St. Francis Xavier University
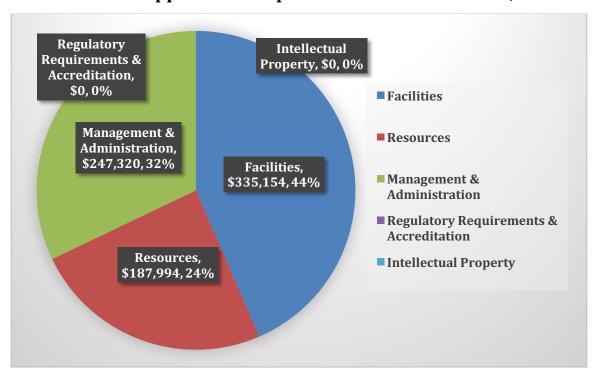
Summary of Research Support Fund (RSF) Funding and Outcomes 2019-20

Total Research Support Fund Expenditures 2019-20 = $770,468

Facilities   **$335,154 (43.5%)**

High-quality, well-maintained research facilities are a critical component in a university's ability to attract and retain high-quality faculty researchers and in turn, students at the undergraduate and graduate levels. Accordingly, the largest portion of our Research Support Fund grant is allocated towards the ongoing operating costs of maintaining (including cleaning and security) of our research facilities.

This investment contributes to support services that ensure a healthy

and safe research environment for our faculty and student researchers, and our research support staff. The Research Support Fund gives StFX University the ability to address a significant portion of the indirect costs of research associated with research facilities, including technical support and upkeep of StFX Animal Care Facilities and the StFX Electronics and Machine Shops.

StFX is continuing to expand its existing base of research facilities, in particular with the opening in 2019-20 of new research facilities based in Mulroney Hall, a newly constructed $50M research and teaching centre that is home to the newly created Brian Mulroney Institute of Government. This new building increases our overall costs related to research facilities maintenance and operation. As operational costs of research facilities continue to grow, the Research Support Fund grant has become a vital funding component for the University's research enterprise as it assists in offsetting these mounting costs. Without this funding, we could not operate our research facilities at the current high standard and it would have been exceedingly difficult to support research at its current level. The Research Support Fund grant is an essential piece of funding that contributes to our success through its use in maintaining our high-quality research facilities for our researchers.

Research Resources   **$187,994 (24.4%)**

Maintaining access to up-to-date information resources is a critical component in StFX's ability to attract and retain high quality researchers. Modern researchers continue to look for information to be readily available at their desktops. The Research Support Fund grant at StFX has been used to help defray costs related to acquisition of library resources, including the purchase of books and paper journals as well as the leasing of electronic journals and databases, all of which are crucial components of our research platform. With RSF support, StFX is able to continue to experiment with new electronic library resources that serve evolving research needs.

In total we have directed approximately one quarter of the Research Support Fund grant allocation towards supporting these Research Resources. This support provides the University with research

resources that serve as incentives in recruiting and retaining active faculty researchers, particularly within an increasingly competitive research marketplace. Our ongoing research activities continue to place additional demands on library resources, the costs of which are ever increasing due to external market forces. StFX also participates in consortia for research information purchase/leasing arrangements, which helps to level the information access playing field with respect to larger institutions and reduce total costs of research resources. The leveraging of these information resources is part of an overall package we strive to provide for our researching faculty members in carrying out their research activities. The availability and access to information resources permit our researchers the opportunity to focus more on the research at hand and free them from other information coordination tasks that would take time away from their primary research activities. Without the support of the Research Support Fund it would be more difficult for researchers to access essential information and conduct their research work.

Management and Administration $247,320 (32.1%)

Providing access to efficient research management and administration support is another critical component in StFX's overall ability to attract and retain high-quality researchers. Enhancing the quality of our research-related administration service standards while simultaneously addressing increasing research funding compliance requirements is making research administration more challenging and complex.

The demands of broad research management and administration requirements at a small university like StFX continually challenge us to continually strive to improve our overall research administration efforts within a framework of limited resources. As part of this, we continue to support the maintenance of our research grant, contract and certification tracking platforms. StFX invests a portion of RSF in an annual license for the ROMEO software package that staff use to track research applications and link certification requirements (e.g. Research Ethics Board and Animal Care Committee approvals). This reduces the administrative burden placed upon the researchers while enhancing the institution's ability to ensure that the many administrative functions

related to research are being addressed. We have expanded our use of ROMEO in 2019-20 with the addition of the researcher portal, at additional cost to the institution, in an effort to create efficiencies in research facilitation, management and administration.

Improvements in processes and procedures related to the administration of research grants enhance the ability of our research-focused administrative personnel to support our research faculty members. With approximately one third of the Research Support Fund grant allocated towards the management and administration of research the RSF has helped us provide stronger administrative support for our overall research enterprise. Funding is also directed towards research administrative staff training. Had we not made the investments in research management and administration, it would not have been possible for us to maintain our administrative support to StFX's researchers.

Regulatory Requirements and Accreditation $0 (0%)

As the indirect costs of research exceed the funds provided by the RSF program, the University makes allocations against the RSF program funds only for those expenses in sections 1, 2 and 3. Indirect costs incurred for items in this section (4) and the following section (5) are covered from the operating budget or from specific funding allocations from other agencies.

Intellectual Property $0 (0%)

As the indirect costs of research exceed the funds provided by the RSF program, the University makes allocations against the RSF program funds only for those expenses in sections 1, 2 and 3. Indirect costs incurred for items in this section (5) are covered from the operating budget or from specific funding allocations from other agencies.

Overall Impacts of the Research Support Fund at St. Francis Xavier University

1. Attraction and retention of researchers

There are many components to an effective research platform: modern high-quality research facilities; capable administrative supports; access to research resources. All are critical. In an increasingly competitive research and employment market, the Research Support Fund grant assists the University by providing foundational support for these core components of a successful research platform - a platform that is highly attractive to world-class researchers and that meets their expectations for a supportive research environment.

2. Attraction of additional funding

While the Research Support Fund grant is not used as matching funding or as seed money, it supports the facilities, resources and support structures that need to be in place in order to attract research funding. The Research Support Fund enables researchers at StFX University apply for research funding from a broad range of provincial, regional, national and international funding sources, as well as attract research partners in government, industry and no-government and philanthropic sectors. These also help support the University's overall effort to involve undergraduate and graduate students in substantive research training efforts.

3. Redirection of funds

No

4. Other overall impacts

The investments we have been able to make with the Research Support Fund grant have supported and increased the overall StFX research footprint, helping maintain morale and research productivity among the researchers at our university. Supporting and strengthening the research culture at StFX is an institutional priority and is an acknowledgement that excellent research can also take place at a

smaller university.   The Research Support Fund also enables a small University such as StFX to continue offering exceptional research training opportunities to undergraduate students, as well as a modest number of graduate students.

Public disclosure

Comments

The Research Support Fund Program helps provide basic infrastructure and administrative support for attracting and retaining high-quality faculty and student researchers at our university. At StFX we have directed the funding to targeted areas that were in need of support and where that support would have the largest positive impact on our institution, while also playing a key role in the maintenance and growth of our research platform. With the continued growth in research activities, the pressure on the University's infrastructure has increased. Within this climate the University strives to remain responsive to the needs of a modern competitive research environment. Without the funds provided by the Government of Canada Research Support Fund, StFX would certainly have had a significantly diminished research capacity and reduced opportunities for student involvement in research. The Research Support Fund grant is a critical foundational piece of funding in our overall research platform.