Triennial General Research Fund Report, 2003 - 2005

Submitted by the KU Libraries’ Committee for Research and Scholarly Activities to the Faculty Senate Research Committee via the KU Center for Research

Our Unit Goal Statement

The Committee for Research and Scholarly Activities of the KU Libraries seeks to encourage each library faculty member, as well as many of the unclassified professionals who work in the library, to develop a program of research and to consider applying for the GRF money that is available to them to further their research goals.

Naturally, one of the major fields of research for librarians is their own discipline of librarianship. However, because many librarians and archivists also have subject expertise, research can be carried out in a broad range of academic fields. Library staff members' research projects provide them with professional growth and development opportunities, enabling them to better support other faculty at KU, as well as encouraging them to participate in and lead local, state, regional, national, and international organizations in both their profession and their fields of subject expertise.

We encourage those who receive GRF awards to produce and share their research results with others in their profession(s) through publication and presentation, though librarians in general put more emphasis on sharing information with their peers through presentations at professional meetings rather than through publishing articles in books and peer-reviewed journals, which is the stronger emphasis in most other academic subject areas.

Since the founding of the Libraries’ Committee on Research and Scholarly Activities approximately fifteen years ago, more than twenty-five library faculty and staff research projects have been approved by CRSA resulting in at least:

2 books published or in press
5 articles published in or accepted by peer-reviewed journals
2 articles published in or accepted by non-peer-reviewed periodicals
1 chapter published in a book
1 conference paper published in a conference proceeding
10 presentations made at local, state, regional, national, or international events
2 scholarly web sites developed or digital projects supported

Considering that library faculty members are evaluated 80 - 90% on their professional performance and only 10 - 20% on research and service activities, this is a fairly substantial output. (Unclassified professional library staff members are evaluated 100% on their job performance and get no credit for their research or service activities per se, participating in these pursuits only for their own professional development and personal satisfaction.)
Libraries’ GRF awards have been used for various purposes, such as hiring student assistants to develop databases and input data, supporting travel (for example, using / copying archival materials not available in other formats, collaborating with others in the field, etc.), and offering release time to library staff researchers whose workload does not otherwise permit them to participate actively in research projects.

We feel that the support of the Faculty Senate Research Committee and the KU Center for Research through the General Research Fund allocations to the Libraries has enabled the library faculty and staff to contribute to their professions and to garner additional recognition for the University of Kansas in local, state, regional, national, and international venues. The Libraries’ GRF money has been well spent, resulting in many tangible accomplishments over the years. The members of the Libraries' Committee for Research and Scholarly Activities would like to see the library GRF allocation continue at current levels, if at all possible.

Our Evaluation Criteria and Procedures

>>> Eligibility for Library GRF Awards

All tenured and tenure-track faculty and state-funded unclassified professionals of the Libraries on the Lawrence Campus payroll (including Regents Center Library staff) are eligible to submit one GRF proposal as the principal investigator each fiscal year. Faculty members who are within their first 24 months as tenure-track faculty are strongly encouraged to apply to the New Faculty General Research Fund grant before, or concurrently with, applying for the Libraries' GRF.

>>> Composition of the Library Committee Responsible for Granting GRF Awards

The Libraries’ Committee on Research and Scholarly Activities (CRSA) administers the GRF monies allocated to the Libraries through the KU Center for Research. CRSA is made up of members appointed from among volunteers by the Library Faculty and Professionals Association’s Executive Committee (LFPA Exec). There are five members on CRSA, at least one of whom is an unclassified professional library staff member. An effort is made to include a representative from each of the three ranks of librarians. If a member of CRSA submits a GRF proposal, that person will not participate in the review of any of the proposals for that year’s GRF competition.
Evaluation Criteria Used in Determining Library GRF Awards

CRSA members will consider the following criteria in evaluating GRF applications:

A. Major Review Criteria

Significance of the work
Importance of the project to the discipline or to interdisciplinary efforts
Innovation, creativity, scholarly approach
Will this project likely lead to a scholarly / professional publication / presentation?

B. Research / Creative Plan

Are the research objectives clearly stated?
Does the plan reflect adequate knowledge of related literature?
Does the plan describe the research / creative methods adequately?
Does the plan address the research / creative objectives?
Is there a reasonable likelihood of successful completion within the time, budget, and facilities limitations suggested?

C. Additional Review Criteria

Faculty early in their professional careers will be given additional points.
Renewals / continuations of worthwhile projects on which sufficient progress is being made will be given addition points.

Evaluation Procedures

A. Applicants turn in one electronic copy of their application form to the chair of CRSA.

B. All applications are due by 5:00 pm on the day of the announced deadline.

C. The applications are read by all committee members, who use the review criteria above to make their decision about which application(s) to fund.

D. Notifications

1. Applicant(s) are notified of the results of CRSA’s deliberations.
2. The necessary library administrative staff are also notified.
3. The entire library staff are notified of the names of successful applicants and what their projects entail.
4. The successful applications are put on CRSA’s GRF website
   a. To be used by future applicants as models
   b. To keep records of library research supported by GRF money
Rules for the Spending of Library GRF Award Money

Because librarians and unclassified professional library staff are on 12-month appointments, GRF money cannot be used for library staff salaries. Budget items that will be considered (when justified in the application) include payments to consultants, reprint costs, per diem and/or meal costs, computing costs, travel and associated costs, and costs of certain types of equipment that will later be donated to the Libraries.