

NORDP Program for External Evaluation of Research Development (PEERD): Perspectives from Evaluators and Institutions Evaluated

Jerilyn Hansen, Utah State University

Susan Carter, Retired, UC Merced

Kay Tindle, Texas Tech University

Peggy Sundermeyer, Trinity University

What is PEERD?

- Program for External Evaluation of Research Development
- Research Development (RD) peer review program
- External evaluation of RD operations/program by a team of qualified NORDP members
- Review team members are “matched” to the institution requesting a review
 - Peer institution
 - Particular expertise

What is PEERD?

- Multi-day site visit
 - Determine strengths, limitations, opportunities
 - Interviews with faculty, RD staff, administration
- Output: confidential detailed report
 - Identifying needs
 - Strategic planning
 - Benchmarking tools
 - Best practices
 - Program enhancement guidance
 - Service improvement

What is PEERD?

Long-term Goal –

To help NORDP's growing organization develop a set of best practices and standards that will stimulate further development and professionalization of this emerging field.

NORDP recognizes members voluntarily share their knowledge – ***that's one of the things that makes our members so great!*** – and PEERD is not intended to interfere, but is instead offered when a more formal review process is needed or desired.

History of PEERD

2012

NORDP determined it had the knowledge and legitimacy to offer a peer review service.

First formal review –

- University of California Merced

NORDP decided the review was solid and well received, so a business plan for PEERD was developed.

History of PEERD

2016

NORDP believes it finally has the bandwidth to develop PEERD as a quality program to provide:

- Useful, insightful reviews to institutions
- Professional development opportunities for the reviewers

2017

Second formal review –

- Texas Tech University

History of PEERD

2017 (cont.)

Annual conference Idea Showcase poster

First call for reviewer applications

Official designation of lead and co-coordinator of program

2018

Intensive marketing campaign begins (see flyer in tote, ad in conference program app, <http://www.nordp.org/peerd>).

PEERD Review Process

- Institution contacts a PEERD coordinator
 - Discuss review purpose, needs, goals
- Review team assignment
 - Institutional approval of reviewers selected
- Conference call
 - Lead reviewer, institutional representative and his/her supervisor (as appropriate), PEERD coordinator
 - Discuss scope, necessary background materials, how report will be utilized, agree on report format

PEERD Review Process

- Development of site visit itinerary
 - Lead reviewer, institutional representative, PEERD coordinator
- Site visit
 - Usually 2-4 days
- Report
 - Draft report to institution within 15 days of conclusion of site visit for review and comment
 - Final report delivered within 5 days of receipt of institutional feedback



University of California Merced: Then

- **First new research university of 21st century.** Opened 2005. Tenth UC Campus. No Carnegie Classification.
- **Number of students Fall 2012:** 5684, 365 grad students (87% pursuing PhDs).
- **Number of faculty Fall 2012:** 306; 153 ladder rank; 23 new ladder rank faculty; 46% Asst. Professors.
- **FY 2011 - 12 Research expenditures :** \$15.8 million.



UC Merced: Now

- **Number of students Spring 2018:** 7474; 579 grad students (91% pursuing PhDs). (31% increase).
- **Number of faculty Fall 2017:** 371; 230 ladder rank; 46% Asst. Professors. (21% increase)
- **FY 2016 - 17 Research expenditures :** \$24.7 million. (56% increase). Cumulative \$186M.
- **Carnegie Classification:** R2 (youngest university to be classified R2); classified in 2016.
- **Rapid Growth under the 2020 Project:** doubled physical plant; growth to 10,000 students.
- **Hispanic Serving and NSF Minority Serving Institution.**

UC Merced: RDS Office Then and Now

- **RDS Office established with .5FTE in October 2008.**
- **Spring 2012 (time of review): 2FTE (Director and Analyst)**
- **Spring 2018: 6FTE (Director, two Senior Research Development Officers, two Research Development Officers, one Analyst.).**
- **Director reports to Vice Chancellor for Research/Central Unit in Office of Research.**

UC Merced: Why a Review?

- **Requested by VCR as part of overall assessment process mandated by UC Merced Senate Administration Council on Assessment and Planning.**
- **Seen as important to address rapid campus growth and to address campus goals as a very young research university.**
- **Review conducted in June 2012.**

UC Merced: The Review Process

UC Merced VCR and Director of RDS gave input to NORDP Board on composition of review team.

Reviewers were asked to assess effectiveness of RDS, the research environment at UC Merced, RDS interaction with key stakeholders, and the ability of RDS to contribute to strategic research goals.

A self assessment was conducted by RDS prior to review.

UC Merced: The Review Process

UC Merced	NORDP	Reviewers
On-site Logistics and Scheduling	Coordinated Contract and Payment	Made own travel arrangements
Compiled Pre-Meeting Materials prior to visit	Reimbursed reviewer travel expenses	Reviewed pre-visit materials, gave input to Agenda based on these
Attended pre-visit teleconferences/planning meetings	Assisted with identification of Reviewers	Attended pre-visit teleconferences/planning meetings
Provided on-site agenda and maps		Determined format of report and delivered final report

UC Merced: The review experience

- **Two day site visit.**
- **Reviewers met with RDS staff, VCR, School Deans, faculty, Faculty Directors of major Research Institutes, Director of Federal Relations, Director of Development and Foundation Relations, and other Office of Research staff (including SPO).**
- **All faculty were invited to at least one session. Individual comments and perspectives were kept confidential.**

UC Merced: The Review Experience, contd.

- Reviewers met with VCR to summarize results and findings before Report was completed.
- For a full copy of the Final Report, released August 2012, including the list of advance materials provided to NORDP Reviewers, bios of the NORDP Reviewers, Site Visit Itinerary/Agenda, list of meeting participants, findings and recommendations, see: <https://rds.ucmerced.edu/about-rds/nordp-peer-review-report-rds-uc-merced>

UC Merced: What we learned

- NORDP involvement and the review team composition was key!
- Campus leadership was very supportive.
- Many identified challenges were systemic issues that needed to be addressed apart from the RD program. For this reason, the Report included a section on “Opportunity and Risk for Research at UC Merced.”
- The broad scope was very helpful to the UC Merced research enterprise and was encouraged by the VCR, but institutions might want to more explicitly define the review scope.
- Over time the Report became an excellent tool to measure effectiveness of change in the Office of Research and in RDS.

UC Merced: What changes were implemented?

- Detailed recommendations were divided by priority level into 9 areas: *Research Environment and Strategic Planning, Proposal Development and Submissions, Collaboration and Partnerships, Funding Opp Dissemination, Communications and Outreach, Tracking and Assessment, Coordination with other units, Funder/Agency Strategy, and Staffing and Resources.*
- As of July 2018, UC Merced has implemented all 3 'Highest Priority' Recommendations, 3 of 4 'High Priority' Recommendations and 13 of 22 other recommendations, with at least four additional recommendations in process.

UC Merced: What is next?

Planned Reorganization of some research functions at UC Merced will likely address some additional recommendations.

Additional Peer Review?

What would I do differently? Very little!





Texas Tech University

- Doctorate-granting, public, R1 institution
- 36,000 students; 3200 faculty
- Total Federal Research Awards - \$41M (FY17)
- Total Research Expenditures - \$184M (FY 17)
- Federal Research Expenditures - \$31M (FY 17)
- Size of RD Office - 3 + ½ time graphic designer
- Type of RD Unit - Central/Institutional RD Office
- Managing director of the Research Development Team (RDT) reports directly to VPR



Texas Tech University

- Goal: \$40M FREs by 2025
- Case study of 12 institutions successful at:
 - ◆ Broadly increasing federal funding
 - ◆ Increasing FREs, particularly in STEM
 - ◆ Securing large programmatic/center grants
 - ◆ Managing increases in funding
- Old Dominion University - Karen Eck
 - ◆ Interpret themes from case studies against own institutional culture
 - ◆ Create an action plan based on internal and external data



Texas Tech University

- 3-day site visit
- Interviews and focus groups
 - ◆ RD staff
 - ◆ Institutional leaders (President, Provost, VPR, Deans, ADRs)
 - ◆ Research administration staff
 - ◆ Faculty members (asked Deans to recommend)



Texas Tech University

Texas Tech	NORDP	Reviewers
On-site Logistics and Scheduling	Coordinate Contract and Payment	Make own travel arrangements
Compile Pre-Meeting Materials two weeks prior to visit	Reimburse reviewer travel expenses	Review pre-visit materials
Attend pre-visit teleconferences or planning meetings	Provide framework for final report	Attend pre-visit teleconferences or planning meetings
Provide on-site agenda and maps		Deliver final report on time
		Keep all communications confidential



Texas Tech University

1. Address the FRE goal in a strategic manner by energizing collegiate ADRs and the VPR to leverage disciplinary strengths and address policy changes and resource issues across TTU.
 - a. Beginning to make monthly meetings more strategic
 - b. Developed committees on faculty mentoring, enhancing research activities via promotion & tenure policies, and research incentives



Texas Tech University

2. Support the FRE goal through seed grant funding programs that are reliable, consistent, and appropriate to the resource needs of TTU faculty.
 - a. Currently no real accountability for awardees or strategy for investment
 - b. Plans in place to review the efficacy of current seed grant funding programs, require accountability, and connect with RDT



Texas Tech University

3. Cultivate a strong ethic for extramural funding through comprehensive mentoring and support of faculty.
 - a. Faculty mentoring committee developed document for consideration
 - b. Grant writing boot camp under discussion
 - c. Why Wait for the RFP? Workshop
 - d. Research Development Videos - Interacting with the Program Officer
 - e. Agreement between VPR & System offices to split the cost of faculty trips to DC



Texas Tech University

4. Integrate the central and collegiate grant development support staff into a network to provide better and more consistent services to faculty.
 - a. Has not been integrated at this time
 - b. RDT providing more PD for college grant facilitators
 - c. Provided training on COS Pivot



Texas Tech University

5. Increase the knowledge and confidence of faculty about grant writing and research conduct, and business managers about grant administration, by providing consistent training opportunities.
 - a. Building a library of successful proposals
 - b. Providing workshops throughout the year (NSF CAREER, Why Wait?, Broader Impacts, Finding Funding, NIH Basics, Resubmissions)
 - c. No discussion of business managers at this point in time
 - d. Mandatory research orientation under consideration



Texas Tech University

6. Drive toward multiple center grants that build on TTU's strengths by establishing cohorts around themes.
 - a. Submitted 2 EFRC pre-proposals
 - b. Planning several ERC planning grant submissions
 - c. Plans to invest in strategic areas that will build the capacity to be competitive for center grants



Texas Tech University

- PEERD conducted with interim VPR
- Follow-up meeting with focus groups/Deans/ADRs reporting findings
- Develop clear timeline for completion of recommended activities

Reviewer Experience

How do I become a PEERD reviewer?

- Periodic calls for applications
 - 5+ years in a RD leadership role
 - 3+ years as a NORDP member, including conference attendance
 - Participation in institutional program evaluation/strategic planning
 - Previous review experience (e.g., programmatic, limited submissions, grants, manuscripts, internal awards)
 - NORDP service preferred
- Current pool = 8 reviewers (selected in late 2017)

Reviewer Experience

- Application consists of:
 - Answering questions related to:
 - Your view of the value of RD globally and at your institution
 - Critical skills you bring to PEERD
 - Summary of experience, type of institution, research infrastructure
 - Evidence of how you meet the selection criteria (previous slide)
 - CV/resume
 - 2 professional references with contact information

Reviewer Experience

How do you benefit from being a PEERD reviewer?

- Gain new ideas to apply at home institution
- Connect with other RD professionals
- Understand the pros/cons of another RD program's structure/organization
- Appreciate alternate ways of handling work flow/load
- Learn disciplinary strengths of another institution for future potential collaborations
- Expand understanding of the RD field and its contribution to knowledge creation

Your Turn – Audience Feedback

What are important aspects of matching PEERD reviewers to institutions?

- A peer reviewer would be most effective if s/he had experience at an institution that was similar to mine in:
 - Size of external funding portfolio (dollars)
 - Number of graduate student programs
 - Number of colleges and/or campuses
 - Disciplinary strengths
 - Institution type (e.g., PUI, MSI, R1, emerging, etc.)

Rank in order of importance – highest (1) to lowest.

Your Turn – Audience Feedback

What are important aspects of matching PEERD reviewers to institutions?

- A peer reviewer would be most effective if s/he had experience:
 - In multiple components of the research enterprise (e.g., sponsored programs, compliance, etc.)
 - Of at least _____ years in RD
 - At multiple types of universities (e.g., PUI, MSI, R1, emerging, etc.)

Rank in order of importance – highest (1) to lowest.

Your Turn – Audience Feedback

What are important aspects of matching PEERD reviewers to institutions?

- A peer reviewer would be most effective if s/he possessed the following skills:
 - Interviewing
 - Data analysis
 - Presentation
 - Written communications
 - Leadership
 - Strategic planning

Rank in order of importance – highest (1) to lowest.

Your Turn – Audience Feedback

What are important aspects of matching PEERD reviewers to institutions?

- Now rank the 3 areas in order of importance:
 - Similar institutional experience
 - Personal experience
 - Skill set

Rank in order of importance – highest (1) to lowest.

Questions?

