



**AUBURN UNIVERSITY**  
Research Initiative in Cancer

# Fostering an Interdisciplinary Approach to Cancer Research

**Bruce F. Smith, V.M.D., Ph.D.**  
**Director, AURIC**

# AURIC

---

- ▶ **Serendipity based on a strong foundation**
- ▶ **Funded October 1, 2011**
  - ▶ Strategic planning committee established
- ▶ **Founded January 1, 2012**
- ▶ **Appropriations from the state of Alabama**
  - ▶ \$1,100,000 per year



**AUBURN UNIVERSITY**  
Research Initiative in Cancer

# AURIC

---

- ▶ **A deliberate, logical, thoughtful approach to funding cancer research at Auburn**
  - ▶ Leveraging of funds
  - ▶ “Sustainability” plans (for extramural funding)
  - ▶ Interdisciplinary Research
  - ▶ Collaborative groups
  - ▶ Rigorous (constructive) review processes

# AURIC

---

- ▶ **175+ members (and growing!)**
- ▶ **75+ faculty**
- ▶ **9 Colleges/Schools (out of 12)**
- ▶ **5 other universities**
  - ▶ National and International
- ▶ **Multiple collaborations established with biotech and academia**
  - ▶ e.g. multiple new clinical trials at the College of Veterinary Medicine.



▶ The Gold Standard in Cancer Research

# LEVERAGING UNIQUE STRENGTHS

---

Pharmacy ChemEng  
PathDCS WashingtonU  
Rowan-University MathStats  
Physics VCOM  
Chemistry-Biochemistry SRRC  
Tuskegee-University Path/SRRC  
UAB Psychology HumScience  
Nursing  
ADS Kinesiology  
APP

---

▶ The Gold Standard in Cancer Research



# LEVERAGING UNIQUE STRENGTHS

---

## The Wilford and Kate Bailey Small Animal Teaching Hospital



---

▶ The Gold Standard in Cancer Research

# AURIC

---

## ▶ How to Establish Interdisciplinary Teams?





One size does not fit all!

# AURIC

---

- ▶ **How to Establish Interdisciplinary Teams?**
  - ▶ Funding
    - ▶ Most AURIC research grants require an interdisciplinary team
    - ▶ Typically multiple departments or colleges
    - ▶ Emphasized in reviewer briefing and score rubric
    - ▶ The “carrot”
    - ▶ Encourage “crossover” research

# AURIC

---

## ▶ **How to Establish Interdisciplinary Teams?**

- ▶ Interaction - Get different people in the same room
  - ▶ “Speed dating” approaches
  - ▶ Time to talk
  - ▶ Places to talk
  - ▶ Seminars
  - ▶ Program-wide meeting
  - ▶ “Matchmakers”

# AURIC

---

## ▶ How to Establish Interdisciplinary Teams?

### ▶ Leverage

- ▶ Encourage \$ contribution from University, College and Dept.
- ▶ Ensure everyone is invested (in the success of the team)
- ▶ Ultimately translates to a culture of institutional support

# AURIC

---

## ▶ **How to Establish Interdisciplinary Teams?**

- ▶ Example – AURIC Major Grants Program
  - ▶ Real money - \$200,000 (\$100K/yr, 2 yrs)
  - ▶ Must be interdisciplinary
  - ▶ Must be led one or more PIs with a “track record”
  - ▶ No leverage requirement
  - ▶ Pre pre-proposal meeting – mandatory for PI
  - ▶ Pre-proposal review
  - ▶ Proposal review, revision, resubmission
  - ▶ Award, monitoring, presenting



► The Gold Standard in Cancer Research

# AURIC

---

## ▶ Summary

- ▶ Fertilizer helps things grow
  - ▶ Money doesn't solve everything, but it sure helps!
- ▶ You don't know what you don't know
  - ▶ Overcoming this ignorance is a priority
- ▶ Herding cats is important

# This is One Health



# This is Auburn