

SUMMARY

The Research Working Group of the Research and Creative Endeavors Task Force has identified the following overarching goal:

SDSU should continue to build its distinctive profile as a dynamic academic community of high-quality, diverse, and innovative scholars with local, national, and international impacts.

We recognize that excellence in teaching at the undergraduate and graduate levels is integral to the identity of teacher-scholar faculty members at SDSU. However, we hold equally strongly that excellence in research is necessary and integral to excellence in teaching, to SDSU's overall academic quality and reputation, and to SDSU's long-term academic and economic prosperity.

Strategic Vision:

- 1. SDSU should establish itself as a national leader in the integration of teaching and scholarship for the benefit of student learning outcomes and scholarly productivity of faculty members.*
- 2. SDSU should articulate more powerfully its unique regional role as an engine of research and education-driven economic development, especially in its service to diverse local communities.*
- 3. A 21st century liberal arts and science education must produce graduates with significant experiences in research and creative activities in their respective majors.*

This vision is best accomplished

- by faculty members who are at the forefront of scholarship in their disciplines,
- with educational programs that provide opportunities for all students to immerse themselves in faculty-mentored research and creative endeavors,
- in a diverse, open, supportive, collaborative, and multi-disciplinary scholarly environment with rigorous graduate programs at the Master's and Doctoral levels,

We have identified the following eight areas for potential strategic planning initiatives in support of this goal:

1. Advance areas of excellence in research and creative endeavors
2. Invest in faculty career-long scholarly productivity
3. Expand opportunities for undergraduate research
4. Strengthen Master's and Doctoral programs
5. Cultivate and expand new funding opportunities, including philanthropy, grants and contracts, and community strategic partnerships
6. Sharpen SDSU's distinctive profile as a research-intensive public university through coordinated branding and marketing
7. Promote opportunities to connect SDSU's student diversity with its research efforts
8. Build infrastructure essential to sustaining research and creative endeavors.

POTENTIAL STRATEGIC PLANNING INITIATIVES

1. Advance areas of excellence in research and creative endeavors

Focused and strategic allocation of resources is crucial to the development of excellence. The most critical resource to pursue high-impact and high-quality scholarship is faculty time; the second critical resource is financial support for meritorious programs and initiatives. We recommend the following:

- Identify, cultivate and invest in programs and initiatives of demonstrated excellence and impact through additional faculty lines (including visiting professorships, research professorships, and hybrid faculty lines), facilities, Foundation funding, development priorities, assigned time, and other resources.
- Establish a task force comprised of on- and off-campus stakeholders to guide the identification and selection of programs and areas of excellence for development.
- Develop and implement a transparent model to guide the allocation of assigned time for research and creative endeavors to meritorious individual faculty members based on evidence of productivity: discipline-specific and evidence-based metrics of productivity with respect to teaching, research, and creative activities that take into account special circumstances of untenured junior faculty members and a system of accountability for assigned time for research based on evidence of continued productivity.
- Develop transparent criteria for assessing and reassessing funding priority for centers of excellence, taking into account demonstrated excellence and impact, financial and academic sustainability, cross-college and cross-disciplinary collaborations, community and business partnerships, opportunities for training, mentoring, and teaching.
- Establish discipline-specific criteria for reviewing all funded areas of excellence on a regular basis. Programs and initiatives should meet established standards and expectations, be focused and distinctive, contribute to SDSU's core mission, and emphasize innovation, quality, motivation, or impact to a field of study to be considered for continued support.

2. Invest in faculty career-long scholarly productivity

Expanding the base of faculty members engaged in productive scholarly activity in the mid- and later stages of faculty careers is critical to the academic and economic prosperity of SDSU. To bolster career-long productivity, we recommend the following:

- Develop improved model of peer-to-peer mentoring for junior and mid-level scholars.
- Increase through philanthropy incentives for career-long scholarly productivity, especially in fields with structurally limited external funding sources, e.g. increasing the pool for University Grants Program funding.
- Evaluate existing University Grants Programs to assess patterns of award allocation and support rewards (assigned time, summer salary) for productive scholars at all stages of their careers.

3. Expand opportunities for undergraduate research

Student engagement in faculty-mentored research and creative endeavors should become an even more distinctive element of SDSU's identity. Not only would development of a campus-wide student research and creative internship program build the campus's distinctive profile, but it may also provide the rationale for a student research-related excellence fee. To build this engagement, we recommend the following:

- Develop methods to match student and faculty research interests, e.g. web or social media based initiatives.
- Identify disciplinary-specific opportunities with particular relevance to student career plans.
- Highlight the importance of engaging in research, service-learning, and creative endeavors in preparation for joining the 21st century workforce.
- Capitalize on community-based research and creative engagement opportunities.
- Quantify and track undergraduate research engagement, including relationships with learning and career outcomes.
- Emphasize in advising the increased need for advanced training in research and creative endeavors at the graduate level.
- Develop mechanisms to support faculty-mentored student research and creative activities, including assigned time for training grant preparation.
- Prioritize support for student research, scholarships, and fellowships through philanthropy.
- Establish mechanisms for faculty members to be recognized for mentoring efforts as part of their workload.

4. Strengthen Master's and Doctoral programs

Rigorous and dynamic graduate programs are at the heart of all successful research efforts. They capitalize on the increased importance of post-graduate training, assist in the recruitment of research faculty, and build alumni relationships with research facilities in private industry, nonprofits, and the public sector. We recommend the following:

- Develop additional support for graduate fellowships and assistantships, including tuition and fee waivers as well as competitive graduate student salaries.
- Strengthen support for existing master's and joint doctoral programs with demonstrated records of excellence and sustainability.
- Implement regular review of graduate training programs and consider developing revision plans to strengthen underperforming programs.
- Continue to explore additional sustainable doctoral programs at SDSU, especially in the context of Areas of Excellence.

5. Cultivate and expand new funding opportunities, including philanthropy, grants and contracts, and community strategic partnerships.

To support new and to sustain existing high-quality scholarly activities at SDSU, it is critical to strengthen established support mechanisms and vigorously pursue new funding opportunities. We recommend the following:

- Enhance support systems to increase the number of grant applications and to enhance their success rate (e.g., professional grant editing; pre-submission

review by external expert reviewers; assigned time to develop large-scale multi-disciplinary grant proposals; clerical support).

- Expand private sector-SDSU partnerships for training programs, research centers, fee for service, and other creative activities.
- Develop fee-paying certificate programs via the College of Extended Studies.
- Increase fee-paying international and out-of-state graduate student enrollment.
- Develop university, college, departmental, course-level excellence fees to support equipment, supplies, software, materials, TAs, and other resources, to support student research activities.

6. Sharpen SDSU's distinctive profile as a research-intensive public university through coordinated branding and marketing

Stronger branding and marketing of our existing and future research programs will be an asset to student and faculty recruitment and development. To this end, we recommend the following:

- Create visual logo to capture SDSU's distinctive integration of research efforts with teaching excellence, student learning, and community relations.
- Incorporate into development messaging an emphasis on how research endeavors at SDSU benefit students and community stakeholders.
- Foreground faculty and student research achievements on departmental, college, and university websites.
- Convene high-visibility college-based public symposia promoting faculty research and its benefits to students and stakeholders.
- Promote student research including SRS as a distinctive and integral element of the SDSU identity in recruitment, advising, outreach, and publications.
- Expand opportunities for novel collaboration with community groups and industry.

7. Promote opportunities to connect SDSU's student diversity with its research efforts

SDSU occupies a distinctive position as an underrepresented-student serving, research-intensive urban university. A thriving research program at SDSU that connects students from underrepresented groups to faculty members at the forefront of scholarship in their disciplines and to live research environments yields powerful benefits to our students and to diverse communities in the San Diego region. We recommend the following:

- Develop avenues to highlight SDSU's institutional identities as Hispanic-serving institution and top 150 federal funding institution.
- Incorporate into development messaging emphases on integration of faculty research and internship experiences for diverse undergraduates and its benefits, ranging from its high positive impact on student development to economic development in San Diego area.
- Build web-based resources to assist grant writers in incorporating SDSU diversity metrics and combined diversity-research "index" into impact statements.

8. Build infrastructure essential to sustaining research and creative endeavors.

Supportive and effective infrastructure (physical, service, administrative) is essential to research and creative engagement. To improve and expand the existing infrastructure, it is critical to establish a significant research endowment that complements other sources of revenue and fosters our research capacity. We recommend the following:

- Prioritize SDSU fund-raising in support of a substantial research endowment to support existing and new areas of excellence.
- Utilize the NCURA peer review report to address gaps in infrastructure (e.g. Statistical Consulting Center, travel funds, or increased IT support), clarity of organizational roles, and enhanced communication needed to support all research and scholarly activities.
- Invest endowment and other revenues to
 - improve and expand physical research infrastructure to remedy existing unmet facilities needs and to accommodate expected growth
 - strengthen service and administrative infrastructure (e.g. library, statistical consulting, fee-for service and charge-back mechanism)
 - establish endowed Chairs and Professorships and endowed undergraduate, graduate, and postdoctoral scholarships.
- Secure funding for research-essential resources including support staff, Foundation staff, technical staff, equipment repair and service contracts, computational resources, library journal subscriptions and books, research-related travel, and facilities.
- Empower the Office of the Vice President of Research to play a central role in the coordinated promotion of research as integral and fundamental to SDSU's institutional health, teaching excellence, community relations, and development success.

NEXT STEPS:

Empower campus leadership to prepare an implementation plan that includes priorities, action plans, timelines, assigned responsibilities, and measures of progress and outcomes. Scheduled assessments by campus and faculty leadership, e.g. the University Research Council, should be established with transparent reporting to the entire campus.