

# **Final Report: Task Force on High Impact Research**

**American University**

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## 1. Introduction

In the charge to the High Impact Research Task Force, the Provost asked its members to identify and recommend ways in which the university can assist AU's faculty to maximize the impact of their work, including their scholarship, as well as their professional, practice-related, creative and artistic activities. Increasing the impact of faculty activities and of our academic community can enhance the national and international visibility of American University, its reputation and the attractiveness of the institution to prospective faculty members and students. At present, the strategies commonly used at our university to promote the visibility and impact of faculty members' scholarship, professional and creative activities rely largely on the initiative and perseverance of the faculty members themselves. Therefore, a key theme running throughout the work of the Task Force was, *what can the university do at different levels to assist and support AU faculty members to communicate the results of their scholarly, professional and creative activities and to disseminate those communications to broader academic and non-academic audiences?*

Several issues were defined as integral to the work conducted by this committee. First, this report should identify effective ways to translate traditional scholarly, professional or creative work into policy statements or other products/formats that can be transmitted to, and consumed by audiences outside of traditional academic venues. Second, this report should identify potential mechanisms to increase the dissemination of communications about the high-value activities of AU faculty to external audiences to promote their citation, adoption and implementation. Third, a set of recommendations should be developed about how teaching units, academic units, and the university can develop specific mechanisms and routine actions, drawn from best practices at AU and other universities that would foster and deepen a culture of high impact research at AU.

## 2. Defining high impact scholarship

Faculty scholarship (i.e., research, professional or creative activities) can be considered to have significant impact when it influences meaningful change in one or more ways. For example, faculty scholarship or creative activities can produce the following:

- **Positive Impacts on Society.** High impact scholarship often produces evidence that addresses critical public policy decisions, solves important social needs, provides the basis for changing human attitudes or behavior, improves people's well-being and quality of life, or produces other broad societal benefits. High impact creative activities may influence audiences in profound ways that result in meaningful changes or improves the quality of people's lives.
- **Generation of New Knowledge.** High impact scholarship significantly deepens or redefines our understanding of various phenomena, generates new discoveries, impacts current research agendas for a field or sub-field, closes an important gap in an existing research area, or establishes a unique reputation or expertise in a sub-field.
- **Transmission of Knowledge.** High impact scholarship involves the transmission of knowledge to the next generation. The process of knowledge dissemination may involve integrating research into one's teaching, transforming the research agendas, professional

practices or creative activities of students or wider audiences, the dissemination of tangible intellectual products to internal and external audiences and the translation of knowledge into products for use in other non-academic settings.

- **Positive Recognition by Peers and Enhanced National Reputation.** High impact scholarship and creative works are recognized as being valuable, important and making a contribution by one's peers, and potentially, larger public audiences. Scholarship or creative works with impact are cited, viewed, used and referred to in multiple ways. High impact scholarship and creative works enhance the reputation of faculty members, their areas of scholarly or creative activity, their academic units and American University as a scholarly community.
- **Generation of New or Revised Professional Practices.** High impact applied research or evidence-based practice evaluates practice principles and generates new or revised practice standards that lead to forms of professional education and service delivery in real world settings.

Just as a definition of high impact scholarship or creative activities can incorporate multiple dimensions, the impact of a program of scholarship/creative activity can be assessed in multiple ways including:

- The influence of scholarship on the development and implementation of policies, standards, and practices;
- The use of scholarship as evidence in the formation of key policy decisions;
- Adoption of scholarship in course content and other traditional publication venues;
- Citation of scholarship by peers, downloads of publications, impact factors of published scholarship or a range of altmetrics;
- Peer recognition via awards, honors, fellowships or other forms of recognition;
- Peer recognition via invited presentations, keynote addresses, or peer-reviewed conference presentations;
- Distinguished or chaired professorships, international recognitions from other public institutions or leadership positions in major professional associations in one's field or discipline;
- Patents, copyrights and licensing of intellectual property;
- Peer recognition via invited performances or juried exhibitions for creative activities;
- Impact on audience members following performance or exhibition of creative activities;
- Content and extent of media discourse in traditional outlets and contemporary social media;
- The application of scholarship by practitioners or in other applied settings; and,
- Indicators of departmental productivity or institutional reputation

We acknowledge that different academic units at the university may emphasize different dimensions or measures of impact or that they may propose additional dimensions or measures.

### **3. Incentives and Faculty Participation in High Impact Research Activities**

Given the importance to the university of high impact faculty scholarship, the committee discussed how the university could (a) reduce perceived disincentives to faculty members and (b) create incentives for faculty members' participation in high impact scholarship. The committee's discussion focused on the extent to which the university (a) recognizes formally the high impact activities of faculty members and (b) provides resources and supports in the pursuit of high impact activities.

**Formalize Recognition:** American University's Mission Statement gives special emphasis to the role of faculty members as "public intellectuals," including activities such as media commentary, citations, and appearances; prominent public lectures, exhibits and creative presentations; testimony and reports given to advocacy groups, courts, legislators, and administrative agencies; and consulting on policy. These activities advance the public good and enhance the visibility and reputation of both the university and faculty members and attract potential students and faculty members to our scholarly community. However, AU's Faculty Manual's guidelines for tenure and promotion currently are generic and all-encompassing and do not reflect these unique scholarly and creative roles of its faculty members. Similarly, the activities associated with the role of public intellectual are only sporadically reflected in guidelines for tenure, promotion, merit pay increases, and research awards within teaching units, schools and colleges. Therefore, the activities of faculty members as public intellectuals are rarely viewed as accomplishments that enhance faculty members' scholarship.

The committee discussed that a general lack of recognition for public intellectual scholarship is a serious disincentive to faculty members' engagement in high impact activities in the dissemination and promotion of their scholarship. It was recommended that changes be made to university documents to recognize formally faculty members' activities outside the university to promote the impact of their work. Specifically, the committee recommended that faculty councils within academic units incorporate these activities into their unit-level definitions of scholarship and consider expanding unit-level guidelines for tenure, promotion, merit pay increases and unit-level research awards. A parallel discussion should be initiated at the level of the Faculty Senate to consider expanding the standards for tenure and promotion, to recognize the importance of public voice, media, outreach and other activities of the public intellectual. In addition, the committee recommended that proposals for work as a public intellectual should be considered on their merits for university-wide faculty research awards.

**Provide Supportive Resources:** Successful programs of research require time, resources and faculty members' effort, persistence, creativity and insight. In addition, research questions and topics deemed by a particular field to be timely and significant are more likely to produce research or scholarship that has impact in a particular socio-historical context. Universities facilitate the development of faculty members' high impact research by hiring, mentoring, rewarding, promoting, and otherwise nurturing research faculty who exhibit specific characteristics over time. To assist faculty members to develop their research the university also provides an environment that enhances opportunities to conduct impactful research and the resources necessary to facilitate its implementation. In addition, resources to communicate the results of research or creative activities are critical to the dissemination of faculty scholarship to targeted external audiences.

University financial resources can be deployed throughout faculty members' careers to maximize the probability that their research programs have greater impact, by encouraging and incentivizing high impact research output. The university provides faculty members with time and financial support to conduct specific programs of scholarship. The assignment of university-supported research and teaching assistants, sabbaticals or differential faculty assignments are examples of resources that provide faculty with dedicated time and supports to conduct, publish and disseminate their scholarship and creative activities. In addition, course buy-outs or releases also provide dedicated time for faculty members to perform sponsored research activities. Significant financial investments also occur when the university hires faculty capable of conducting high impact research, provides them teaching and research supports, suitable research environments or facilities, merit increases and job security via the processes of tenure and promotion.

**Recommendation 1:** Revise unit-level and university-wide, tenure and promotion documents, merit pay criteria and research award eligibility criteria to include recognition of the importance of faculty activities designed to increase the impact of faculty scholarship.

**Recommendation 2:** At the academic- and teaching-unit levels, state explicitly how faculty access specific resources (research and teaching assistants, course buy-outs, sabbaticals) to provide them adequate time and support to improve the impact of their research programs.

**Recommendation 3:** At the academic- and teaching-unit levels, state explicitly how mechanisms such as differential assignments can be implemented to provide faculty with highly intensive programs of scholarship or creative activities additional time to engage in and promote their research programs.

**Recommendation 4:** At the academic- and teaching-unit levels, state explicitly expectations that faculty engage in activities to promote their scholarship and creative activities following discussion by stakeholders in unit.

#### **4. Existing Campus Resources to Promote High Impact Research Activities**

At American University, a number of opportunities and resources currently exist that assist faculty members to enhance and promote their programs of research. These resources exist in multiple forms, in both central offices and in the academic units. Some examples include:

1. Enhancements and supports to faculty member's research environments:
  - a. Differential teaching loads, teaching releases or course buyouts;
  - b. Investment in research space, research facilities, capital equipment and core/common facilities;
  - c. Dedicated support in the form of TA/GA support or in-unit administrative support;
  - d. Funding for start-ups, pilot studies, conference travel
2. Dedicated central and in-unit staff who assist faculty to publicize and disseminate their scholarly activities:
  - a. The staff of University Communications and Marketing (UCM);
  - b. Unit-level strategic communications professionals;

- c. Unit-level web content managers, webmasters, IT managers and other support personnel; and,
  - d. Library-based research support for scholarly communication / digital research archive, scholarly metrics tools, scholarly networking and social media channels, etc.
3. Strategies and mechanisms to improve dissemination of scholarly works:
- a. Press releases, op-ed columns, web-based content, development of compelling stories into engaging formats, integration into university-level publications, branding campaigns and publicity efforts to highlight the scholarship and creative activities of single or groups of faculty members. These efforts are typically coordinated by UCM in collaboration with the academic units;
  - b. Unit-level or departmental webpage content, newsletters, publications, marketing campaigns, social media content, blogs, and Internet-hosted interactive multimedia products;
  - c. Individual faculty members' webpages, blogs, social media content, scholarly networking profiles, and traditional media publicity efforts; and,
  - d. Library-based training opportunities to promote the adoption of digital archiving, identifiers, scholarly metrics and altmetrics, scholarly networking and web-based platforms for scientific collaboration.
4. Resources for assessing and enhancing scholarly impact:
- a. For accessing aspects of the impact of books: World Cat, Google Scholar, MLA International Bibliography, JSTOR, Project Muse;
  - b. For accessing aspects of the impact of scholarly journals: Journal Citation Reports (JCR), MLA Directory of Periodicals, SNIP, SJR: SCImago Journal Rank Indicator, Publish or Perish;
  - c. For accessing aspects of the impact of specific journal articles: Web of Science, Google Scholar, Proquest, PLOS ALM, Mendeley, Impact Story, ORCID, CitedIn, Altmetric.com, ScienceCard, Publish or Perish;
  - d. For accessing aspects of the impact of specific individuals: H-index via Google Scholar or Web of Knowledge; Altmetrics including Mendeley, Impact Story, ORCID, CitedIn, Altmetric.com, ScienceCard, Publish or Perish; and,
  - e. To access strategies for assessing the impact of creative works (e.g., films or the performing arts) on audiences, on larger communities or in social media environments, please see the following example resources:

[http://context.lis.illinois.edu/iConf\\_jd10212013.pdf](http://context.lis.illinois.edu/iConf_jd10212013.pdf)

<http://www.theartswave.org/impact/resources-on-arts-impact/impact-toolkit>

<http://www.intrinsicimpact.org/>

<http://www.storypilot.org/feature-1/>

<http://harmony-institute.org/>

**Recommendation 5:** Create a webpage that provides AU faculty and students information regarding training opportunities and resources currently available at the university to promote their scholarship and creative activities to external audiences. This webpage could also host discipline-specific examples of resources that are particularly useful for faculty development and student education in academic units to promote the adoption and use of standards, strategies, technologies and networks most relevant to particular disciplines or professions.

**Recommendation 6:** Provide media training to campus stakeholders who wish to learn to interact effectively with external media to promote their scholarship and creative activities.

**Recommendation 7:** Expand available training opportunities in the use of emerging metrics for assessing and enhancing impact of scholarship and creative activities in the sciences, social sciences, the humanities and the arts.

## **5. Additional Resources and Supports to Facilitate High Impact Research Activities**

One goal of the task force was to make recommendations to the academic leadership of the university regarding future investments that faculty members judge to be especially important to their ability to disseminate and promote their scholarly and creative activities to external audiences. Discussion focused primarily on current technologies not available at AU and forms of assistance that would facilitate faculty members' efforts to increase the impact of their scholarship and creative works. Several resources and supports were identified in committee discussions that (a) could be implemented with little or no additional funding (b) would require additional funding for implementation. Examples are listed for each category below.

1. Resources that can be provided *without additional investments* in staff or infrastructure:
  - a. Expand training opportunities for faculty and students on the use of scholarly peer networks (e.g., ResearchGate, LinkedIn, Academia.edu or SSRN) and developing profiles in altmetrics most appropriate for specific disciplines;
  - b. Increase awareness of the AU Digital Repository among faculty members; and
  - c. Provide guidance to faculty and students for obtaining ORCID identifiers and completing and maintaining their ORCID records. Unique identifiers linked to faculty members' names are attached to research objects, preventing the need to enter personal data multiple times in different research information systems and creating a method for linking research activities and outputs to unique identifiers.
2. Additional supports to facilitate high impact research activities by faculty *will require new investments* in staff, infrastructure, training or professional development. These include:
  - a. A dedicated web presence to collect and display faculty and student publications from across AU. This platform would associate faculty members' publications with the university and make them immediately available to visitors, to use and cite. Aggregated scholarship by AU faculty could also be "pushed" out to external audiences for institutional or other goals;
  - b. A service that registers faculty members for ORCID numbers and assigns the identifiers to scholarship and creative activities. Dedicated staff with access to

- specific FARS fields could use ORCID's API for system-to-system communication to automate record creation/updating;
- c. A comparable service to generate Digital Object Identifiers (DOIs) that faculty members could use as persistent identifiers for digital materials that they share/publish online including videos, reports, research datasets, conference papers, or article pre-prints;
  - d. A service for creating more than minimal metadata, and/or file format conversions for data preservation purposes, for research data that they deposit in AU's or domain repositories, to comply with agencies' research data management requirements;
  - e. A service that creates one-way or bidirectional links between different kinds of scholarly or creative works (e.g., publications, datasets, presentations, data visualizations) by faculty members, thereby increasing access to a larger body of related scholarship or creative works;
  - f. Create a researcher networking platform for AU faculty members, such as VIVO or the Open Science Framework platform;
  - g. Provide a dedicated, secure on-campus facility where graduate students and faculty can work with restricted-use datasets;
  - h. Make faculty members' scholarly work freely available to external audiences through Open Access publishing. Institutional support for potentially high-impact scholarship, in the form of Open Access publishing fees, could accelerate the dissemination of premier scholarship and creative activities of AU faculty;
  - i. Improve current editing and data storage capabilities on faculty profile web pages to enable user-friendly formatting, article/media uploads, and other electronic features that are commonly found at other research universities;
  - j. Increase conference travel funds to allow faculty members to increase the dissemination of their scholarship and creative activities to wider audiences;
  - k. Examine ways to reduce the cost of course buyouts for senior faculty, which may be prohibitively expensive;
  - l. Provide competitive opportunities for faculty members to access travel funds to promote newly published books; or alternatively, funds for faculty members to purchase copies of their new books to send to influential scholars or other thought leaders who will cite, reference or tout the new publications;
  - m. Ensure that highly-trained, responsive staff professionals are available in every academic unit to provide faculty with assistance and support to develop and promote their research, scholarship and creative activities;
  - n. Invest in training and professional development opportunities of existing support staff to provide more effective support to faculty at the department level. Where retraining and professional development are unlikely to be effective, consider other options such as restructuring how faculty support is provided at the departmental level, e.g., a shared services model with more appropriately trained and resourced staff professionals; and,
  - o. Provide additional opportunities for faculty to obtain peer support, feedback and mentoring to sharpen, revise and improve their scholarship for maximum impact.

These opportunities can range from informal and unstructured settings (e.g., peer writing groups, grant- or manuscript-related feedback opportunities in an academic unit, center-based colloquia) to more formal experiences (e.g., intentional mentoring arrangements, highly structured book incubators, statistical and methodological consulting services, as well as grant-writing and editorial supports).

**Recommendation 8:** Determine the priority of resources and supports that would further assist AU faculty and other campus stakeholders to increase their ability to disseminate and promote their scholarly and creative activities to external audiences.

**Recommendation 9:** Create a timetable with measureable action steps and dedicated funding to attain the implementation of specific resources and supports to improve the dissemination and promotion of AU faculty scholarship and creative activities to external audiences.

## **6. Management of communications in the dissemination and media placement of faculty scholarship and creative activities**

AU is a mid-sized research university in which media relations are managed centrally by the Division of University Communications (UCM). Integral components of UCM's mission are to:

- lead the university's strategic integrated marketing and communications and provide strategic thinking and creative services to campus work closely aligned with the critical priorities in AU's strategic plan.
- maintain the university's media relationships with reporters and editors and guide others in their interactions with media. We are strategic in the stories we pitch to the media, and put our time into publications and news stories that have the highest impact for the institution.

University Marketing offers marketing strategy at a central level. Media buying is also centrally managed to provide expertise and negotiate better rates that come with total volume. There has been a requirement since 2012 that all advertising and marketing materials created by outside vendors are approved by the Office of the Vice President for Communications. Creative Services (writing, editing, design, photography and web design) are accessible through UCM for projects that are directly related to AU's highest level strategic priorities. Since demand exceeds capacity, UCM often refers requests from academic units to trusted outside vendors when they cannot complete the work. In contrast, Web publishing is highly distributed, with UCM responsible for content on the top-level pages, and unit-level communications specialists responsible for academic unit and department pages.

To ensure effectiveness, unit-level communication specialists must coordinate closely with staff in UCM, the Office of Graduate Studies (OGS), Undergraduate Admissions, and communications specialists in other academic units. Their responsibilities in the academic units primarily focus on the positioning and visibility of the school, its faculty and leadership, and support for student enrollment management. To complement functions provided centrally by UCM to support the strategic mission and brand architecture of AU, communication specialists embedded in academic units ideally enact a parallel set of goals at the unit level, including:

- Gather information on emerging scholarship and creative activities, as well as faculty and student achievements;
- Collaborate with unit-level admissions/enrollment professionals to refine messaging and strategic communications to prospective graduate students, identify program competitors and establish program position; and,
- Help unit leadership to express and communicate a vision for the academic unit that is distinct, compelling and integrated with AU's positioning and brand strategy.

One pressing goal for the next several years will be to build and leverage capacity among unit-level communications specialists in tasks related to marketing strategy and tactics, strategic communications, and in the production of compelling materials and messages for prospective graduate students. It is critical to augment their professional training and experiences to address the areas with gaps in capacity and expertise that are likely to influence quality of support to faculty, graduate enrollment management and the positioning of the academic unit with academic peers. Training and ongoing professional development for unit-level communications specialists should enhance skills and experiences that complement those of colleagues in the central units, to leverage university resources and maximize effectiveness. Ideally, unit-level communications specialists should have the experience and skill set of a generalist at a small institution, including the ability to develop speeches, newsletters, social media, websites, publications and events. They should also have the ability to develop broad content strategies and to collaborate with UCM staff on media and marketing plans that will address the strategic goals of the unit.

### **Roles and Responsibilities of Unit-Level Communications Specialists**

**Critical Role 1:** Develop and implement a unit-level strategic communications plan that is consistent with AU's strategic plan, AU's brand strategy, and school goals.

- Steward the development of a position in the marketplace for the school and its academic programs, distinct from competitors that is the basis for all messages.
- At the unit level, integrate position and messages, leveraging university brand position, in all appropriate communications channels selected.

**Critical Role 2:** Work with a marketing account manager in UCM to develop a compelling marketing strategy and integrate positioning and messages into graduate enrollment management marketing, including advertising, digital marketing and media planning.

- Work with unit faculty and program directors to understand competitors, audiences, current perceptions, pricing considerations (including targeted GFA offers), and key channels in path to enrollment.
- Work with unit graduate enrollment management staff to align marketing strategies with recruitment processes for prospects, admitted and enrolling students.
- Develop marketing budget to maximize resources.
- Develop semi-annual media (advertising) plans with account manager and university's media buying agency in December and June.

- Identify and refine SEO strategies for digital marketing plans.
- Develop engaging web pages for graduate programs.
- Work with third party providers (establishing approval structures, differentiating programs, crafting positioning statements, identifying enrollment capacity).
- Identify and monitor analytics and metrics to evaluate and measure effectiveness.
- Develop collateral materials to support the initiatives of unit leadership.

**Critical Role 3:** Work with a public relations manager in UCM to develop media relations plans for the unit, with regard to potentially high-impact faculty scholarship and key areas of student and faculty achievement.

- Identify emerging faculty scholarship with greatest potential for impact.
- Work with PR manager and faculty members to shape messages that are relevant to key audiences and link to current events and AU strategic goals.
- Provide input on press releases and media pitches.
- Cross-promote media articles on web, via social media, in newsletters and in unit-level publications.
- Collaborate with UCM/Office of Communications to prepare and deliver media training and op-ed writing workshops to improve faculty members' media effectiveness.
- Assist faculty with public relations tactics that complement and leverage media tactics (e.g., book talks, briefings, panels, speaking engagements, blog posts, social media).

**Recommendation 10:** Support for a cross-functional working group that has begun to assess and refine the optimal division of roles and responsibilities between unit- and university-level communications operations in the dissemination and placement of information about AU faculty through traditional and social media.

**Recommendation 11:** Ongoing assessment of skills and competencies and professional development for unit-level communications professionals is needed to ensure high quality, responsive support for faculty in the dissemination and placement of media content about their research, scholarship and creative activities.

**Recommendation 12:** Existing policies and procedures for the placement of media content about faculty scholarship should be published and available for faculty to see so that they have accurate guidance for how they are expected to work with specific campus offices and operations. Similarly, current roles and responsibilities of unit- and university-level communications operations and how they work together should be published so that faculty members have accurate information about where they obtain specific services for the dissemination and promotion of their research, scholarship and creative activities.

## **7. Communicating strategies for increasing research impact to the campus community**

One goal of the task force was to examine strategies for communicating to campus stakeholders national best practices, published resources and strategies, as well as useful case studies describing efforts to improve the dissemination/translation of faculty research,

scholarship and creative activities. Initially, the committee attempted to identify models and practices that appear to result in higher impact outputs, as well as practices that appear to be most appropriate for AU its current stage of development. During the course of discussion, a consensus emerged that identification of useful practices and resources would be helpful to AU's academic community, and in particular more junior faculty members, but that individual faculty members can best decide for themselves which dissemination or communication strategies are most appropriate. There are numerous resources, guides, publications and toolkits available on-line and in other formats that provide guidance for the dissemination of, and tailored communication about scholarship and creative activities to multiple potential target audiences. In addition, published resources exist that can assist faculty members to determine what their primary audiences should be and plan a communication strategy for each phase of the lifecycle of a research project or creative endeavor. Similarly, currently available resources address issues related to the influence of career stage on optimal communication and dissemination strategies.

**Recommendation 13:** A series of information gathering sessions be held with faculty members to determine what communication and dissemination strategies they are most interested in learning more about and accessing in order to increase the impact of their research, scholarship and creative activities. Information gathering could take the forms of focus groups, town hall meetings, on-line surveys, workshops at the Ann Ferren Conference, etc. Similarly, determine from faculty members what training opportunities they would consider most appropriate, effective and useful.

**Recommendation 14:** Create a webpage that provides AU faculty and students information regarding guidance, toolkits and best practices on the dissemination/translation of faculty research, scholarship and creative activities and appropriate communication strategies to promote their research, scholarship and creative activities to targeted external audiences.

**Recommendation 15:** Each department, teaching unit or program identifies leading outlets for scholarly or creative works (e.g., book presses, academic journals, peer-reviewed creative or performing arts venues, awards, etc.) and encourages faculty members to submit their scholarly or creative work to these highly valued outlets.

## **8. Unit-level practices that promote a culture of high impact scholarship and creative activities**

There are a variety of ways in which current practices in teaching and academic units influence the scholarly culture at the university. At the simplest level, promoting scholarly culture and the research and creative activities produced therein requires that faculty members within departments and programs, and within and across academic units are aware of, and appreciate the scholarship of their colleagues. At the next level, practices within units that promote the scholarly and creative works of AU faculty to influential scholars, policymakers, practitioners, and thought leaders also contribute to the university's scholarly culture. Furthermore, a culture of scholarship is promoted at the level of the academic unit through dedicated resources in support of the conduct of research and scholarship, including, in the pursuit of external funding.

Listed below are categories of examples of activities currently ongoing in teaching and academic units at AU that support efforts to promote and deepen a scholarly culture at the University. Many of these practices involve modest levels of resources for implementation and could be adopted by other units if their faculty deem them to be appropriate and useful.

a) Examples of activities to promote awareness among AU faculty of research, scholarship and creative activities conducted by other AU faculty:

- Events to promote the scholarship of specific AU faculty members, such as the SIS public 'book-launch' event series;
- Public displays of faculty members' scholarship and creative activities including enlarged prints of faculty members' books as artwork in the SIS building, public displays of faculty books in CAS and in many departments, as well as faculty member's artworks featured in shows in the Katzen Art Museum or other campus spaces;
- Colloquia and research roundtables are held in most academic units on campus, as well as their constituent teaching units. These are promoted heavily to internal audiences, and may emphasize the research expertise of single or clusters of faculty members, a senior scholar in the discipline, or a candidate for a position at AU. The events may be recorded, live-streamed or involve a range of networking opportunities;
- Most academic units, many departments and sponsored research operations at AU distribute monthly email newsletters that describe the latest scholarly achievements of their faculty including recent publications, awards, exhibitions, performances, creative activities, peer recognitions and new externally-funded grants;
- Most academic units at AU routinely use social media (e.g., Twitter, Facebook), live streaming or the posting of recordings to promote public events held in the academic unit or to promote the scholarship and creative activities of their faculty. Social media and other internal publications are extensively used by support operations and cross-campus service providers (e.g., the Katzen Museum, CTRL, the University Library) to publicize events and to promote the work of AU faculty members;
- Specific units or groups of faculty host virtual communities to collaborate, publicize their work, and disseminate their research. See for example: Café Americain, hosted by the Creative Writing/MFA Program in CAS <https://cafeamericainmfa.wordpress.com/>, the Institute on Disability and Public Policy (IDPP) in SIS <http://www.aseanidpp.org/> and the Game Lab collaboration between CAS and SOC <http://www.american.edu/gamelab/>
- Tagging of AU produced digital media content facilitates searches for relevant stories about AU's faculty and their scholarship or creative activities. Tagged content is pushed to specific webpages for display to site users;
- The AU Events Calendar tags internal events (e.g., for the Arts or Research) to facilitate searches for, and the identification of priority entries for different individuals; and,
- Some academic units and departments (e.g., the School of Communication) are having internal discussions and producing documents that explicitly state unit-level expectations for faculty members' participation in activities to promote their scholarship and enhance its national and international impact.

b) Examples of activities that bring the scholarship and creative activities of AU faculty to the attention of influential scholars, policymakers, practitioners and other external audiences:

- Both the SIS and the CAS Deans' offices provides funds for faculty members to conduct a "book incubator" as a way to both improve and publicize their developing scholarship;
- The SIS Dean's office purchases copies of newly published faculty books, for distribution to key audiences strategically targeted to raise the profile of the book;
- Several academic units film and post digital interviews with faculty to highlight their research, scholarship, creative activities and student mentorship to promote strengths of the academic community at AU and the quality of its research and educational programs;
- All academic units and many departments have active colloquium and seminar series that invite nationally and internationally acclaimed scholars to campus to interact with AU faculty members and students. In addition, AU's Washington College of Law (WCL) offers multiple legal clinics on campus and provides an extensive series of high-impact trainings, seminars and consultancies that promote engagement with local, national and international communities;
- Academic units host workshops and more formal conferences on campus and in downtown locations that attract faculty and students from other universities, encouraging exchanges among participants, disseminating scholarship from the AU academic community and promoting AU's identity and brand recognition; and,
- Institutional partnerships (e.g., with DC-CFAR, Consortium universities and libraries, NIST, NIH and other non-local university and non-university partners) increase access for AU faculty and students to resources, potential collaborators, research settings, expertise and extensive research opportunities.

c) Examples of funding or other resources that support scholarship and creative activities among faculty at AU:

- Several academic units hold internal faculty competitions for funds for travel to conferences to present their scholarship, in addition to annual travel funds provided to faculty members. The Dean of Academic Affairs (DAA) holds an annual competition for funds to support international travel;
- Several academic units and Academic Affairs hold annual internal competitions for funding that supports the research and research-related travel of undergraduate and graduate students, many of whom are assisting faculty members' research or other scholarly or creative projects;
- CAS, SOC, SIS and SPA each administer graduate financial aid (GFA) funds in the form of stipend support to graduate students, who in turn provide research assistance to faculty members on scholarly and creative activities;
- Faculty members with sponsored research awards are now eligible to receive a portion of the overhead attached to the award at the end of each fiscal year in a research account that may be spent on support for their programs of research;

- A number of opportunities exist on campus for faculty to access competitive seed funds or other resources that can support the development of their programs of research, scholarship or creative activities:
  - Academic Affairs sponsors the Faculty Research Support Program each year in which the direct costs of a pilot project may be obtained, up to \$10,000 for a single faculty member or up to \$25,000 for a group proposing a collaborative project;
  - SIS has a competitive internal funding mechanism for collaborative studies among faculty members working in different subfields, such as the SIS Roundtable on the United Nations, which brings UN officials and scholars to campus for invitation-only meetings;
  - Faculty development initiatives exist in several forms in SIS, SPA and CAS wherein faculty members work in a collaborative fashion to enhance the quality and impact of their scholarship via discussion and exchange, feedback and information on grant applications, on-going projects, the broader relevance of their research to different audiences and dissemination strategies;
  - The *Bridging the Gap* in SIS, a Carnegie Foundation funded initiative, is designed to strengthen relations between scholars of International Relations (IR) and the broader foreign policy community, by promoting scholars' policy engagement in a summer fellowship program, thereby strengthening the place of policy-relevant research in IR; and,
  - Competitive funding opportunities exist with some inter-institutional partners for support for pilot projects. For example, faculty at AU who are conducting or interested in conducting HIV/AIDS research are eligible to apply to the pilot project program of the DC D-CFAR.

## **9. The Center for Latin American and Latino Studies: A Case Study Demonstrating Integrated Strategies for Increasing Impact of AU Faculty Scholarship**

Most researchers at AU are interested in finding ways to maximize the impact of their scholarly or creative work, whether that be on peers in their discipline, policy and advocacy constituencies or individuals and institutions in the communities that are the focus of their scholarship and creative activities. But those same researchers face many competing demands on their time. Thus, the most desirable strategies for boosting the impact of scholarly and creative activities are ones that are efficient, that do not diminish research productivity, and that are strategic, in that they maximize payoff to whatever time and resources are invested. By all accounts, thinking about the impact of one's work is most productive if it involves a planning process that begins in the project formulation phase, and is connected to careful consideration of the often disparate audiences whom one might want to reach. Below is a case example of an integrated, intentional approach to the use of strategies for increasing the impact of faculty research and scholarship at American University.

The Center for Latin American and Latino Studies draws on multiple resources to raise the profile of research findings generated through its projects. For virtually all Center-sponsored projects, edited volumes and journal issues produced by academic presses in the U.S. and

abroad, in some instances simultaneously in English and Spanish and/or Portuguese, aim to influence the world of scholarship. We highlight these products in academic conference presentations, advertisements in key professional association publications, and through our website and social media platforms. A working paper series, published with high production value in hard copy and available electronically through SSRN and the CLALS website, provides a mechanism for circulating work in progress, as well as “White Papers” geared toward practitioner audiences. It can also call attention to forthcoming publications in more conventional scholarly venues.

Looking further beyond academe and print outlets, the Center seeks to maximize the impact of its work through a ubiquitous presence on the web and various social media platforms. In the first instance, this involves coordinated sequences of postings on Twitter and Facebook of all such publications, with customized introductory text aimed to appeal to specific audiences. To maximize the impact of such publicity efforts, CLALS strives to maintain up-to-date lists of different types of stakeholders (e.g. scholars, diplomats, journalists, policy makers and government staffers) on all of its e-mail and social media contact lists, and it tailors announcements to these separate audiences. Those announcements are not limited to mentioning research results translated into publications. They are used as well to call attention to public events at AU and elsewhere (and in particular think tanks in the U.S. and abroad where CLALS research is presented; these are almost always streamed live). In addition, videos are posted on YouTube and Vimeo to provide an additional mechanism for illustrating research findings, as are blog posts drawing from the research.

The American University Latin America (AULA) blog, [www.aulablog.net](http://www.aulablog.net) is a key resource for the Center’s efforts to disseminate research results to non-academic and scholarly audiences alike. Entries are typically posted twice per week, almost always following a precise, three paragraph format designed to engage non-academic audiences. A Senior Research Fellow with vast knowledge of Latin American affairs and three decades of experience in the U.S. government works with the CLALS Director Eric Hershberg to sharpen every blog post in such a way as to combine scholarly quality with accessibility to well-informed practitioner readers. Typically, the blog focuses on current developments in Latin American politics, economics and society, or in U.S.-Latin America relations, but posts are interspersed on those topics with pieces derived from scholarly research projects that non-academic readers of the blog might otherwise remain unaware of. This has increasingly generated inquiries from media, policy-makers and others outside academe who are among the thousand or so people who download blog entries each month. To further magnify the impact of the blog, CLALS has entered into a partnership with the Christian Science Monitor and with two Central American newspapers to have them link to the blog posts on their respective sites, and is trying to reach a similar agreement with the Huffington Post and news outlets in several Latin American countries.

A further resource for circulating results of CLALS-sponsored research results from a partnership with Webster University in producing Latin Pulse, a weekly half hour podcast/radio program, directed by Professor Rick Rockwell, which after more than two years of continuous production now boasts roughly 120,000 downloads per week via I-tunes, Soundcloud and other platforms. Latin Pulse provides a venue for participants in research projects to devote up to 10-

12 minutes discussing the significance of their work for understanding key developments in the region. CLALS staff members work diligently to increase the number of followers of this and other initiatives, and the Center now has roughly 4,000 followers on Facebook, several hundred on Twitter, and so on. These efforts have broadened the visibility of CLALS and AU more broadly in a number of communities well beyond academe.

#### **10. Unintended consequences and potential negative outcomes of efforts to promote or disseminate faculty research, scholarship or creative activities**

Members of the task force also discussed potential unintended consequences or negative outcomes from efforts to enhance dissemination or translation of faculty research, scholarship or creative activities. The purpose of the discussion was to think through strategies for reducing challenges and perceived barriers to activities that can increase the impact of faculty members' scholarship and creative activities. Several potential negative consequences or barriers were identified, including:

- Faculty members feeling uncertain about how much promotion to do of their own scholarship or creative activities. It is unclear to many faculty members what is valued in specific academic or teaching units and by the university in general, and in particular how research impact is factored into annual evaluations and the tenure and promotion process;
- Similar to the lack of clarity in the value assigned to activities engaged in to increase research impact, faculty members expressed concerns regarding how "impact" will be quantified;
- In some forms of promotion of one's own scholarship and creative activities (e.g., blogging) many faculty are unsure of how to do this well and would appreciate guidance from the university or from other credible sources; and,
- Some faculty members expressed concerns about promotion efforts "going viral," resulting in legal issues, safety issues or threats to maintaining relationships with funders.