



This document provides 2 example investment “stories” related to the 2024-25 expenditures of the Research Support Fund by Saint Mary’s University. This is in response to the reporting request:

“Provide investment stories – for any of the five expense categories – that demonstrate how the RSF base grant contributed to sustaining a strong research environment within your institution during the reporting period. The stories should demonstrate the value and need for the program.”

Story #1:

Expenditure category for story #1:

Management and administration of the institution’s research enterprise

With Saint Mary's University (SMU) being in the category of small-to-medium sized Canadian universities categorized in the MacLean's magazine "Primarily Undergraduate" category (with just under 6000 total students, about 11% of which are graduate students), SMU nevertheless has a high level of research activity - garnering the most external research funding of the small-sized universities in Atlantic Canada, and ranking 42nd in the 2024 Research Infosource national rankings for universities of the year. In order to administer this level of research activity, the personnel required would be difficult to maintain/justify fully from the university operating budget (which is driven primarily from undergraduate student tuition) - therefore, the **RSF allocation of over \$400k toward the salaries of the research office staff** (as enumerated in our posted Outcomes report) is an absolute necessity to maintain the size of team needed. For example, **one of our graduate studies officers** holds primary responsibility for posting and tracking *all* research funding support for the graduate students in our 12 thesis-required Masters programs (161 students) and 5 PhD programs (103 students) - distributing \$1.4M of university support funds, and \$2.1M in external donor/grant support funds during 2024-25 ... while those may seem like small numbers for larger institutions, the key is that all of that is fully managed by *one* person. The RSF support provided to support Graduate Studies Officers is what allows SMU to put this expert personnel to serve the research-based graduate programs.



Story #2:

Expenditure category for story #2:

Management and administration of the institution's research enterprise

With Saint Mary's University (SMU) being in the category of small-to-medium sized Canadian universities categorized in the MacLean's magazine "Primarily Undergraduate" category (with just under 6000 total students, about 11% of which are graduate students), SMU nevertheless has a high level of research activity - garnering the most external research funding of the small-sized universities in Atlantic Canada, and ranking 42nd in the 2024 Research Infosource national rankings for universities of the year. In order to administer this level of research activity, the personnel required would be difficult to maintain/justify fully from the university operating budget (which is driven primarily from undergraduate student tuition) - therefore, the RSF allocation of over \$400k toward the salaries of the research office staff (as enumerated in our posted Outcomes report) is an absolute necessity to maintain the size of team needed. Key to the research success of SMU researchers is their strong commitment to direct their research expertise to support "community" in an applied fashion - where we define "community" broadly, including private sector (local SMEs and larger enterprises with local branches), government (specific ministries, provincially and federally, doing RFPs), or community groups and not-for-profit organizations. SMU provides a unique support environment for our researchers by closely connecting our Community-Engaged Research Network Manager and our Director of the Office of Innovation and Community Engagement (both partially supported through RSF) - we provide a model of responsiveness to community need, a judgement-free approach to getting external community/business partners to get engaged with our faculty researchers, and utilizing minimum administrative bureaucracy. Our close connection of supporting industry partnerships and community-led partnerships - and a holistic approach to community-led partnerships that also draws upon a research network built across 8 other provincial institutions - has allowed an increase in such community/industry-connect research engagements by roughly 25% by number over last 7 years, but with a corresponding increase in dollar value for those engagements of over 200%. The RSF allocation toward the salaries of these expert "connectors" of community/business-to-professor is a critical aspect to our ability to maintain these roles.