

The CAS Core Facilities Committee met once this fall with all new members appointed by the college and elected a new chair. We discussed at length the role of Core Facilities and their ability to gather essential data needed by faculty to produce high impact research. We further discussed the impact of the current funding model whereby Cores are self-supporting. It was agreed that this model is unsustainable and that actions must be taken to better educate faculty on usage cost as well as promote the Cores in a more direct fashion to USF administration. It is becoming increasingly important to underscore the high impact research facilitated by each Core to include not only total grant dollars supported (the current metric) but also all publications as well as student coursework, dissertations and theses that make full use of the analytical facilities at hand. Additionally, we plan to work with the ADR to help ensure that future grants, which make use of CAS Core Facilities, are reviewed by core managers to check for adequacy of funding of any proposed analyses. Despite last years effort no mechanism is yet in place that tracks the cost of gathering preliminary data, underfunded research and student research, a key need.

The ultimate outcome of the discussion is that the labs themselves have a grave need for business support services and for trained personnel in the labs. Business support will offer Core managers assistance with not only grants, billing and accounting, but also with promotion and “branding” of the cores as integral to the mission of CAS and the overall USF initiative to compete for “Preeminent” status. Since most managers are almost completely engaged in facilitating scientific research for faculty (for which additional trained personnel is needed as technical laboratory staff), business support will allow us to better track overall usage and revenue (including underpayments), help disseminate or capabilities to USF faculty and the community at large as well as produce a set of promotional items (i.e., flyers, website enhancements and brochures) that can be used to booster the labs accomplishments to USF administration and to private donors via the USF Foundation.