

What the Hell is the UIRCP?

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The University Institute for Research and Creative Projects (UIRCP) began operation in January 1981. It is a small Institute with a big and important job. Its purpose was enunciated in President McCrone's announcement of its establishment. It is . . . "to encourage and to foster and facilitate the acquisition of funding and support for faculty research and other productive scholarly or creative efforts. . . ." Thus it is not, strictly speaking, a "research institute" in the sense of a group of people doing research within an institute. It is rather an institute to encourage and facilitate research and creative activity. The Institute does not "do" research and creative projects; it helps others to do them. It is a service body. It is a faculty institute in the sense that it is run by a faculty director and a faculty Advisory Board.

I believe the Institute is especially timely for a number of reasons. Most fundamental is the belief that faculty research and creative activity is essential in successfully carrying out the goals and mission of the University, and this is especially true in a period of limited growth where the infusion of recently trained and thus current faculty slows. The result can be that the stock of knowledge of the increasingly older faculty body becomes more and more out of date. An increased level of research or creative activity is one way to avoid this undesirable result. The Institute is timely from the faculty standpoint because research or creative activities serve as a positive element in professional growth and in the increasingly competitive promotion process, and they can be financially advantageous on income and tax grounds, and they are lots of fun.

The Institute is also timely from the administrative viewpoint as it fulfills a felt need of the faculty and thus helps retain the most intellectually and creatively alive faculty members and because the increased level of faculty productivity will enhance the reputation of the faculty and the University.

Currently the Institute has limited capacity to perform its service function. During the two quarters it has been operating it has been able to respond to a number of service needs. A mention of some of these should indicate how it might help you. It tries to provide an informing function. A number of campus-wide announcements of research and creative opportunities of general interest were made to the faculty such as the Ford Foundation grants for non-fiction books, the Fulbright research grant program, and the NIH

program for study and research. The Institute screens various agency requests for proposals and sends copies of these request announcements to individual faculty members that might be interested in developing proposals. The constraint here has been that I do not have enough information on faculty interests. The number and variety of requests for proposals for which funds are available and waiting is very substantial. There is, in fact, a lot of money available for a fantastic variety of things. To enable a better matching of faculty interests with available opportunities, your research interests will very shortly be surveyed through a short questionnaire. (Faculty in Creative Arts and Humanities have already been surveyed.) A version of the matching function that the Institute has performed and which it hopes to do more of is to organize or help organize faculty teams to respond to larger requests for proposals of consulting opportunities.

The Institute also provides help in obtaining outside support. This help has taken the form of critical reviews of proposals, help in identifying potential support and help in applying for that support. To these ends, the Institute is developing a "grants library," containing listings of public and private sources of grant support and their areas of funding interest.

The amount of funding support is great and diverse. Faculty should drop by the Institute (219 Siemens Hall) and just see the diversity of things the various foundations and institutions are willing to support. There is, for example, the Joseph Henry Jackson award of the San Francisco Foundation, made to northern California authors of unpublished, partly completed, book-length work in fiction, non-fiction, and poetry, or the Louis Agassiz Fuertes Grant of the Wilson Ornithological Society for research in ornithology, or the Fats and Proteins Research Foundation, or, not finally, the Society for Animal Rights, Inc. The Institute is also putting together a list of faculty in various areas who have had research or creative experience and funding and who are willing to help their colleagues develop proposals.

On the output side of the picture, the Institute has helped by critiquing manuscripts before publication, helped in finding outlets for publication, provided clerical support for proposal preparation, and provided handsome covers to dress up manuscripts being sent off campus.

The Institute is trying to work for the faculty interest. It is open to suggestions as to what needs to be done. Give me a call at 3112.