Pursuing

EXCELLENCE

THE RESEARCH FOUNDATION FOR THE STATE UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK

2013 Annual Report
Across every aspect of our business, we advanced in 2013 to new levels of performance, continually reaching for excellence in fulfilling our mission to serve SUNY and New York.

Guided by the leadership and vision of Governor Cuomo and Chancellor Zimpher, and the wisdom of our esteemed Research Council, we made strategic investments in new initiatives that maximize and energize the collective contribution and impact of SUNY research. START-UP NY and SUNY’s Networks of Excellence form part of The Innovation New York Network created to foster collaboration across the state, attract venture capital to higher education, and generate new opportunities for job creation and economic growth. Investments in funding programs such as the Research Collaboration Grant Program and Technology Accelerator Fund produced new intercampus and interdisciplinary cooperatives, and new commercially viable technologies.

At the same time, we stayed focused on delivering essential core sponsored programs administration and innovation support services for faculty and students performing life-changing research in life sciences and medicine; engineering and nanotechnology; physical sciences and energy; social sciences; and computer and information sciences.

In FY 2013 the RF achieved record growth amidst challenging times. A 15% increase in sponsored programs revenue brought volume
over the $1 billion mark for the first time in the RF’s 62-year history. The RF received a positive audit report from the New York State Office of the State Comptroller. The audit found that the RF’s methodology for assessing the campuses is fair and equitable and that campus officials are satisfied with the services provided by the RF’s central office.

As an organization, we learned and developed together at a new standard and pace, recognizing the magnitude and import of our work as the largest, most comprehensive university-connected research foundation in the country, serving SUNY and New York State. We continue to review and evaluate our policies, procedures and processes to improve our service and conduct our business as effectively as possible.

2013 was a year of achievement made possible by the steadfast commitment of a most dedicated and highly resourceful workforce and the support of our partners at SUNY and throughout the state.

TIM KILLEEN

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On the cover: (Clockwise from top left) Shark conservation study at Stony Brook University; bio-based materials development at the SUNY College of Environmental Science and Forestry; sensors research at Binghamton University; student research opportunity at SUNY Downstate Medical Center, and state-of-the-art R&D and prototype manufacturing infrastructure at the College of Nanoscale Science and Engineering.
“These SUNY Networks of Excellence will bring together our top scientists and researchers to further our understanding of pressing societal issues, and in turn draw new venture capital to invest in commercialization activities that address our challenges in energy, the environment, economics and education. As part of our Innovation Agenda, this initiative will help bring our best ideas to market right here in New York State.”

ANDREW M. CUOMO, Governor of New York State

Excellence in RESEARCH

Research leads to invention and innovation. The RF has made strategic investments to maximize the collective impact of SUNY research to strengthen the innovation economy that is steadily building across New York State. By fostering collaboration, attracting private partners and uncovering new opportunities, these investments support the work of faculty and students who perform research for public benefit worldwide. In 2013 grants awarded for research and other sponsored programs at SUNY topped $1 billion for the first time.

NETWORKS OF EXCELLENCE
Supported by a $4 million investment from the RF, New York State launched four Networks of Excellence that position the nation’s largest comprehensive system of public higher education to become a global scientific leader. Each network brings scientists and scholars from SUNY campuses across the state to collaborate on research projects in transformative areas – SUNY 4E (Energy, Environment, Economics and Education), SUNY Health, SUNY Brain and SUNY Materials and Advanced Manufacturing.

These networks are designed to generate innovation, grow the economy, spin out new companies and create jobs.

RESEARCH COLLABORATION GRANT PROGRAM
In 2013 the RF and SUNY awarded $700,000 to faculty researchers who work with colleagues across the system to address big societal issues. The Research Collaboration Grant Program maximizes the impact of SUNY’s research by helping new and existing intercampus collaborations mature into long-term partnerships with sustained growth. The program seeks out projects that demonstrate originality, student involvement and the potential to attract future funding. The program funds a broad range of scientific research at SUNY, including projects that seek to improve cancer detection and treatment, medical imaging and diagnostics, and climate change.

STEM RESEARCH OPPORTUNITIES FOR SUNY UNDERGRADUATES
Increasing student success in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) provides the basis for a globally competitive New York. The RF dedicated $300,000 to stimulate undergraduate recruitment and persistence in STEM and give SUNY graduates a competitive edge as they enter the workforce.

Micro-plastic pollution survey of the Great Lakes, SUNY Fredonia.

Solar energy research, Binghamton University.
“It’s a huge help to get the TAF award. My overarching goal is to translate this discovery from the bench-to-the-bedside-to-the-curb so as to combat an unmet medical need in cancer resistance.”

SABINE BROUXHON
Clinical Associate Professor of Emergency Medicine, Stony Brook University
“SUNY and its Research Foundation are committed to accountability, professional courtesy, fairness, good stewardship and – above all – integrity in the conduct of scholarly research.”

H. CARL MCCALL
Chairman, State University of New York Board of Trustees

Excellence in
SPONSORED PROGRAMS ADMINISTRATION

Thousands of brilliant minds at SUNY are exploring new ideas and advancing the latest technologies. The RF’s sponsored programs administration services allow faculty and staff to focus on research. In 2013 the RF implemented best-in-class resources, tools and guidance for managing 6,983 SUNY research, training and public service projects.

ONLINE EFFORT REPORTING TOOL
The RF eased a major burden of sponsored programs management for SUNY faculty researchers and administrative staff with the implementation of the ecert® web-based system for effort reporting. The new online tool streamlines the process for complying with a key federal requirement – certifying that the amount of work required as a condition of a grant has been completed.

COMPLIANCE AND RESEARCH INTEGRITY
The RF ensures that SUNY research projects comply with government, sponsor and university regulations that cover such activities as hiring employees, purchasing supplies, working with human and animal subjects and reporting results. Notable achievements in 2013 include implementing two new compliance resources that ensure the protection and welfare of human and animal research subjects, and an enterprise-wide Statement on Research Integrity that holds SUNY and the RF to the highest standards of excellence in the ethical conduct of research.

FEDERAL DEMONSTRATION PROJECT
The RF’s role as a charter member of the Federal Demonstration Project reflects its leadership in research administration. This association of federal agencies, academic research institutions and research policy organizations works to improve and streamline processes for managing federally sponsored research projects.

UNIVERSITY-INDUSTRY DEMONSTRATION PARTNERSHIP
Industry-sponsored programs is a rapidly growing segment of SUNY’s research portfolio. The RF negotiated a unique systemwide membership in the University-Industry Demonstration Partnership that helps SUNY faculty and staff better understand the culture and constraints of their industry counterparts. This membership has opened new research opportunities for faculty.
“I look forward to the networking and professional development opportunities that being a protégé will foster. This program will allow me to grow and become more capable as a leader.”

BRENT DANEGA
Human Resources Manager, SUNY Cortland

Excellence in
LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT

The RF is a learning and development organization supporting employees, faculty, staff and the research community to strengthen their skills, achieve their professional goals and expand their knowledge and abilities in all areas of RF operations. Mentoring, leadership training and continual education foster growth and advance SUNY’s research enterprise.

LEARNING TUESDAYS
Occurring on a bimonthly basis, Learning Tuesdays instruct on the business of SUNY’s research enterprise. Since its initial live-streaming broadcast, 24 programs have aired on topics spanning administrative, transactional and compliance matters.

SPONSORED PROGRAMS FUNDAMENTALS
Sponsored programs administration is a complex and highly regulated field. The RF launched Sponsored Programs Fundamentals in 2013 to guide employees through requirements and protocols of grants management. The course was developed in collaboration with SUNY campus experts to provide participants with the skills, knowledge and practical learning they need to assist and guide faculty researchers.

RF MENTORING PROGRAM
The RF Mentoring Program connects seasoned professionals with protégés to build the skills and expertise necessary to advance and achieve. The RF Mentoring Program extends to SUNY campuses across the state, including Binghamton University, SUNY Buffalo State, SUNY Cobleskill, SUNY Cortland, University at Albany, University at Buffalo and Upstate Medical University.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT
Professional development is critical to performance. The RF invests in the professional growth of its employees through training and tuition assistance programs and by providing tools that help set and achieve career goals. The RF partnered with SUNY’s Center for Professional Development (CPD) to develop training courses and a scholarship program specifically tailored for the research community.
In FY 2013 the RF achieved record growth amidst challenging times. Despite a decline in federal funding from sequestration and the end of research support provided by the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) of 2009, RF sponsored programs revenue grew 15%, surpassing the $1 billion mark for the first time in the organization’s 62-year history. Funds generated by grants and contracts for research programs conducted at SUNY campuses comprise about 94% of RF income.

The rise in sponsored programs revenue was driven by a 61% increase from Private and Other sources, primarily due to the Global 450 Consortium at the College of Nanoscale Science and Engineering (CNSE). This $4.8 billion, first-of-its-kind collaboration is comprised of five leading international companies – IBM, Intel, Global Foundries, Samsung and TSMC – working to create the next generation of computer chip technology.

The RF responded to the changing funding landscape by working with SUNY to grow research from nonfederal sources. The RF has engaged with state and industry partners to extend the successful CNSE business model across the state. Examples include the Computer Chip Commercialization Center in Utica, the CNSE Photovoltaic Manufacturing and Technology Development Facility in Rochester, and the Medical Innovation and Commercialization Hub in Buffalo.

The RF implemented an annual budget review process to manage expenses and ensure progress toward its strategic goals. This has enabled the RF to invest in value added programs such as the Networks of Excellence, Technology Accelerator Fund, Research Collaboration Grant Program and STEM Research Opportunities for SUNY Undergraduates, which generate growth in an era of federal retrenchment.

The RF continues its efforts to increase the amount of funding generated by licensing SUNY inventions; to stretch the impact of SUNY research by providing seed funding for promising technologies; and to build a culture of entrepreneurship across the SUNY system. START-UP NY will attract high-tech and other start-ups, venture capital, new business and investments to SUNY campuses, Centers of Excellence, Centers for Advanced Technology and business incubators. These partnerships give promise to new discoveries that yield more licensing and royalty income.

The RF uses the majority of its funds to provide direct services to sponsored research programs. These services include hiring employees, purchasing supplies and reporting to sponsors at SUNY campuses in accordance with sponsor guidelines. With 16,300 employees dedicated to SUNY research, salaries and employee fringe benefit costs comprise over 40% of the RF’s total expenses.

While many employers have eliminated post-retirement plans due to their significant cost, the RF continues to sponsor post-retirement benefits to attract and retain the best employees and to maintain comparability with SUNY employee benefits. The RF’s net assets are in a deficit position of $68.8 million mainly due to the impact of the post-retirement benefit liability. This obligation has decreased $23 million since 2012, due mainly to interest rate changes.

For the RF’s full financial statements, go to www.rfsuny.org/annualreport.

The Research Foundation for The State University of New York

Visit www.rfsuny.org and connect with the RF on Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, Instagram, Medium, and YouTube.