Reflections on an Excellent Year

The 2014-15 fiscal year has been an excellent one for NC State research, innovation and economic development efforts. All indicators are that new records will be set in research expenditures and achievements, innovation, and national recognition.

It has also been a year of change. At the end of 2014, Terri Lomax joined RTI International after seven years as the vice chancellor for research, innovation and economic development. Those years had tremendous successes, such as two of the largest grants NC State has received in its history — for the Laboratory for Analytic Sciences (LAS) and the Next Generation Power Electronics National Manufacturing Innovation Institute, known as PowerAmerica.

NC State also had record-breaking research expenditures in excess of $446 million in 2013-14. According to National Science Foundation (NSF) classifications, about $189 million of that was in life sciences; about $163 million in engineering and computer science; about $69 million in physical, environmental and mathematical sciences; and about $25 million in social sciences, psychology, education and other disciplines.

The most recent NSF data ranks NC State fifth in the country among public universities without a medical school for expenditures in industry-sponsored research, and 10th in total research expenditures.

Building on the activities and successes of our Institute for Advanced Analytics (IAA), the $60 million-plus LAS; and the data-driven sciences cluster funded by the Chancellor’s Faculty Excellence Program, we announced a university-wide Data Science Initiative in December 2014. IAA, which has tripled its enrollment since its inception in 2007, has a new home in the Alliance Building on Centennial Campus.

PowerAmerica — announced by President Obama in 2014 and still the largest grant NC State has ever received at over $140 million — also has new offices, in Venture Place on Centennial Campus.

NC State is the only university in the nation that currently leads two NSF Engineering Research Centers. In May, NSF reaffirmed continuation of funding for both.

In January, a University of North Carolina systemwide study reported NC State’s annual economic impact is at least $6.5 billion in added state income. See page 23 for details.

A significant portion — about $1.6 billion — comes from NC State research spending and startup activities. Our researchers, innovators and entrepreneurs have not disappointed us. Indeed, in 2014-15 our innovation and technology transfer activities reached new heights. We close our state fiscal year with a record-breaking 12 startups. Female entrepreneurs lead five of these startups. Look for details in the next issue of Results.

Of the 155 responses to the 2013 Licensing Activity Survey conducted by the Association of University Technology Managers, NC State ranked 10th for licenses and options executed. Among universities without medical schools, NC State consistently ranked among the top 10, including second in licenses and options executed, seventh in invention disclosures, seventh in startups formed and ninth in U.S. patents issued.

It has been a pleasure and a privilege serving in the role of interim vice chancellor for research, innovation and economic development. I offer a big “thank you” to ORIED staff for your dedication and outstanding services. Thanks also to NC State research support staff and administrators for enabling our scientists, engineers and scholars. And I especially thank NC State faculty, researchers and innovators for your efforts and world-class achievements. I know our successes will continue.

MLADEN A. VOUK, Interim Vice Chancellor
Research, Innovation and Economic Development