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CU researchers attract $774 million in sponsored funding

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DENVER ? Faculty at the University of Colorado attracted research awards totaling $774,079,158 during the 2012-13 fiscal year, based on preliminary figures.

That investment in CU maintains the university?s place as one of the top research institutions in the country, the total ranking as fourth-highest in CU history. The amount slipped 5.6 percent from the previous year, reflecting an increasingly competitive arena shaped in part by tightening federal budgets.

The reduction in research funding may be here for a while, says Richard Traystman, Ph.D., vice chancellor for research for the CU Anschutz Medical Campus and CU Denver, because there is less money and more competition for grants.

Overall, however, Traystman noted that the federal government provides billions of dollars in research support nationally, $31 billion from the National Institutes of Health alone. While funding is reduced, he says, ?it?s not wiped out and my optimism is that we have the opportunity to receive our fair share of that to continue the important work of research.?

With an eye on the horizon, CU President Bruce D. Benson recently initiated an effort to enhance CU?s research operations and infrastructure, as well as to diversify the entities it partners with, all with the intent of increasing revenue from one of CU?s most significant funding streams.

?We have innovative research faculty and we not only need to facilitate their great work by having an efficient and effective research infrastructure, we also need to find new partners to augment what we already do for federal agencies,? Benson said. ?I have every confidence that we can substantially increase the amount of research funding we attract.?

Fiscal year 2012-13 sponsored research funding across CU, broken down by campus:

- University of Colorado Boulder, $351.9 million, including a five-year, $9.2 million award from the U.S. Department of Energy. A team led by CU-Boulder is researching how to modify E. coli to produce biofuels such as gasoline. The researchers hope to engineer the production of ethylene and isobutanol, two compounds that can be converted into gasoline among other chemicals.
- University of Colorado Colorado Springs, $7.8 million, including a four-year, $550,000 grant from the National Science Foundation to fund about 30 scholarships annually for past and current military service members interested in pursuing degrees in science, technology, engineering or mathematics. UCCS is the one CU campus that saw research awards increase this year.
- University of Colorado Denver, $19.1 million, including a $300,000 commitment from the Surplus Lines Association of Colorado for the Risk Management and Insurance program at the CU Denver Business School. The gift will endow a scholarship fund and underwrite an international Risk Management and Insurance travel course that will help the program develop students who will graduate prepared to join the insurance industry workforce.
- University of Colorado Anschutz Medical Campus, $395.2 million, including an $11 million grant by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation supporting research to normalize early growth of children of mothers in poor communities with high rates of early growth retardation.

Sponsored research funding from federal, state and local agencies targets specific projects to advance research in laboratories and in the field. Research funding also helps pay for research-related capital improvements, scientific equipment, travel and salaries for research and support staff and student assistantships. CU cannot divert these dollars to fund non-research-related expenses such as utilities, compensation, student financial aid or grounds

maintenance.

Much sponsored research funding is directed to departments and researchers with unique expertise, such as biotechnology and aerospace, which stimulates industry.

Via the CU Technology Transfer Office, CU research commercialization has led to the formation of 132 companies since 1994; eight start-up companies were formed in fiscal year 2012-13.

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