kitzmueller, Kendall Alexander and Pam Lambert  
Re: Committee on Contracts and Grants – Report for Year 2011-12  
Date: May 31, 2012

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**Members:** Kendall Alexander, Barbara Bergman, Darcy Bushnell, Denise Fort, Sue George, Beth Gillia, Gloria Gomez, Martina Kitzmueller, Pam Lambert, April Land, Daniel Ortega, Helen Padilla, Carol Parker (Chair), Gordon Rahn, Roger Thompson, Curtis Vigil

**Charge:** To explore ways in which the law school could improve administrative support for its contracts and grants, and explore ways in which the work of these programs could be better integrated into the instructional mission.

The Committee on Contracts and Grants was convened for the first time this academic year of 2011-2012. The Committee was created to identify issues, including a need for knowledge and education, in the areas of grants and contracts. The Committee undertook the following activities.

**Areas of Concern:**

- Within the last few years, the law school was able to obtain several grants and bring in new faculty and support staff on these new projects. Upon joining the law school under these contracts, the new contract employees as well as existing faculty who agreed to take on the role of principal investigators experienced a lack of information and support in the area of grant administration. Grant participants particularly were at a loss as to what staff to approach for assistance inside the law school and on main campus. This problem was especially severe for members who were not just new to the law school but also new to the area of grants and contracts.
- In addition to maintaining the existing grants and contracts, participants require help in identifying and pursuing future funding sources. Many grants are limited to one or two years, thus making the process of grant renewal and the pursuit of future funding vital to the survival of these programs. Not only do participants desire assistance in finding sources, but some participants complained of negative experiences in getting main campus's swift and efficient cooperation in pursuing opportunities they had found and missing out on opportunities as a result, although this may have been due to unmanageable time constraints on both sides.
- A problem area related to these factors was a lack of communication within the law school community and between the law school and main campus. It became apparent that different parties (individual staff and faculty members, the law school administration, IPL, etc.) had different levels of knowledge and expertise in particular grant and contract areas but no mechanisms were in place to allow for a free exchange of information between all parties.

**Education:**

- The Committee invited guest speakers from main campus to give presentations on issues related to contracts and grants. Tim Wester, the law school's Contract and Grant Administrator, came to speak on the role of Pre-Award Services. Faculty liaison Susan de los Santos also gave a presentation on the pre-awards process. Betsy Till gave a presentation on the role the UNM

Foundation plays and the differences in Foundation-based grants, and how the Foundation can be of assistance with the process.

- In the spring, the law school hosted a 3-hour PI training session on the different requirements associated with becoming a principal investigator and moving grants applications through Pre-Award Services. This session is mandatory for all principal investigators and is held throughout the year on main campus; this was a special session convened in the Law School for convenience and to encourage participation. Participants also received training in Cayuse, the on-line source used by all UNM grant applications.

### **Recommendations:**

- All SOL members interested in obtaining contracts/grants should take the required PI training.
- The SOL should draw more directly on the UNM resources available for contracts and grants work, such as the Office of the Vice President for Research website (<http://research.unm.edu>) and the services offered by the Contract and Grant Administrator and the Faculty Research Support Officer.
- If feasible, current SOL staff should be designated to provide some degree of contract and grant support, to be determined, and this should be publicized within the SOL.
- If funding permits, the SOL should consider hiring a part-time staff member to directly assist in the contracts and grants process.
- The Committee should consider meeting once or twice a year to exchange ideas and new information related to contracts and grants.