

The pathway to RSCAD Success at K-State Salina

RSCAD = Research, Scholarship, Creative Activity, and Discovery

This brief guide is written for those who would like to become active, or more active in RSCAD but are not sure exactly how or even why they should. To the experienced scholar, much of what is found herein may be a review.

Before we begin it will be important for the reader to review the following web pages to gain a greater perspective on where K-State is headed with RSCAD, including the K-State Salina plan, and to see where the existing K-State RSCAD strengths are:

<http://www.k-state.edu/2025/>

http://www.k-state.edu/2025/documents/college-planning/K-State-2025-K-State_Salina-Strategic-Action-and-Alignment-Plan-June-2013-Final.pdf

http://www.k-state.edu/2025/documents/rscad-strengths/SAL_Report_on_Areas_of_RSCAD_Strengths_May_2014.pdf

While recognizing that the scope of RSCAD at K-State is broad and encompasses a range of endeavors relevant to a variety of academic disciplines, this discussion focuses primarily on traditional peer-reviewed scholarship relevant to most of the disciplines found on the Salina campus. It should be noted here that often significant scholarship and creative activity falls outside the traditional view of peer-reviewed setting. Since that form of scholarship can vary widely in its form, it is up to individual academic units and the associated leadership team to determine what is acceptable in terms of RSDAD in those cases. Certainly publishing or performing a creative work or undertaking a creative service-related project can all fit nicely within a particular faculty member's RSCAD portfolio. That stated, traditional scholarship most often takes the form of funded research (and the related funding applications to reach that point), publication in peer-reviewed journals or publication in prominent broader-interest venues where access to publishing therein is by invitation and is controlled by an editorial review board or process. Often those publications will serve as the basis for conference paper presentations, panel discussions, and invited lectures.

Scholarship is often one of the most prominent and distinguishing features of a successful academic career and should serve to enhance, enrich, and invigorate a faculty member's performance in the classroom, not detract from it; good teaching and RSCAD go hand-in-hand if students are to be challenged in the way they need to be in any academic degree program.

At the heart of good scholarship is a deep and innate desire to make a lasting contribution to knowledge and advancement in your focus area. At its pinnacle this will often result in being widely known and sought as a person of influence by conference organizers, the media, and other leading thinkers within a chosen field. This part does not come easy and will only come through countless hours of personal time and expense invested over the years but the payoff can be rewarding.

So with that in mind, what are the steps to becoming a producer of knowledge in your area rather than merely a consumer/purveyor of that knowledge? While certainly not comprehensive, the following steps will hopefully provide some guidance.

Having the appropriate skills.

While a terminal degree in a given field certainly enhances the visibility of a scholarly work, and in some cases perhaps the chances of being published as a primary author, it is not a requirement in many application-centered publications. What IS necessary is that you are familiar with the methods of scientific inquiry and reporting results that are relevant to your field. In addition to subject matter expertise, at a minimum you will need an adequate foundation in descriptive and inferential statistics along with a research methods course where you learn how to translate your thoughts into an appropriate and repeatable format.

Connecting your ideas

One of the most important factors at the outset of a scholarly initiative is to understand that you MUST connect your thoughts and ideas to the larger discussion and body of literature in your area wherever that is occurring. Answering questions that no one is asking will most likely result in scholarly frustration and ultimately failure. Relevant journals, periodicals, conferences and seminars or even discussion boards and blogs are all places where current problems are discussed, ideas are formulated/challenged, and progress is made.

It is helpful at this point to become familiar with relevant journals in your field. This is important so that you not only learn what the current problems are, but you learn the format, flows, quality, and writing styles that are acceptable in the area in which you will focus. Examples of quality journals relevant to some disciplines on this campus include:

<http://ieeexplore.ieee.org/xpl/RecentIssue.jsp?punumber=9754>

<http://www.journals.elsevier.com/journal-of-air-transport-management/>

<http://www.onefpa.org/journal/Pages/default.aspx>

It is well worth your time at the outset of your effort to subscribe to (or acquire copies of) relevant journals and spend ample time reading/studying the articles well in advance of when you intend to make your scholarly entry into that field. The K-State library system provides access to a vast array of databases of both peer-reviewed and non-peer-reviewed publications with just a few clicks:

<http://www.salina.k-state.edu/library/index.html>

Relationship Building

Investing the time, energy, and travel to build key relationships may be the single-most important factor in your RSCAD success. These relationships are important on several levels. You may find it helpful to connect with researchers already working on funded projects in your field who may have opportunities for collaboration or may know of others with those opportunities.

For Federally funded projects it is well worth the time to make a special visit to program managers who manage research budgets at Federal agencies. Program managers are employed at the larger government research facilities such as NSF, USDA, the FAA (i.e. the Tech Center in New Jersey), Army Research Labs, Navy Research Labs, the Air Force Research Labs. Even if you are only able to spend an hour or two with this person they can inform you as to current funding priorities, where the research dollars are being channeled, what contract vehicles are available and what the open, or soon to be open opportunities are. Program managers can also point you to others to connect with who may have funding for a collaborator or may wish to put you on an upcoming project as a principal investigator (PI) or co-PI.

Traveling to conferences and building relationships with commercial vendors and contractors can also prove helpful; often socializing after hours at official gatherings will yield great potential. Be willing to start with a small, even pro-bono project if the commitment is manageable. This will allow you the opportunity to prove your ability to deliver a quality product on-time. The Salina Associate Dean of Research is available to assist you in identifying how best to structure contract opportunities with the private or public sector once an opportunity is identified. A small investment in travel is something any new researcher should prioritize.

Mentoring

Mentoring can be particularly helpful at the outset of a scholarly career but can occur at any point a faculty wishes to become more active in scholarship. Mentorship is certainly not required and certain faculty may be able to be successful in this area without mentoring being able to move through the steps identified herein without mentoring but this process can add significant depth, dimension, and richness to the beginning scholar.

Should you choose this route and you are already well-versed in the literature and proceedings of your scholarly field, it is important to identify a person who can provide you with some guidance and open doors for you. It is important to remember that a full blown mentoring program has the components of both accountability and expected outputs, so be prepared for that process. It is often helpful to pair with a more experienced scholar in your area (and this is expected in many areas of science) on an article or two before embarking on an effort of your own.

The mentor should be a person whose work is well-respected in the field and one who has the time and desire to help others along in this area; mentoring can be hard work for a good mentor. Typically later-career researchers have the perspective of years which helps them more easily appreciate the value of developing lesser experienced researchers. Should you desire to become mentored in scholarship the Salina Associate Dean of Research will gladly assist you in identifying an appropriate mentor. Often a suitable mentor will be a researcher from another institution or organization who is perhaps connected through a common national or international association or other organization.

A formal mentoring program should include as a component, the development of an individual scholarship development plan which is a personal document that takes inventory of your current skills

and abilities, your desired direction, and outlines appropriate steps to help you arrive at your scholarly goals. Here is a sample scholarship development plan:

Scholarship Development Plan for Faculty

Individual Scholarship Development Plans (ISDPs) provide a planning process that identifies both professional development needs and career objectives. Furthermore, ISDPs serve as a communication tool between individuals, their mentors, and administration. An ISDP can be considered one component of a broader mentoring program that needs to be instituted by all departments hosting faculty with research and scholarly expectations.

Expertise and Research focus areas- This is the starting point for an ISDP; not having this identified will only lead to frustration.

Establish goals

Faculty need to identify:

- Long-term career options they wish to pursue and the necessary tools to meet these; and
- Short-term needs for improving current performance.

Benefits

Once developed faculty will have identified a process that will assist in developing long-term goals to help focus scholarly efforts and activities. Identifying short-term goals will give them a clearer sense of expectations and help identify milestones along the way to achieving specific objectives. The ISDP also provides a tool for communication between the faculty mentee and a faculty mentor.

Outline of ISDP Process

The development, implementation and revision of the ISDP requires a series of steps to be conducted by the faculty and their mentor. These steps are an interactive effort, and so both the faculty and the mentor must participate fully in the process.

BASIC STEPS

For Faculty

Step 1: Conduct a self-assessment

Step 2: Survey opportunities with mentor

Step 3: Write an ISDP, share ISDP with mentor and revise

Step 4: Implement the plan

Step 5: Revise the ISDP as needed

For Mentors

Step 1: Become familiar with available opportunities

Step 2: Discuss opportunities with faculty mentee

Step 3: Review ISDP and help revise

Step 4: Establish regular review of progress and help revise the ISDP as needed

Execution of the ISDP Process

For Faculty:

Step 1. Conduct a Self-Assessment.

-Assess your skills, strengths and areas which need development. Formal assessment tools can be helpful. (Examples can be found in Resources: Self-Assessment at the end of this document).

-Take a realistic look at your current abilities. This is a critical part of career planning. Ask your peers, mentors, family and friends what they see as your strengths and your development needs.

-Outline your long-term career objectives. Ask yourself:

-What type of work would I like to be doing?

-Where would I like to be in an organization?

-What is important to me in a career?

Step 2. Survey Opportunities with Mentor.

-Identify career opportunities and select from those that interest you.

-Identify developmental needs by comparing current skills and strengths with those needed for your chosen scholarly path.

-Prioritize your developmental areas and discuss with your mentor how these should be addressed.

Step 3. Write an ISDP.

The ISDP maps out the general path you want to take and helps match skills and strengths to your scholarship choices. It is a changing document, since needs and goals will almost certainly evolve over time as a faculty member. The aim is to build upon current strengths and skills by identifying areas for development and providing a way to address these. The specific objectives of a typical ISDP are to:

-Establish effective dates for the remainder of your academic career.

-Identify specific skills and strengths that you need to develop (based on discussions with your mentor).

-Define the approaches to obtain the specific skills and strengths (e.g., courses, technical skills, teaching, supervision) together with anticipated time frames.

-Discuss your draft ISDP with your mentor.

-Revise the ISDP as appropriate.

Step 4. Implement Your Plan.

The plan is just the beginning of the scholarly development process and serves as the road map. Now it's time to take action!

-Put your plan into action.

-Revise and modify the plan as necessary. The plan is not cast in concrete; it will need to be modified as circumstances and goals change. The challenge of implementation is to remain flexible and open to change.

-Review the plan with your mentor regularly. Revise the plan on the basis of these discussions.

For Mentors

Step 1. Become familiar with available opportunities.

By virtue of your experience you should already have knowledge of some scholarly opportunities, but you may want to familiarize yourself with other scholarship opportunities and trends in the faculty member's chosen area.

Step 2. Discuss opportunities with faculty mentee.

This needs to be a private, scheduled meeting distinct from other specific meetings. There should be adequate time set aside for an open and honest discussion.

Step 3. Review ISDP and help revise.

Provide honest feedback - both positive and negative - to help faculty set realistic goals. Agree on a development plan that will allow faculty to be productive in their scholarly pursuits and adequately prepare them for their chosen path.

Step 4. Establish regular review of progress.

The mentor should meet at regular intervals with the faculty to assess progress, expectations and changing goals. On at least an annual basis, the mentor should conduct a performance review designed to analyze what has been accomplished and what needs to be done. A written review is most helpful in objectively documenting accomplishments.

**This document was adapted from the Federation of American Societies for Experimental Biology (FASEB)'s Science Policy Committee.*

WORKSHEET TEMPLATE FOR SCHOLARSHIP DEVELOPMENT PLANS

Name: _____

Date Developed: _____

Revised: _____

Potential Areas to Develop/ Enhance/Explore (Research, Scholarship, or Development)	Goals:	Method/Activity/ Resources to Achieve Goal	Target Date	Date Completed	Outcomes/ Revisions
Scholarship Goal 1					
Scholarship Goal 2					
Scholarship Goal 3					
Scholarship Goal 4					
Etc.					

Components of the Professional Development Plan

[This form is optional and could be used in departments that don't already have their own Scholarship development plan in place.]

Information on this form will address:

- Specific goals for the upcoming year in performance areas of scholarship.
- Strategies to be used to meet these goals.
- Resources needed (time, money, equipment, continuing education, reduced teaching load, etc.).
- Expectations of the program/department in order to meet its goals/objectives.
- Methods for measuring accomplishments.

After the professional development plan has been reviewed and approved by the department head and faculty member, both will sign the **Scholarship development plan**.

Signed copies of the Plan will be filed in the department and given to the faculty member. This step is necessary regardless of which evaluation instrument is used. Copies of the Worksheet (or other instrument) would stay on file in the department and with the faculty member.

Step 4. The hard work- beginning your scholarly endeavor

Whether it's a peer-reviewed article or a grant application or something else it's time to get down to the hard work of doing what you came to do. Should help be needed connecting with funding opportunities, having proposals or articles reviewed, contact the office of the Salina Associate Dean for Research for assistance.

Appendix A

Funding Opportunities De-coded

Contractual relationships with sponsors can take on many forms from simple memorandums of intent to work together, to complex service agreements and multi-agency grant funded projects. The office of Research and Sponsored Program pre-award office has dozens of templates to help you get started: <http://www.k-state.edu/research/preaward/>

Below is a list of some common proposal and sponsored project opportunity terminology- this list is by no means exhaustive so feel free to suggest changes (kurtb@ksu.edu).

Army Research Labs: <http://www.arl.army.mil/www/default.cfm>

Air Force Research Lab: <http://www.wpafb.af.mil/AFRL/>

Air Force Office of Scientific Research: <http://www.wpafb.af.mil/afri/afosr/>

FAA Technical Center: http://www.faa.gov/about/office_org/headquarters_offices/ang/offices/tc/

National Science Foundation: <http://www.nsf.gov/funding/>

NAVAIR: <http://www.navair.navy.mil/>

Navy Research Lab: <http://www.nrl.navy.mil/>

SBIR- http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Small_Business_Innovation_Research

CRDA- http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cooperative_Research_and_Development_Agreement

EPSCOR- http://www.nsf.gov/od/iia/programs/epscor/Outreach%20Procedures_updated2013.pdf

FDA/USRG- <http://www.k-state.edu/research/funding/fdausrg.html>

Limited Submissions- <http://www.k-state.edu/research/funding/limitedsubmissions/>

Federal Agencies- <http://www.k-state.edu/research/funding/fedgrant.html>

Private Sources- <http://www.k-state.edu/research/funding/private.html>

FedBizOps (FBO)- <https://www.fbo.gov/index?cck=1&au=&ck>

Grants.gov- <http://www.grants.gov/web/grants/home.html>

Defense Innovation Marketplace-

<http://www.defenseinnovationmarketplace.mil/industryresources.html>

Notices in RSCAD Momentum: <http://www.k-state.edu/vpr/news/>

Updates in the weekly Funding Connection-

<http://www.k-state.edu/research/funding/connection/index.html>

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Grant Application Guide:

http://grants.nih.gov/grants/funding/424/SF424_RR_Guide_SBIR_STTR_Adobe_VerB.pdf

Reconstructing America Opportunities: <http://reconnectingamerica.org/resource-center/federal-grant-opportunities/>