Externally Funded Grants and Contracts

HHS brought in $10.16 million. (See Figure 1 on page 5 for details.) The dollar amount is higher than any other academic unit on campus. However, this reflects a modest (0.65%) decrease over the prior record year.

Campus wide, there are 17 departments/offices/centers that brought in over $1 million dollars. Five of these are from within HHS.

- Nutrition ($1.01 million; NTR is new to the list this year.)
- Social Work ($1.07 million)
- Kinesiology ($1.24 million)
- Public Health Education ($1.27 million)
- Human Development and Family Studies ($4.47 million; this is the largest amount of external funding for an academic department campus wide.)

HHS Initiatives in 2021-2022

HHS Research Advisory Committee: The HHS Research Advisory Committee (RAC) members advise the Associate Dean for Research about a number of matters including the use of resources, research policies, and researcher needs. They also review internal grant applications and serve as the selection committee for HHS Faculty Research Grants and HHS Top-Off Funding Awards. The committee consists of seven faculty from HHS departments. The 2021-2022 members were: Lucia Méndez (CSD), Ben Hickerson (CTR), Catherine Scott-Little (HDF), Lenka Shriver (NTR), Amanda Tanner (PHE), and Laurie Wideman (KIN).

Summer Grant Writing Fellows Program (SGWFP): Three faculty fellows participated in the SGW, each with a senior mentor. The fellows were Tamar Goldenberg (PHE), Tracy Nichols (PHE), and Kierra Sattler (HDF), and their mentors were Amanda Tanner (PHE), Sandra Shultz (KIN/CWHW), and Jill Duerr Berrick (UC Berkeley), respectively. Each planned to submit a grant to NIH, NSF, or the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation by June 2023.

The SGWFP fellows attended a virtual orientation session in which characteristics of good mentor-mentee relationships were discussed, completed a writing and mentoring plan, and attended six (6) workshops; the workshops were (1) Grant Writing for Maximum Impact, (2) NIH Biosketch & Rigor and Reproducibility, (3) Putting Your Best Foot Forward: Dissecting the Critical First Page, (4) Optimizing Grant Content and Style for Success, (5) Specific Aims, (6) Grant Budgeting 101, (7) How to Work Successfully with HHS Office of Research, (8) Nailing the Ancillary Documents, and (9) Understanding NIH: Mechanisms, Criteria, Review Process. We received much assistance from other university offices (the Office of Research and Engagement and the Office of Sponsored Programs) in the facilitation of these workshops and in the collaboration with and advice for the fellows. This program began in summer 2015 and has had 33 participants (6 have since left the university.) Nine of the fellows have received
awards for the proposals which were submitted as part of the program. The cumulative return on investment to date is $36.87 for every dollar spent.

The award amounts for the SGWFP offers an option to faculty who are interested in grant proposal preparation allowing them to concentrate solely on a grant proposal versus teaching a summer course AND working on a grant proposal. The SGWFP offers training to faculty in order to guide them through the proposal preparation process and offers support via an identified faculty mentor and other faculty with grant-writing expertise; also, OOR provides guidance with budget preparation and financially supports the external review of proposals by both a content expert and an editorial expert. These lend to the strength of the program.

**HHS Faculty Research Grants (FRG) and Top-Off Funding Program (TOFP):** Both the Faculty Research Grants and the Top-Off Funding Program began accepting applications in fall 2019. In the spring 2022 cohort, one individual and four multidisciplinary grants were funded. Four applications were received for the FRG funds, and two applications were received for the TOFP funds. After review by the HHS Research Advisory Committee and the revision of several of the proposals, five applications were funded. Recipients of the HHS Faculty Research Grants were: Jared McGuirt (NTR); Sandra Shultz (KIN) & Randy Schmitz (KIN); and Jessica Dollar (KIN) & Jaclyn Maher (KIN). The recipients of the Top-Off Funding Grants were: Jessica McNeil (KIN) & Jaclyn Wideman (KIN); and Tamar Goldenberg (PHE), Amanda Tanner (PHE), & Jennifer Erasmus (PHE). A total of $43,458 was awarded for these projects. Funding for these was provided by the Dean’s Initiative funding that was received from the UNCG Office of Research and Engagement (ORE).

These mechanisms will continue to be offered in 2022-2023 if funding is available.

**HHS Faculty Excellence Awards:** The Faculty Excellence Awards winners were Sandra Shultz (KIN) for the Senior Research Excellence Award, Jaclyn Maher (KIN) for the Junior Research Excellence Award, and Emily Janke (PCS) for the Community Engaged Scholar Award.

**Scientific and Editorial Review of External Proposals:** The Office of Research supported the external review of ten proposals involving twelve HHS faculty for a total of $5,950.

**Special Projects Initiative:** Through the Special Projects Initiative, we were able to provide funding for equipment, supplies, etc. in interdisciplinary labs providing for enhanced collaborative work by the users. Requests may be for internal bridge funding, seminar speakers, research equipment, research supplies, scientific software, or other research-related items. In 2021-2022, one of these ‘Special Projects’ requests was funded for a scientific computer for Nutrition research.

**Travel Support for Research-Related Training or Consultation Initiative:** We provided support to two individual faculty through the Travel Support for Research-Related Training or Consultation Initiative; these individuals attended workshops or conferences to increase their knowledge-base and hone skills needed for their respective research areas. Through this same initiative, we funded a proposal submitted Dr. Sandra Shultz on behalf of the Center for Women’s Health and Wellness to host Dr. Karen Mustain during the Fall 2021 semester for a 3-hour workshop on conceptualizing and proposing a clinical trials research grant; the working title of the workshop was, “Tips and Strategies For Successful Clinical Trials.”

**Research Networking and/or Team Building Initiative:** Forging collaborations was the intent of the funding to support the Research Networking and/or Team Building Initiative. Two individuals were
supported by this. The faculty traveled to collaborate with others in their field in order to foster a relationship that would enhance the UNCG researchers’ portfolio and create building blocks for future professional relationships and possible externally funding grant proposals. One faculty used the funding to support travel for the research study, “Rapid health evaluation in migrant persons in transit at the Migratory Reception Stations in the Province of Darién, Panamá”; travel was to Meteti, Darien Province, Panama supporting the faculty member’s role to “supervise data collection at Migrant Reception Stations, with clinical (basic health exam) and self-administered survey components. The target population is migrants as they emerge from the Darien Gap (dense jungle route, a 60-mile break in the Pan American Highway) on their way north to the US or Canada. The study aims to describe the health status and health needs of these migrants.” The other faculty member was supported for travel to a conference over which they served as Chairperson at the 2022 Annual Meeting of the Society for Applied Anthropology in Salt Lake City, UT.

**Scholars’ Travel Fund and HHS Scholars’ Travel Fund:** In conjunction with the Office of Research and Engagement, this provides faculty members with supplemental travel funds to support presentation of their research, scholarship, or creative activity, to serve as chairpersons, to participate as panelists, or to contribute in other appropriate manners at scholarly meetings. Eight HHS faculty members received funding from this initiative in 2021-2022.

**HHS International Travel Fund:** Given that international travel is quite costly, the HHS International Travel Fund was used to supplement the research-related travel of faculty. This funding allowed the individual to travel and represent UNCG on an international level. Through this initiative, we funded one faculty for international research-related travel.

**Research Space Allocation:** HHS maintains, allocates and supports a number of research facilities for faculty. Space in all of UNCG’s buildings is very limited, so priority for the allocation and use of research space is always given to externally funded projects. Needs for space are identified at the time of proposal submission and brought to the attention of the Associate Dean for Research; all investigators are asked to send a formal request when proposals are submitted. When a project is funded, the Associate Dean for Research will work with the investigator to identify space options. During the 2021-2022 fiscal year, the Office of Research worked with thirteen faculty members to allocate space for use during their research. This was enhanced by the addition of designated research space in the Moore Building. In Moore, collaborative graduate/undergraduate research project team space for Community-Based Participatory Research (CBPR) projects and a CBPR lab were allocated to Dr. Sharon Morrison (PHE) and Dr. Sudha Shreeniwas (HDF) for their CBPR work; additionally, five offices/spaces were allocated to the GCSTOP research team led by Dr. Melissa Floyd-Pickard (SWK). The use of this research space is re-evaluated each year, and the faculty are asked to re-establish their application for use of the space annually. It is worth noting that the HHS research space is aging and will need updates to furnishings and to facilities (paint, carpeting, etc.) in the near future.

**Projects in 2021-2022**

The HHS Office of Research will continue work on the equity audit of their programs, initiatives, and services to determine if there are ways we are being inequitable/maintaining status quo. The work on this equity audit began during 2020-2021 and will continue in future years. Here are some action plans set forth for progression of the equity audit. This is a fluid process; here is current thinking on the remaining phases, but we recognize this will evolve over time.
Phase 3, Identify priorities, set goals, generate strategies: Once results have been synthesized, shared, and discussed we will generate targets and efforts to achieve them. These steps may involve the HHS OOR Equity Audit working group, a reformulation of this working group, the HHS Racial Equity Task Force, the HHS DEI committee, HHS Executive and Chairs Councils, newly established entities, or some combination thereof. This phase will need to be reassessed as the other phases are completed as new priorities, goals, and strategies may emerge.

Phase 4, Implement strategies: It is difficult to comment on these until we know more. It may also be the case that we invite commentary on the plans prior to implementation. It may also be that strategies get phased in over time rather than all at once.

Phase 5, Evaluation: We maintain many internal records which will facilitate ongoing evaluation to some degree. We will need to decide how many years of data post implementation are needed to draw reasonable conclusions about the efficacy of new strategies. In addition, we may want to collect additional quantitative and qualitative data at some point.

We have steps planned to continue this work; they are as follows:

• Communication (website). We will add a section to our website devoted exclusively to our EDI efforts. It will include access to the background/history that led to the audit and all written reports. The focal point, however, will be a visual depiction of progress made to date and future plans to implement the identified strategies. We will also work to visually display data annually about how we allocate financial support. Updates will periodically be disseminated via email on the listserv.

• Implementing additional strategies over time. We will continue to implement additional identified strategies over time as resources (both time and money) allow.

• Evaluation plans. We will continue to collate internal data about faculty applications/awards and other sources of support, and we intend to share data annually on the website. In three years, we will replicate the quantitative analyses and collect additional qualitative data to see if our efforts are beginning to move the needle and to identify needed course corrections. At that time, we will lay out the longer-term evaluation plan.

Additionally, as identified by the equity audit, the HHS OOR mission statement will be clarified and will be aligned to the services offered. Revisions are underway and will be completed in 2022-2023.
HHS External Funding Trends Over Time 2022

Comparison with Other Academic Units

Awards: HHS brought in $10.16 million. The dollar amount is higher than any other academic unit on campus. However, this reflects a modest 6.5% decrease over the prior record year. The below graph (Figure 1) illustrates patterns of external funding over time, by academic unit. The gap between HHS and A&S has shrunk to less than $30,000. Some units are experiencing growth in the dollar amount of awards, and it is anticipated that they will continue to rise given the ADVANCE grant targets STEM; additionally, A&S and Education have implemented some of HHS’ programs/initiatives to support their research faculty.

Applications: The number of applications HHS submitted fell (58 vs. 82). Though, the dollar value of these requests (see Figure 2) increased this year compared to last year ($38.68 million vs. $30.11 million.) A&S, Nursing, VPA, and Bryan School enjoyed increases in the dollar value of applications submitted, $4.47 million increase, $2.28 million increase, $212,485 increase, and $2.36 million increase, respectively. The gap in applications between HHS and A&S decreased this year. To remain in the position as the top academic unit regarding external funding, HHS will need to ensure submissions are strong in the coming year(s). From looking at these data, it seems two record years of submissions are required to see a big increase in awards. The HHS Office of Research will continue to encourage the pursuit of diversity and administrative supplements on existing NIH awards as one possibility, but other ideas will be necessary to maintain a high level of applications. Creative suggestions to develop faculty-grant writing talent and increase faculty submissions are being sought.

Fig. 1

Awards by Academic Unit Over Time

![Graph showing awards by academic unit over time (2012-2023)]
Departmental data: The graphs on the following page illustrate the same data by departments within HHS.

Awards: Awards are up compared to last year in CTR, NTR, PCS, and PHE (Figure 3).

Applications: HDF and KIN demonstrated an increase in the dollar amount of applications (Figure 4); both departments roughly doubled their applications. Each department chair received a graph displaying their own departments’ trends in submissions and awards over time; the chairs are encouraged to meet with the Associate Dean for Research in the fall to discuss these data and to strategize ways to increase faculty submissions and awards in the future.