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## Marquette looks to boost research resources

*School aims to balance humanities, science*

BY NAHAL TOOSI

In recent speeches, Marquette University President Father Robert Wild has mentioned a topic that has long been more of an interest than an obsession at the Jesuit institution: research.

The faculty need more financial support for their research, he says. Marquette's donors need to know this, he says. The research is more ambitious, he says.

Asked about such comments, Wild quickly points out that Marquette has always engaged in research, but he also says that he wants the school's research reputation to grow.

### Emphasizing humanities

Such an emphasis on research from the top at Marquette is interesting at a campus long perceived as more of a humanities haven than a scientific powerhouse, and certainly more of an undergraduate institution than a graduate one.

"Marquette, I think . . . still emphasizes undergraduate thinking and learning," said Dale Noel, a professor of biological sciences. "But I think the administration is doing things that perhaps in the long term will increase our research potential."

**John Mantsch (center, standing), who does research on drug addiction, works with students Matt Hearing (from left), Miguel Castaueda and research technician Urvashi Gubta at Marquette University. From 2002 to 2003, Marquette's requests for federal research funds increased 51% to \$20.4 million, officials say.**

The changes have been subtle. There has not been a memo to faculty, as history associate professor Phillip Naylor put it. But there are signs that Marquette's research efforts are growing.

From 2002 to 2003, Marquette's requests for federal research funds increased 51% to \$20.4 million, according to university officials. The university has also upped its spending on research, from \$3.2 million in 1990 to \$9.8 million in 2002.

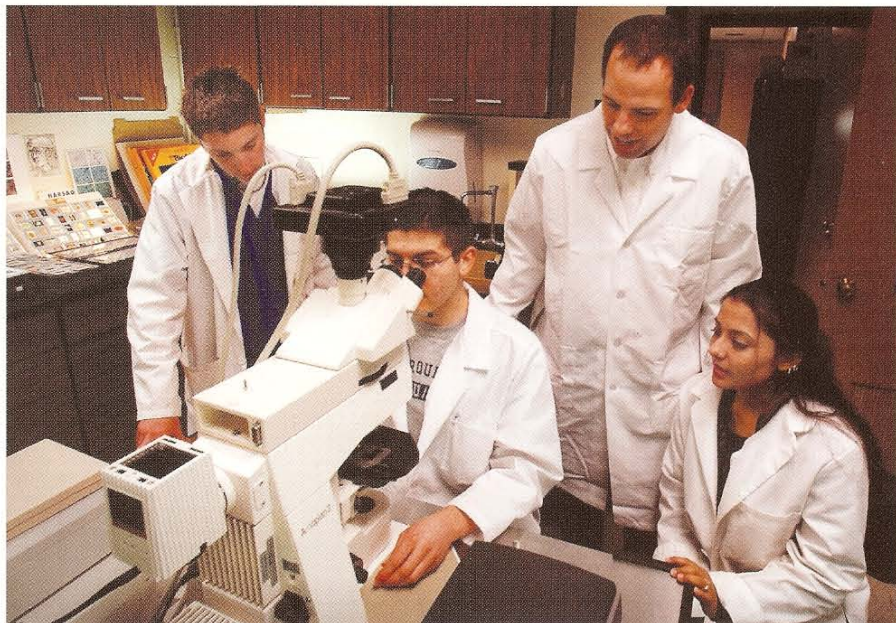
### New post

Last year, the school hired a "vice provost for research and graduate programs," a new position that replaced what was once the dean of the graduate school.

The university is trying to offer better financial packages to prospective faculty, money that helps them continue research they already had going and makes Marquette a more attractive place to work, said Marquette Provost Madeline Wake. Some faculty members say they have noticed a growing willingness by some administrators to match grant funds.

Also, there are more opportunities for undergraduate students, who remain Marquette's primary constituents, to get involved in research projects.

Perhaps most telling is a growing desire for a new life sciences facility on campus. Faculty members in the sciences said such a building would be the most concrete



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commitment to research the school has shown in years.

Wild, who is well aware of such hopes, said he wants improved research facilities, but won't promise a new building. "I'm committed to doing whatever works best," Wild said.

Marquette is learning that there is no shortage of demand for the sciences among students.

Marquette's College of Health Sciences was established in 1996, a combination of different fields of study, many of which already were being taught. The college started with an enrollment of 349 students and now has more than twice that many. Of its 842 students, 434 are studying biomedical science — now Marquette's most popular major.

But it would be a stretch to call Marquette a "research university," at least not in the traditional sense as defined by places such as the Massachusetts Institute of Technology or the University of Wisconsin-Madison.

Marquette doesn't make the top 200 schools nationally in research spending,

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Madeline Wake  
Marquette University's Provost

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according to the 2001 national rankings, the most recent available. Johns Hopkins University, which spends almost \$1 billion a year, is No. 1. UW-Madison is third, spending more than \$600 million. UW-Milwaukee, which too, has increased efforts to attract research dollars, was No. 200. It spent about \$24 million on research in 2001.

### Limit on grants

Although Marquette has Wisconsin's only dental school, it has no medical school, which hinders its ability to tap big pools of research dollars available through the National Institutes of Health. The Medical College of Wisconsin, for example, currently spends \$118.9 million annually on research.

Wild doesn't think Marquette's research reputation should grow purely in the sciences, that there is a lot of research in the humanities that, while it may not rake in the money, adds to the university's profile.

He and others in the administration are wary of losing strength in one area to benefit another.

They want to keep the undergraduate experience a top priority even as they try to improve the status of graduate programs. They want to emphasize research but not at the expense of teaching. They don't want a culture that allows faculty to live in labs and never see students. The multi-pronged desires lead to a less than clear-cut vision.

Overall, Marquette leaders say the goal is not to transform the school into a traditional research university like UW-Madison or the University of Michigan.

They have other priorities.

"What we really want to do is make a difference in the world," said Wake, the provost. "We are preparing leaders who will really make a difference. Some of that may be through research."