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## **Charting the Future: The Role of Research and Creative Activities at Cal State Fullerton**

*Shari McMahan and Dorota Huizinga*

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Undoubtedly, research is vital to Cal State Fullerton.

The CSU Provosts' April 2007 report, *The Role of Research, Scholarship and Creative Activities*, indicates that the role of research since the 1990s has increased within the CSU system. Non-state funding to support research and scholarship has increased dramatically, centers and institutes have proliferated, and faculty and student awards and recognition for research and creative activities have multiplied.

The CSU system recognizes that excellent teaching and research are integral to the students' learning experience. When students are actively involved in research and creative activities with faculty members their learning experiences are enriched, creative and critical skills are enhanced, retention and graduation are positively affected, and professional opportunities are broadened.

Research and scholarly and creative activities are necessary for the retention, tenure and promotion process at CSUF. The university will hire 80-90 new tenure-track faculty members annually over the next few years, heightening the need to support an infrastructure that recognizes that research is key to our mission at Cal State Fullerton.

What we know....

- Faculty research and creative activities have made significant contributions to California's economic prosperity. For every dollar spent on the CSU, more than double is returned to the state of California in economic resources. Particularly important, as pointed out in the

May 2008 *Access to Excellence* report, is the CSU's increasing applied research activities that represent important contributions to our regional and state economic development.

- Externally supported research and sponsored programs and donor gifts may provide additional funds to sponsor faculty travel, enhance student support services and develop new academic programs.
- The CSU has the most ethnically and culturally diverse student body of any system of higher education in the world. Encouraging students to pursue doctoral level education provides opportunities for workforce development traditionally underserved by underrepresented groups.

It is critical that Cal State Fullerton actively support the enhanced scholarship and creative activity efforts of faculty and students. It is our recommendation that resources must be provided to match the increases in scholarship and creative activity and expectations of faculty at CSUF.

Specifically:

1. Improve visibility and promote the culture of research at CSUF by increasing the emphasis on featuring faculty research, faculty/student projects and grants on the university websites and in university publications.
2. Improve an infrastructure at CSUF that facilitates grant and contract submissions by deploying a comprehensive web-based grant and contract management system, and continuing to implement recommendations provided by the report on "Grant and Contract Activities and Processes at CSU Fullerton: An Evaluation." (November 2006).
3. Extend intramural research grant activities set forth in UPS 280.000 and evaluate current policies regarding number of awards, award types, frequency and distribution of awards. Additionally, create grants sponsoring mentorship programs for new faculty, and specifically focus on writing multimillion-dollar grants.

4. Increase the availability of funding for graduate students in such ways as stipends for theses/projects, seed money for faculty-mentored projects and travel to conferences (we realize current funding under “Fleckles” fund provides some money for travel, but this money can be changed and declined to support student travel to conferences at anytime).
5. Continue to foster programs, such as MARC, MHIRT and McNair, by providing support to program directors to facilitate management of these programs.
6. Continue to create new master’s degree programs, such as the professional science master’s degrees — which are vitally important to our future workforce needs — by analyzing the needs of the community and improving the process for submitting new program proposals to Academic Programs.

#### Role of the Academic Senate and its Committees

The Academic Senate can play an important role in promoting research and creative activities at this institution. It must be clear that as part of the “green” - sustainability movement, we must strategize our use of resources at this institution. This may be as simple as sharing our achievements at senate meetings to promoting interdisciplinary collaboration among colleagues. Moreover, the committee structure sets forth an opportunity for us to review university policy statements that are integral to the infrastructure of research. We are at a pivotal time in our institution with the hiring of 80-90 new tenure track faculty members and must find a way to support, mentor, and recognize new and existing faculty and our achievements.



**Dr. Shari McMahan** is Professor and Chair of the Department of Health Science. Her research utilizes a social ecological approach to prevent childhood obesity. She serves as Director for the Center of Healthy Lifestyles and Obesity Prevention and coordinates the Master’s of Public

Health degree program. Dr. McMahan is a Certified Health Education Specialist and Vice President elect for the Southwest District of the American Alliance for Health, Physical Education, Recreation and Dance.



**Dr. Dorota Huizinga** is Associate Vice President for Graduate Studies and Research and Professor of Computer Science at California State University, Fullerton. Her publication record spans a wide range of Computer Science disciplines, and her research has been sponsored by the National Science Foundation, State

of California, and private industry. She is also a co-author of the book “Automated Defect Prevention: Best Practices in Software Management” published by John Wiley & Sons/ IEEE Computer Society Press in September 2007. Dr. Huizinga joined CSUF’s Department of Computer Science in 1991.

### Upcoming Academic Senate Meetings

#### Fall 2008

October 30  
November 6, 20  
December 4

#### Spring 2009

January 29  
February 5, 12, 26  
March 5, 12, 26  
April 16, 23    May 14, 21

*The Academic Senate meets from  
11:30 AM to 1:00 PM in the  
Senate Chambers, Titan Shops.*