UNIVERSITY OF KENTUCKY

Office of the President
101 Main Building
Lexington, KY 40506-0032
(859) 257-1701
Fax: (859) 257-1760
www.uky.edu

August 28, 2006

Chairman Tom Coburn
Subcommittee on Federal Financial Management
Attn: Anna Shopen
439 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510
Fax: 202-228-3796

Dear Senator Coburn:

Thank you for your letter of July 27 regarding federal appropriations. As a flagship land grant university, we have a very active research program. From our fiscal year 2000 through fiscal 2006, we received a growing number of federal dollars to support our research and educational activities. Our total federal awards rose from $67 million in 2000 to $155 million in 2006. Because most of these awards are for the support of projects that individual researchers develop and submit for competitive review, there is a very long list of projects that add up to the $155 million received last year. While we have a very transparent website http://www.research.uky.edu/ that provides a great deal of information about our research programs, we do not routinely generate such a detailed list. And because our researchers are highly motivated to make sure that their research is publicized through peer reviewed journals, we do not have a single, unified database that would catalogue the many thousands of such articles. We do highlight our successful researchers in a number of ways, one of which is in our research magazine *Odyssey*. I am enclosing several copies and will place you on our mailing list for future issues.

The direct appropriations that the Kentucky Delegation works hard to acquire for the university are an important part of UK's federally funded projects. This effort has had a positive impact on the university and the state. In the six years from 2000 through 2006, UK received over 100 direct appropriations worth a total of $120 million. These funds are used judiciously to build capacity in the university that allows our researchers to compete for merit reviewed funding. These dollars are used to start critical new initiatives. An example is the Kentucky Oral Health Initiative (KOHI), which brings together the academic and clinical strengths of UK in the areas of oral healthcare, OB/GYN, and CVD nursing and medicine to expand community-based prevention (research and treatment) in order to improve oral healthcare for disadvantaged/ disenfranchised populations in the Commonwealth. Another program is the Abandoned Mine Lands Reforestation project, which has found new ways of planting formerly mined

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land with high-value hardwood forests and has reforested over 3,000 acres in Kentucky. The Advanced Genetic Technologies program seeks to advance our understanding of plant and animal diseases and also to bring new economic opportunities to the region. After the initial federal support, the investigators have been able to secure competitive funding to further this research.

The University of Kentucky has a very broad research program since we have colleges of medicine, pharmacy, agriculture, engineering, basic arts and sciences, education, public health, health sciences, dentistry, fine arts, design, and communication. It is therefore impossible to have a single metric of success. A project in the arts might lead to the restoration of rare documents, whereas a study in medicine might lead to a treatment for cancer. Not all projects have successful outcomes, but that is the nature of research.

The University of Kentucky does not have a policy regarding Congressional earmarks, but we take very seriously our responsibility to use direct appropriations to grow programs, develop infrastructure, and build critical mass, all of which allow our researchers to compete for research dollars and provide services that are needed in Kentucky. We believe it is important that all of our researchers know of all the opportunities for funding, and so we have an office of program development that assists faculty in learning about funding opportunities at NIH, NSF, DOD, DOE, and other federal agencies as well as through state and private sources. We also have a federal relations officer who is charged with working with our faculty and with federal agencies and our Congressional delegation to ensure that there are good lines of communication. We find that in addition to identifying funding sources, we want to have a means to educate our delegation about the outstanding work being done here as well as be able to raise concerns we might have about proposed federal agency policies, such as export controls.

We find that all of our federal funds are important to the university. The strong reliance on peer review helps guarantee that top quality research is funded. The interest we have here at UK to ensure that research is being done that is relevant for questions facing the Commonwealth and the nation is one that is shared by our delegation. As an EPSCoR state, we appreciate the need to support infrastructure at institutions that are not as wealthy as some; given that infrastructure, we can compete. Federal funding for research has been key to developing the modern research university.

Sincerely,

Lee T. Todd, Jr.
President

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