Public Utility Research Center (submit proposals to Mark Jamison, 205 Matherly)

PURC supports faculty and graduate student research on topics related to the management and regulation of electric, gas, and telephone companies. Monies will come from the Brigham endowment, but the amount of funds to be allocated to such research will depend in part on the Center’s total funding. In the past grants have ranged from $500 for research expenses to $5,000 salary support. PURC has often been able to obtain data from Florida utilities, the Florida Public Service Commission, and numerous international organizations which enabled researchers to address important regulatory issues. Research should focus on US domestic issues.

Since it has a specific mission, PURC does not award grants on a competitive basis as would an organization that dispensed State funds. Rather, PURC’s Director (Jamison) meets with its sponsoring organizations (utility companies and the Florida PSC) to discuss projects that would be of interest to both academicians and the industry. PURC’s budget is variable, depending on the research agenda, and continued support depends on the quality and relevance of the output.

The criteria for evaluating potential projects are as follows:

1. The potential contribution of the research to analysis and practice in public utilities and regulatory commissions in the United States. Only proposals that have implications for policy and for analytical frameworks will be funded.

2. The potential theoretical or methodological contribution of the research to the academic literature. Likelihood that research will be published in a quality academic journal.

3. Whether the project will be completed within a reasonable period of time.

There will be no restrictions or preferences to faculty based on rank or department.

Potential research topics include utility financing, incentives for energy conservation, environmental protection, incentives for economic efficiency, diversification, industry structure, impacts of utility reforms, and regulatory institutions.

Faculty should consult with Dr. Jamison concerning the potential for PURC funding and the format to be used for application.

All recipients will receive 50 percent of their funding at the time of award and the remainder when a completed working paper is accepted by PURC.