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CCST News

CCST Report Helps CSU Launch New Graduate Science Programs

December 15, 2006

The Alfred P. Sloan Foundation has given an \$891,000 grant to enable the California State University to launch Professional Science Master's (PSM) Degree programs on 12 of the university's 23 campuses. It is the first statewide higher education system in the nation to do so.

"Professional Science Master's Degree programs supply the labor market with highly skilled workers that are essential to the state's future economy," said CSU Chancellor Charles B. Reed. "We are extremely pleased that the prestigious Alfred P. Sloan Foundation recognizes the exceptional quality of the graduate science programs that our campuses offer, and their potential for growth due to this generous contribution."

The Professional Science Master's (PSM) Degree is an innovative two-year graduate program created to meet industry needs by providing math, science and engineering graduates the skills essential to excel in today's high-growth technical industries. PSM programs also feature internships, which provide essential industry-based experience and exposure. In 2005, CCST released a study, "[An Industry Perspective of the Professional Science Master's Degree in California](#)," which explored potential interest in the new degree programs among key high-tech industries throughout the state.

"CCST's study on industry interest in the PSM, conducted on behalf of the CSU, was instrumental in achieving Sloan's recognition of CSU's substantial commitment to the PSM degree," said Keith Boyum, CSU associate vice chancellor for academic affairs, who has led the systemwide initiative to develop the PSM. "We are extremely appreciative of CCST's role in establishing these programs systemwide."

CSU plans to launch 16 new PSM programs on the 12 campuses within the next three years, which will be implemented in a variety of fields, including: bioinformatics, biostatistics, biotechnology, clinical project management, computational science, ecological economics, environmental science, and forensics. The programs will be developed by building on successful models already piloted on CSU campuses. San Diego State University, a pilot campus, will play a key role in administering the new grant.

"In the first five years of this Master's Degree project, we anticipate preparing more than 1,100 PSM graduates for the workforce," said Boyum. "Students who go through these programs will have excellent employment prospects because they will have the training needed by the state's highest growth employment sectors."



Professional Science Masters' programs combine laboratory experience with the skills needed to meet industry needs. Above, PSM student Vicki Brandt works on electro-optics with Prof. Vassili Sergan at the CSU Sacramento PSM program. Photo courtesy CSUS.

Related links:

[An Industry Perspective of the Professional Science Master's Degree in California \(CCST Project Page\)](#)

[California State University to launch 16 new graduate science programs \(CSU Press Release, 12/6/06\)](#)

[Professional Science Masters website](#)