Program Guidelines

How to Create, Grow, and Sustain
New Programmatic Initiatives in SURA

15 April 2007

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Main points:

- SURA exists to develop good "ideas" into high-impact "programs" that further the interests of its members and fulfill its mission to grow the scientific capacity of our region and the nation; but before a good "idea" can achieve to "program" status within SURA, the proponents must:
    - ➤ Articulate clear vision and mission statements, taking into account SURA's mission
    - ➤ Establish clearly defined and realistic programmatic goals with anticipated timelines
    - ➤ Develop a business model for near-term and long-term needs and program viability
    - ➤ Advance a governance model with SURA leadership consistent with 501(c)3 status
- A subset of SURA members must agree to take a leadership position in a new program, and the proposed programs is not deemed by the SURA Board to be in competition with SURA member institution(s).
- SURA may be petitioned to provide seed funding for programmatic initiatives but only if such a request is accompanied by a comprehensive and realistic business model as well as a proposed governance model that is consistent with SURA's 501(c)3 status.
- New programs will be expected to become self-sustaining after 3-7 years, depending on the size and the nature of the program.
- Seed funding will typically be in the form of a "loan" to the program; the expectation, unless otherwise agreed to in advance, is that this "loan" is to be paid back with interest if/when the program is successful

Process for Creation and Growth of SURA Programs

SURA strives to be the organization of choice for enabling major collaborative programs in science and technology in the southeast. In this role, SURA uniquely provides: resources, especially its people; relationships and connections; a recognized and respected brand name and reputation; the ability to transcend the viewpoint of any one institution; the ability to energize a broad base of intellectual capital; the assumption of risk, including financial, contract management, legal and insurance; and broad federal relations activities. This document aims to describe the process under which new ideas germinate, how they are selected for further development, and then nurtured and maintained throughout their life cycle within SURA.

The process for creating and sustaining SURA Programs consists of two general phases: Phase I, Program Planning; and Phase II, Program Life Cycle. During Phase I (consisting of the first three steps in the overall process), ideas are germinated and pursued until a valid plan has been created and gained momentum. Phase II consists of the life cycle of the program (the remaining four steps of the overall process), from growth through sustainability to return on investment to SURA, completing the cycle. Figure 1 demonstrates this cycle pictorially; each of the seven steps will be discussed below.
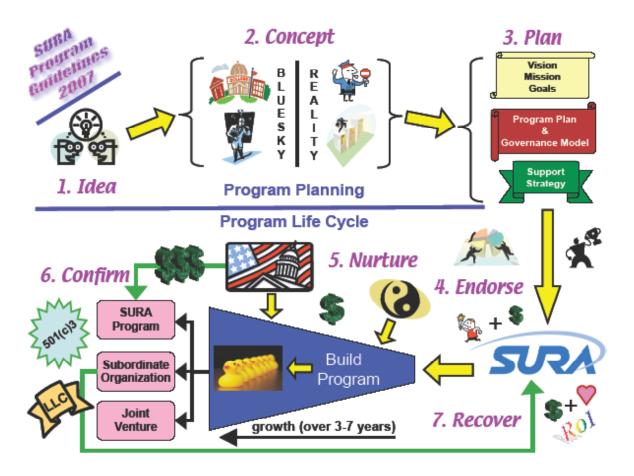
Figure 1. SURA Program Guidelines
(Phase 1 - Program Planning; Phase 2 - Program Life Cycle)

Phase I – Program Planning (Steps 1-3)

Idea – Good Ideas can come from a number of sources:

- A researcher or group of researchers at a SURA institution or laboratory, e.g., Jefferson Lab
- A SURA standing committee
- The SURA Board of Trustees
- The SURA Council of Presidents
- The SURA Executive Committee
- The SURA President or other staff
- Other outside sources related to SURA

No matter the source, however, the idea for a new program at SURA should embody certain criteria:

- A long-term, sustainable program that meets SURA's goals for increasing the science and engineering capacity of the southeast and our nation
- The need for enhanced collaboration across multiple institutions in our region
- Financial projections that ultimately yield a positive return on SURA's investment

2. Concept

Concept – Once an Idea for a new program is conceived, it must be developed into a Program Concept by its supporters working under the auspices of a SURA committee, either one of the standing program committees (JLab, IT, Coastal) or the Development Committee for new projects and programs. It is with under the committee's purview that the idea is further developed, and in particular, that programmatic as well as institutional leads are identified. Also, it is here that the idea is set in context: Why is what is being proposed niche to SURA; what is the competition; and what, if any, are synergistic national and international activities, and so on?

At this stage the Concept must be vetted with SURA's Board to insure the "blue-sky" dream passes a "reality" check; specifically, is what is being proposed something the Board would be inclined to "endorse" (Step 4) if it is presented with a well-developed "plan" (Step 3)?

3. Plan

Vision
Mission
Goals

Program Plan & Governance Model

Support Strategy

Plan – In addition to formalizing the roles of program participants and advocates, the Program Concept must subsequently be expanded to include three crucial documents: 1) Charter; 2) a Program Plan and Governance Model and 3) a Support Strategy. These documents should be written to *clearly articulate* the plan for growing the program into the future, readily accessible for those inside or outside of the program area. It is understood that these are *preliminary* plans and will change dynamically as the program develops, but they are nevertheless of prime importance before the program can move forward.
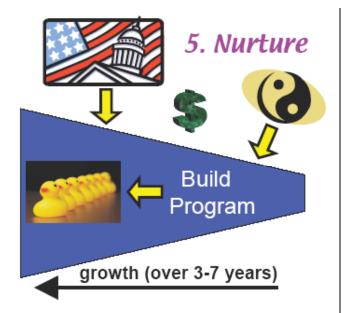
The documents include:
- *Charter*: The defining document for the Program Concept, this document includes

top-level **Vision and Mission Statements**. It also contains the **Goals** of the Program and any objectives that have already been identified. The connection to the SURA overall Vision and Mission should also be evident in this Charter.

- *Program Plan* and *Governance Model*: This document contains information about all Stakeholders involved in the Program, including the roles they will play. It may contain a SWOT (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats) analysis, describe governance models, identify key milestones, list near-term and long-term action items, describe the market needs, measurement metrics, and contain a development plan for reaching the goals articulated in the Charter. It also describes one or several potential Governance Models, including legal structures, boards, leadership roles, membership requirements, and other relevant information regarding proposed or possible governance of the program.

- *Support Strategy*: This identifies both the funding requirements and sources of funds for the seed, growth, and sustaining stages of the Program. It includes detailed financial projections for the one-year and three-year time horizons, including a pro forma Income Statement. It also describes the funding players (federal government, state and local governments, private sector corporations, non-profit entities, etc.) and their roles in funding the system. Finally, it must include any requests for SURA seed stage funding and a plan for repayment of these funds, with appropriate interest, over time.

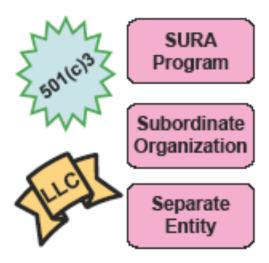# Phase II – Program Life Cycle (Steps 4-7)

Endorse – The proposing group, typically a SURA standing committee (IT, Coastal, JLab, or Development for new projects) now brings the Program Concept (including all supporting documents) first to the SURA President, then the SURA Executive Committee, and finally to the SURA Board of Trustees for discussion and endorsement. If the Board endorses the plans, then and only then can the program proponents propose to SURA that it provide seed funding for the initiative, with the amount determined by the Support Strategies and in concert with SURA's investment guidelines. Approval for seed funding requires a review by the SURA Finance Committee and ultimately Board of Trustees approval.

5. Nurture

growth (over 3-7 years)

Nurture – The Program then enters into the Nurture phase, wherein the seed funding is put to work to begin to bring together the various resources – people, as well as financial support – required to build a long-term and sustainable program. This will include pursuing funding sources and strategic partnerships in support of the vision, mission, goals, and objectives noted in the Planning Documents. While this phase may take three-seven years, it is expected that most programs will begin demonstrating some level of self-sufficiency by year four.

6. Confirm

Committee. In this case as with the others, however, external sources of funding must support all of the activities of the program within SURA.
- Subordinate Organization: One also has the option of creating a separate not-for-profit 501(c)3 organization that remains under the umbrella of SURA. The advantage of this is that the program can grow, have its separate governance body, bring in funding, and so on, without the need to create separate by-laws and other legal filings.
- Separate Entity: At some point, a program may grow in size and/or scope so it makes sense for certain strategic, tactical, or even funding reasons, to set it up as a separate legal entity. This could be a separate non-profit entity, an LLC, or maybe even some form of a for-profit entity in which SURA has ownership rights.

The nature of a separate entity that is formed should always be governed by partnering and programmatic considerations. It is important to appreciate that just about anything can be made to work without putting SURA's 501(c)3 status at risk, including, for example SURA entering into a partnership with a for-profit entity with SURA in either a majority or minority member.

Confirm – As a program grows and matures, the SURA Board can Confirm it as one of its significant activities. There are several options available for this and the course of action taken should be driven by the best choice to achieve the vision and mission of the program. There are many forms this could take, including:
- SURA Program: The best way to grow the program may be to simply continue it as an SURA Program, with its separate Standing

7. Recover

Recover – An important component of any new program is its impact on the long-term sustainability of SURA itself. This includes the benefits such programs provide to academe or for the public good as well as prestige to the organization. However, it also includes the recovery of investment made by SURA to SURA itself, either in the form of repayment of a loan, equity distributions, or other financial return(s) that will ultimately allow SURA to continue funding other seed stage programs while continuing to pursuing a path of growth towards long-term sustainability.