

To: Charles Wharton, Member, UT Board of Trustees
From: Louis Gross, UTK Faculty Senate Past- President
Re: Your comments on Research funding at UT
Date: February 1, 2008
Cc: Professor Candace White, Vice Chancellor Brad Fenwick

First, this is to reiterate my thanks for your hospitality last week. Our candidate for a faculty position was greatly impressed by the facilities as well as the performance of the Lady Vols.

During our conversation, among other comments you made regarding UT, you stated that “all the recent gains in research funding at UT are due to gains in the Institute of Agriculture”. I did not have the data at hand to refute this statement at the time, but I have included it below. These data are taken from the official University of Tennessee Budget Summary for Fiscal year 2007-2008, which is posted on the web at <http://budget.tennessee.edu/docs.html>

This is a long document, so I have attached only the relevant pages to this letter. The Budget provides the recent history of Grant and Contract revenue, summarized below for the main UT units (e.g. averaging > \$10M per year) that generate such funds. These numbers include Unrestricted as well as Restricted funds (typically, external funding from federal and other government grants and from government and private firm contracts is Restricted), but given that the Unrestricted funds for each unit have remained essentially flat over the time period, changes in revenue are due almost completely to changes in Restricted fund income over this time period.

Unit	FY 2004 Actual	FY 2007 Probable	Four-year Change Amount	%
UTK	\$124,157,042	156,990,000	32,832,958	26.4
Agric. Units	27,505,720	29,753,272	2,247,552	8.2
UTHSC	150,162,276	163,730,245	13,567,969	9.0
UTC	17,082,752	26,280,726	9,197,974	53.8
Total	318,907,790	376,754,243	57,846,453	18.1

So over this four year period, of the total change in Grant and Contract Revenue to UT, 56.8 % of the gain is due to increased revenues at UTK, 3.9 % is due to increased revenues for the Agricultural Units, 23.5 % is due to increased revenues at the Health Science Center and 15.9 % is due to increased revenues at UTC.

I do not know who provided the information that led to your statement on this matter, but whoever did provide it has supplied you (and presumably the rest of the Board of Trustees) with incorrect information. I encourage you to discount any information you receive from those who provided this incorrect statement to you. There are many individuals, including UTK Vice Chancellor for Research Brad Fenwick, who can provide you and the Board of Trustees with more complete information about the external Grant and Contract funding which is critical to the research mission of UT.

Faculty across the UT System have had to work very hard to increase external funding, given the highly competitive nature of such funding, and their efforts should be lauded. False facts are highly injurious to the proper functioning of UT, and I encourage you to reprimand the individuals who provided you with the incorrect information that led to your statement.

I'd be happy to talk with you about any aspect of my comments. I appreciate all the effort you and other members of the Board devote to enhancing the opportunities provided by UT to the people of the State.

Sincerely,

Louis J. Gross
Professor of Ecology and Evolutionary Biology and Mathematics
Director, The Institute for Environmental Modeling