



Group on Institutional Planning (GIP) Member Spotlight



Title and Institution: Assistant Dean for Biomedical Research, University of Alabama at Birmingham

Education: M.S. and PhD from University of Illinois

Experience: 20 years in space planning

GIP Membership: GIP member since 2006, Data and Information Subcommittee member since 2008, Steering Committee member since 2011

What are your main job responsibilities at your institution?

I am fortunate to have a diverse portfolio of research-related responsibilities; therefore, I am rarely bored. Working closely with university colleagues outside of the School of Medicine, most notably with a strong partner in the Animal Resources Program, I am part of a team that develops proposals for capital improvement of research facilities and for acquisition of research equipment. In partnership with our Research Integrity Office, I support processes that facilitate and evaluate compliance with our policy on the ethical conduct of research. As the primary data analyst in the Dean's Office, I provide routine and ad hoc research reports as requested by the Dean or other university leaders.

What has been your most significant innovation/breakthrough/project/contribution at your institution? What are you most proud of?

I am most proud of the impact that my teammates and I have had on the research environment on our campus. Working in partnership with colleagues from Safety, Facilities, Maintenance, Finance, Animal Resources, and Campus Planning we have together been able to secure nearly \$90 million in extramural sponsorship in bits and pieces during the last decade to renovate and construct some of our finest campus research buildings. I am as proud of our work that resulted in the complete renovation of our Comprehensive Cancer Center building as I am of that which allowed us to acquire zebrafish tanks and "green" caging for our animal program.

What advice would you share with someone who wants to further their career in planning?

Do your best to be service- and institution-oriented rather than advancement-oriented. A successful planning career is built on a foundation of credibility and trust. Be an active participant who speaks with an honest voice. Meet with people in their offices or spaces, or take a walk with them. The walking meeting puts many people at ease. Walking the campus with others has also helped me learn about our buildings; and, it has had the added benefit of helping me stay healthy and energized. Finally, there is no greater career pleasure than working with a team of people who value and respect the unique skills, perspective, and expertise that each member brings and shares.

Joining a GIP subcommittee was the best thing that I have done in my professional career. I am grateful for the friends that I have made through this organization and for the generosity of spirit that permeates the membership. If you haven't joined a subcommittee yet, do it now. You won't regret it.