

# Research and Professional Development Committee report for Spring 2008

The committee met five times with almost full attendance. The goal for the quarter was to refine the working list of suggestions to improve/increase the ability of faculty to pursue research activities. Four of the meetings involved working on the actual document for the Provost and the fifth meeting of 14 May was with the Provost to discuss the list of suggestions.

The committee felt that our efforts of the 07/08 academic year were more devoted to the Provost's report than to Academic Senate activities. However, we also felt that one of our charges for the 08/09 would include clarifying the discussion about whether there should be qualifications for the \$5000 from Financial Resources section 1.

The majority of the committee contributed to the final document and stated that they were ready for another go for next year.

The report as sent to the Provost follows:

## Research and Professional Development Report Spring 2008

### **Introduction**

The Provost asked the Research and Professional Development Committee to perform a brief study and suggest a set of general recommendations to encourage scholarship at Cal Poly.

The Committee reviewed related Academic Senate and University documentation to gain a broader understanding of its task<sup>1</sup>. After several discussions, the Committee concluded that many of the barriers identified in this documentation still exist today. Thus, to effectively encourage scholarship among the faculty, Cal Poly will have to invest in three key areas: human resources, financial resources and physical resources.

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<sup>1</sup>Resolution on the Role of Research, University Research Committee, University Research Committee, February 4, 1981. Accessed online 27 April 2008 at <http://www.calpoly.edu/~acadsen/Resolutions/1980-1981/AS-114-81-RC.pdf>  
Resolution on the Development of a Research and Professional Development Infrastructure at Cal Poly, Research and Professional Development Committee, 1999. Accessed online 27 April 2008 at <http://www.calpoly.edu/~acadsen/Resolutions/1998-1999/AS-527-99-R&PDC.pdf>  
Recommendations on Providing Workload Relief for CENG Faculty Engaged in Scholarly Activities, CENG Workload Task Force, June 6, 2006.

The Research and Professional Development Committee focused on cost effective recommendations that could be applied across all Colleges and Departments in the University without negatively impacting the quality of teaching and student learning.

## **Recommendations**

In order to further engage faculty in scholarly activities, the Research and Professional Development Committee recommends the following:

### **Human Resources**

- 1) Provide each tenured and tenure-track faculty member with one course reduction per academic year
- 2) Provide each tenured and tenure-track faculty member with a student assistant
- 3) Utilize technology, such as distance learning or institutional repository tools, to reduce the effect of teaching load and to increase the visibility of scholarship
- 4) Reduce the burden of committee work at all levels

### **Financial Resources**

- 1) Provide each tenured and tenure-track faculty \$5,000 annually for scholarly activities
- 2) Establish graduate programs in every core discipline, since graduate instruction and research are complementary.

### **Physical Resources**

- 1) Provide an office to every tenured and tenure-track faculty member
- 2) Provide new space to accommodate sponsored research activities, including off-campus options if necessary

## **Discussion**

The Committee recommends that all faculty receive a reduction of one course per academic year as well as a reduction in the time dedicated to committee work. This will enable faculty to devote their energy toward scholarly and/or creative activities in their field. We also recommend providing each faculty member with a student assistant to help with teaching, administrative and research activities. Student assistants will not only free up faculty time for scholarship, but will also play an active role in faculty research with the experience serving as a gateway for graduate studies. Faculty should actively utilize technology to enhance and support teaching obligations while increasing the visibility and availability of existing research. As such, Cal Poly should consider endorsing distance learning and institutional repository technologies.

The Committee also recommends that all faculty receive a sum of funds to assist in pursuing scholarly activities. With the rising cost of participating in professional venues, travel and research, such guaranteed funding would enable faculty to interact, disseminate their work, learn

state-of-the-art protocols, and to collaborate/develop new research. This is a fundamental issue for Professional Development that seems to be largely underutilized by several departments. Such funding should come from a source other than the academic department or college. With regards to graduate education, funding should not only be made available for the betterment and growth of existing graduate programs but also for new and emerging programs. Functioning graduate programs are a bridgehead to research development, they inspire and generate new pedagogies at the undergraduate level, attract students to research activities, and encourage critical thinking.

Finally, the Committee recommends that space limitations be addressed by providing each faculty member their own office, as well as exploring creative ways to accommodate research activities and professional interaction both on and off campus.

### **Summary**

The Committee recognizes that Cal Poly faculty enjoy the enterprise of academic research but are hindered in furthering those pursuits due to lack of human, financial and physical resources. The Committee has compiled a brief list of actionable recommendations to advance the Provost's goals of increased scholarship at Cal Poly. Successful resolution of such limitations will enable and enhance Cal Poly's engagement in more sophisticated levels of research and scholarship.