

The Role of Research, Scholarship, and Creative Activities in the CSU

Provosts' Statement and Recommendations

April 2007

I. Purpose

As chief academic officers of their universities, the CSU provosts are committed to promoting an environment that develops and sustains faculty research and creative activity as integral to the mission of their institutions. These activities enhance student learning, help us recruit and retain high-quality faculty, develop new knowledge, and contribute to scholarly dialogue. All of these aspects serve California and strengthen the economy. Through the vehicle of the CSU Academic Council, the provosts have consulted with the system's senior research officers and developed this report, which provides context for research and creative activity in the CSU and makes recommendations for building capacity in these areas.

We firmly maintain that there are necessary and highly valued synergies between teaching and research that must continue to be supported and enhanced. Faculty research and creative activities not only inform and strengthen our current programs, but they are often integral to curricular innovations and the development of future degree programs. The ability of the CSU and the state of California to maintain and build economic capacity so that its citizens can compete in the global marketplace can only be achieved if the CSU actively pursues excellence in both teaching and research.

Two decades ago, Ernest Boyer criticized research-oriented universities for slighting teaching; he explained that teaching was scholarship, too. His viewpoint was that skilled professors understood rhetoric, the working of the mind, and the influence of culture. Without such knowledge they could not possibly transmit their ideas. Today it is just as important for teaching-oriented universities such as the CSU to take research seriously. California's demographics demand this: ten public research universities in the University of California do not have the capacity to fulfill the needs of 34,000,000 Californians. Advances in knowledge across a multitude of fields, the transfer of research to applications that stimulate economic growth and social improvement, and the preparation of professionals for the knowledge economy require the participation of the CSU.

The California Master Plan was written for an "analog" world with relatively stable employment patterns and occupations. The digital age, however, has quickened change—in knowledge, applications, and occupations. California must support a CSU effort to deploy its intellectual capital in teaching and research. Otherwise, thousands of citizens will be uninformed consumers of a new economy and culture that they neither understand nor help to develop

II. History and Context

The Donohoe Act implemented the Master Plan for Higher Education for California in 1960, authorizing the CSU to assume only a minor role in research. Nonetheless, many faculty members considered research and other forms of scholarship to be fundamental to their professional development and believed that their involvement in research and scholarship was essential to enhancing their teaching effectiveness and student learning. Hence, for over four

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decades, they have continued to engage in such activities without the use of significant state resources. In time, legislative action authorized research in the CSU and, in 1989, the *Final Report of the Joint Committee for Review of the Master Plan for Higher Education* claimed that, "Central to the role of any decent teaching institution is the research, scholarly and creative activity essential to the development of good teaching, and essential as a part of the education of students. The state should acknowledge this in the Mission of the California State University, and endeavor to support it." As a result, the California State Education Code: Chapter 1587 (SB 1570, Nielson) was amended in 1990 to broaden the CSU mandate to include "research, scholarship, and creative activity in support of its undergraduate and graduate instructional mission."

During the 1990s and continuing into the current decade, research and scholarly activities have increased within the CSU, not at the expense of our educational mission, but in support of it. It could be said that the expansion of non-centrally funded research in our system arose from the natural link between research and effective instruction, and that our faculty developed research projects because they recognized their intrinsic value to our mission. The quality of CSU's academic programs has continued to improve, and our educational system is recognized for the excellence of its students, faculty, and alumni. Non-State funding to support research and scholarship of faculty and students has increased dramatically; centers and institutes have proliferated; and faculty and student awards and recognition for research and creative activities have multiplied.

Moreover, the acceptance of research and scholarly activity as an integral part of our instructional mission is manifest in system-wide strategic planning efforts. The 1997 *Cornerstones Report* affirmed that "Through teaching, research, scholarly activities, and service, the university is a powerful force for individual development and the improvement of a democratic society." Principle 4 of the report stated that, "The California State University will reinvest in its faculty to maintain its primary mission as a teaching-centered comprehensive university. Faculty scholarship, research and creative activity are essential components of that mission," and included "a commitment to support research, scholarly and creative activities for the faculty as a central element of a rich learning environment for our students."

Now, nearly a decade following the launch of the first *Cornerstones* initiative, the CSU is poised to reconsider and reexamine its mission and role in higher education in the State of California. *Access to Excellence*, as the current initiative is called, will address six domains, including "Domain 5. Faculty/Staff Excellence to Promote Student Success," which embraces, among other elements, a commitment to "supporting the teacher-scholar model for faculty" and "recognizing...faculty roles in research and service." This reexamination of mission and goals provides a propitious opportunity for reflection on the role, significance, and value of research, scholarship and creative activity in the CSU.

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III. The Value of Research and Creative Activity to the CSU and the State of California

A. *The importance of faculty research to student learning.*

Excellent teaching and research are both integral to students' learning experience. Teaching creates the educated workforce upon which an advanced society depends, while creative original research and scholarship extend the boundaries of knowledge, and enlarge and modify the body of accepted knowledge to be taught. Student learning often depends on the nexus between these two activities. When students are actively involved in research and creative activities with faculty mentors, their learning experiences are enriched, their creative and critical skills are enhanced, retention and graduation are positively affected, and their professional opportunities are broadened.

B. *Research/Scholarly and Creative Activity and its relationship to a high-quality professoriate*

The faculty whom we seek to attract to CSU campuses bring specific research and creative activity agendas with them. They typically have just completed intense research and creative inquiry experiences as doctoral, post-doctoral, or MFA students and are seeking to dedicate their new knowledge and skills to original scholarship. If our system is to be competitive in the recruitment of the most promising faculty and to retain them throughout their careers, we must honor scholarly research and creative activities as essential components of the professorial career, and provide the time and resources for faculty to conduct them. Thus, the quality and reputation of faculty and CSU universities will continue to rise, and with these attributes, so will the number and credentials of students seeking admission. In turn, these skilled and demanding students will have not only more respected faculty in the classroom, but the additional venues of laboratory, library, and performance space through which to extend their knowledge and promote personal inquiry.

Furthermore, when faculty are at the cutting edge of their disciplines, they remain connected with the source that feeds their intellectual curiosity and creative abilities and are able to establish and maintain partnerships with other scholars around the world. This scholarly currency, in turn, enhances faculty teaching and interactions with students, from freshman through doctoral levels.

C. *Research and creative activity can provide ancillary benefits for our universities.*

The growth of external support for advancement, research, and sponsored programs is instrumental in advancing campus missions and strategic plans. Externally supported research and sponsored programs and donor gifts may provide funding to modernize laboratory facilities, fund faculty fellowships and travel, enhance student support

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services, and develop new academic programs that will meet the workforce needs of the state.

Many of the individual CSU institutions either have undertaken, or will soon undertake comprehensive campaigns for advancement and donor cultivation. Some of the largest areas of donation request are for endowed professorships, student scholarships, and new and enhanced facilities, all of which serve to underpin the institution's ability to support faculty and student research.

CSU faculty and staff have greatly increased external grant and contract support within the last decade, through their successful approaches to federal, state, local, and private/corporate sponsors. These grants and contracts not only provide much needed direct programmatic support for instructional programs, but the indirect costs recovered provide infrastructure support for campus research facilities.

The obvious value of indirect cost recovery notwithstanding, the recovery of the indirect cost for grants and contracts should never be viewed as a rationale to pass off to external agencies the supposed "full" cost of the ongoing intellectual work in the university on grants and contracts. That intellectual work contributes to future resources that we cannot always account for precisely at the time of grant or contract acquisition; the teaching and research of faculty are positively affected in ways that fundamentally elude calculation, yet are highly significant.

CSU should be held accountable for the effects of its research; but such accountability is very different from an accounting practice that requires the full cost of current research to be recaptured immediately. Evaluation of the benefits of research in a university setting should take into account both direct economic benefits, and the equally important, yet often intangible benefits to intellectual growth and society afforded by faculty research, scholarship, and creative activity.

D. Diversification of the professional workforce and the professoriate

Research on higher education indicates that traditionally underrepresented groups become more fully engaged in planning their education through such vehicles as community service and research experiences. As a result of its emphasis on access, the CSU has the most ethnically and culturally diverse student body of any system of higher education in the world. When these students have the opportunity to participate in research and scholarly activity with their faculty, some of them are inspired to pursue doctoral-level education. As graduates of doctoral programs, they can make an important contribution to the diversity of their professions, as members of the academy in all disciplines, as well as private sector scientists, engineers and other professionals.

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Furthermore, many of the CSU institutions are designated minority-serving or Hispanic-serving institutions or otherwise qualify for federal programs aimed at increasing the number of under-represented minorities in the STEM fields (science, technology, engineering, and mathematics). Both NSF (e.g., LSAMP, AGEP) and NIH (e.g., MBRS, RISE, BRIDGES, COR) have programs that provide direct support for student stipends as well as for the development, evaluation, and dissemination of innovative methods for improving student success. These agencies understand that minority-serving institutions cannot produce highly competitive graduates without affording students the opportunity to gain research experience under the tutelage of productive faculty and using advanced research methods, equipment, and laboratories. As well, the CSU benefits from the many sponsored projects that indirectly support students through faculty research development and support for research infrastructure (e.g., DOE McNair, NSF CREST, NIH SCORE, NIH M-RISP).

E. Economic Impact of CSU Research

Recently, the *CSU Economic Impact Report* (2003, revised 2005) concluded that CSU faculty research and creative activities have made significant contributions to California's economic prosperity. "CSU research has attracted public and private research investment in the form of research and entrepreneurial partnerships that drive California's knowledge-based economy. For every dollar spent on the CSU more than double is returned to the state of California in economic resources."

Chapter 5 in the system-wide report identifies CSU research as a "growing resource for California's economy" and an "expanding economic engine", and states that:

"As the pace of technological change has accelerated, the need to ensure that the curricula remain current has become fundamental. Faculty research has become a natural way to ensure that the CSU curricula are on the leading edge. Faculty members who perform research are usually at the top of their professions and bring the latest insights to their teaching. Many, if not most, CSU research projects are also carried out with students and in the process, create important learning experiences."

IV. Recommendations for Building Capacity for Research, Scholarship and Teaching in the CSU

It is critical that the CSU system and the individual campuses embark on a program to make the broad audience of stakeholders aware that the CSU is a vital and significant contributor to California's communities and economy, and to actively marshal resources in support of this mission. Through research, advanced pedagogy, and interdisciplinary, experiential learning, faculty and students are building the California of tomorrow.

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At the system and campus level we believe four major areas need to be addressed through advocacy efforts:

- The need to align resources to match the research and scholarly roles and expectations of the faculty and the curriculum in light of the recent advances in the CSU mission and regional roles of our campuses;
- The importance of focusing internal and external advocacy messages on the CSU as a significant contributor to regional economies and workforces via teaching, research and community service;
- The role of the CSU as the primary preparer of California's professionals via undergraduate and graduate programs and the array of experiential and service learning opportunities created by the faculty and staff, often as externally-funded activities;
- The emerging reality of the CSU as an incubator and leader for new academic programs and partnerships responding to California's needs, largely through external sponsorship.

In terms of actions to be taken, we believe progress is necessary in two major domains, with recommendations for consideration for system, individual university, or policy makers:

1. Policies, procedures, resource allocation.

Within the context of individual CSU campus strategic plans, cultures, and resource availability, there is a need to update, revise and communicate policies and procedures and encourage the reallocation of resources at each campus and/or within the system. In some instances, system and/or campus conversations with policy makers may be required to address the following:

Faculty roles as teacher-scholars, and the need for professional currency in field and demands of research and scholarly programs

Recommendation: To both internal and external CSU audiences, continue to actively articulate the role, significance of, and benefits deriving from research in the CSU system today. In these communications, a specific emphasis should be made to link the interdependence of teaching and scholarly accomplishment, including research and creative activities.

Workloads that emphasize student learning and outcomes assessment, research and creative activities, and teaching, as well as institutional service and community involvement

Recommendation: Based upon the most recent faculty workload study (and any subsequent updates) each campus should consider implementing workload realignment and reassignment strategies that support the move to increased

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faculty/student research and scholarship, and reflect the full spectrum of faculty responsibilities.

Incentive, reward, and evaluation structures that encourage engagement in research, scholarship and creative activity

Recommendation: Develop effective incentive plans at both the system and campus levels to encourage increased involvement in research and creative activities, including obtaining extramural support for research and creative activities, through philanthropy and sponsored programs.

Facilities formulae that reflect dynamic faculty/student research activities and sponsored programs that integrate research and student learning

Recommendation: The CSU system must work with the appropriate state governance to revise the thirty-year old CSU facility- and space-allocation formulae to recognize faculty, undergraduate and graduate research, project and creative activity needs. Augment budgets for development and enrichment of information resources in support of scholarship.

2. Faculty recruitment and retention.

It is also important that the system and campuses promote an environment that develops and sustains faculty recruitment, retention and career-long involvement in research and student learning activities, including:

Flexible support for start up packages for new faculty that may include: labs, equipment, supplies, information resources, and assigned time

Recommendation: As system and campus resources allow, each campus should provide competitive start-up funding where appropriate for new faculty as part of its base funding.

Funding for Research, Scholarly, and Creative Awards (RSCA) that keeps pace with growth in new faculty hiring and campus expectations for intellectual advancement

Recommendation: At the system level, revisit RSCA accountability constructs and the funding allocation, in keeping with current research and scholarship expectations.*

Support for research and contract administrative infrastructure that recognizes the expanding complexity of the research enterprise

Recommendation: At both system and campus levels provide support for research

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infrastructure. If research is indeed integral to the mission of the university, support for infrastructure is required.

Support for intellectual property development and management

Recommendation: Examine and support an approach to leveraging the specialized legal and business expertise of certain campuses to benefit all campuses in developing intellectual property and technology transfer in the CSU. Consider providing centralized support to all campuses through the development of system-wide resources and expertise.

V. Conclusion

We all recognize that research, scholarship and creative activities benefit the CSU and California. However, to achieve the optimum benefit, a true partnership among faculty, administration, and policy makers is required. We look forward to building dialogue on the issues raised in this document through campus governance structures and administrative leadership, and systemwide, within the CSU's Academic Senate and the Executive Council. Subsequent to these discussions, we anticipate the adoption of appropriate action plans to bring the resulting recommendations to fruition.

*We recognize that these particular goals will likely be achieved only through the state legislative process.