If you would like information about an announcement, please contact Deborah Hamilton (8-2952).

research.cba.ua.edu has links to searchable databases and the UA internal coordination sheet.

All proposals must be coordinated through the College before submission. Proposals submitted jointly with another UA college as the lead still require C&BA approval.

**TIAA-CREF Institute, Partnerships Program**

The TIAA-CREF Institute Partnerships Program provides financial support and the opportunity for collaboration with the Institute on initiatives related to the Institute’s fields of study, which are:

- Pension and retirement issues
- Health, life and long-term care insurance
- Investment products and strategies
- Endowments and planned giving
- Higher education financing and trends
- Corporate governance
- Financial literacy

The Institute establishes partnerships with groups that have shared goals that align with the Institute’s mission. Partnerships can entail support of a particular initiative with full or partial funding provided by the Institute. Other partnerships require participation by the Institute at meetings convened for a variety of reasons that might include the planning of a research project or agenda, a conference, a survey or series of related activities tied to a central theme or desired outcome. Whether a partnership involves financial support or the contribution of intellectual capital or both, the Institute seeks to ensure that all partnership activities are communicated effectively to relevant audiences that stand to benefit from the interactions and results. Ideally, the partner also strives for broad communication.

When an organization, individual or group of individuals applies to the Partnership Program for support, the Institute seeks evidence that the proposed initiative has a clear purpose, is efficiently organized and has the potential to produce new knowledge or resources that directly or indirectly contribute to the support of lifelong financial security for individuals and families. Amounts of funding span a wide range, generally not exceeding $50,000.

Applications are accepted at any time from January 1 through November 30.

**Institute for Research on Poverty (IRP), IRP-USDA Small Grants**

The Institute for Research on Poverty (IRP) at the University of Wisconsin-Madison is a national, university-based center for research into the causes and consequences of poverty in the United States. IRP and the Economic Research Service of the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) sponsor a competition that provides small grants for studies focusing on the effects of food assistance programs on food security, income security and other indicators of well-being among low-income individuals and families.

The competition seeks to stimulate new areas of interest in research on poverty and food assistance programs, such as Food Stamps, school lunch and breakfast programs, the Special Supplemental Food Program for Women, Infants and Children (WIC), and the Child and Adult Care Food Program.

Analyses of existing surveys are encouraged, in particular those that include the USDA food security module (for example, the Food Security Supplements to the Current Population Survey, 1995-99, and the Early Childhood Longitudinal Study-Kindergarten Cohort). The causes and consequences of food insecurity are also of research interest.

Grant recipients are expected to present their research results at a conference in Washington, D.C., in October. Grants range from $25,000 to $35,000.

Recent awards include: The Impact of the WIC Program on Pregnancy, Infant and Child Outcomes, RAND Corporation; An Individual-Level Analysis of Food Stamp Dynamics, University of Kentucky; Exploring the Effects of the National School Lunch Program on Child Obesity and Development Using the Early Childhood Longitudinal Study, University of Utah and Cornell University; and The Role of Food Assistance and Employment in Helping Food Insecure Families Avoid Hunger, American University of Beirut.

Tentative deadline is May 3, 2004.
Research grants of $10,000 are available to encourage academics in all fields of scholarship to study topics of interest to the equipment leasing and finance industry, administered through the Equipment Leasing and Finance Foundation. Higher grant amounts will be considered for exceptional projects. A review process and grant guidelines are established. Foundation Trustees are willing to work with applicants to focus their proposals on subject matter deemed of interest.

Research topics of interest to the industry include:

(1) Risk/Credit Management:
   - Corporate financial reporting and transparency trends
   - Capital adequacy and money laundering
   - Implementing the U.S. Patriot Act - The challenges
   - Good business practices for lease financing companies
   - The image of leasing - what it is and what it means
   - If there are “Ten Dogs On Every Bone” what can a lease finance company do to increase profitability
     - Accounting regulations, federal state tax legislation and Basel II — major regulatory challenges facing the industry

(2) Discuss the dilemma for manufacturers of financing sales of their equipment: to form a captive finance company, use a leasing/finance company to finance sales, or a combination of both? What are the issues to consider (ROE “drag,” credit risk, operating risk, cost of funds, liquidity/fund raising, financing “tough” credits, etc.)

(3) The leasing captive: Does a captive lessor ownership interests influence and/or contribute to poor pricing and credit risk decisions?

(4) Analyze the impact on cost of capital from “new approach” to lease accounting. Assume leveraged lease accounting treatment was lost. Determine market volumes for leveraged leases, what types of assets are leased, what industries typically lease, etc. Predict efforts of changed accounting policies on leveraged leasing.

(5) Analysis of possible options to account for leases and recommend “best approach” to lease accounting.

(6) Analyze effect of “new approach” to lease accounting on lessees, including:
   - Effect of complex calculations at lease inception
   - Systems and accounting impact
   - Need to account for differences between book and tax, etc.

(7) Productivity and effectiveness of sales strategies:
   - Telemarketing, Vendor, Direct Calling.

(8) Lessons learned from past leasing cycles: What have been some of the patterns of past leasing downturns? How may that impact the future?

(9) Value added products and services: Create case studies of various leasing company differentiators - and their respective product life cycles.

(10) Risk management: What is the role of holistic risk management beyond simple credit analysis?

(11) How do differences in accounting policies (or simply the complexity of the accounting) for equipment finance and leasing companies affect the willingness of capital providers to invest in this industry?

(12) The implications for the changing of competitive differentiation from price to bundled services. What are the risks in execution? How can companies price for the risk that they are taking (i.e. they may not know the costs of providing the services that they will be required to provide for a set price)?

(13) The economic outlook and critical success factors for established leasing companies expanding to the China market.

(14) International risk assessment - creating a viable framework to evaluate and quantify risk factors for expanding to new global markets.

(15) The empirical linkage between productivity improvement and profitability in successful leasing and financial services companies.

General topics of research interest are:

- Funding
- Industry compensation models
- Strategic management/planning
- Accounting/financial reporting, and finance
- Tax and legislative/ regulatory
- Credit/collections
- Economics
- Portfolio management
- Contracts/documentation
- Technology benchmarking
- Strategic importance of captives
- Operations and best practices

Deadline is May 15, 2004.