

CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY, STANISLAUS
STRATEGIC PLANNING WORKGROUP
GOAL 5: PROMOTING RESEARCH ACTIVITIES OF FACULTY AND STUDENTS

Purpose of RSCA and its relationship to the academic mission?

A commitment to research and scholarly pursuit is reflected in the academic mission of CSU Stanislaus, accompanied by the stated goal to “support and actively promote the research, scholarship, and creative activities of the faculty so its work is recognized for its excellence within and beyond the region.”

Through governance deliberations in 2000, the faculty have defined “research” broadly to include diverse forms of scholarly inquiry: “Research, scholarship, and creative activity are considered to be those activities of an intellectual or professional nature which extend knowledge, understanding or appreciation of work within one’s discipline or across disciplines, which includes basic and applied investigation, as well as the production of creative works.”

Thus, research, scholarship, and creative activity—abbreviated throughout this text to “RSCA”—recognizes and honors the diversity and richness of academic disciplines in the conduct of scholarly inquiry, as reflected in departmental elaborations for RPT decisions.

RSCA is an essential interdependent ingredient of superior teaching, a hallmark of an intellectually vigorous faculty, an indicator of the quality of student learning, and a means to contribute to the betterment of the world inside and outside the academy. Emerging from discussions and assessment of RSCA goals and progress toward goals, the following actions for infrastructure and funding resulted.

Faculty Research

1. 1997 Formed Task Force on RSCA with recommendations in four categories guiding campus initiatives in enhanced support for RSCA: Retention, Promotion and Tenure; Faculty Funding; Institutional Funding; and Structural Support.
2. 1997 Ensured the allocation of CSU system allocations for RSCA and AA grants with specification that faculty describe the nature of student involvement in the project.
3. 1997 Created MDIS 7000 continuing enrollment thesis course to support faculty and students completing thesis research.
4. 1997 Graduate Council reviewed processes and support for RSCA and established an action plan and assessment measures.
5. 1998 Increased positions in the Office of Research and Sponsored Programs to include pre-award and post-award staff positions.
6. 1998 Created the Grants Incentive Program (GRIP) and Research Incentive Program (RIP) to provide support to faculty for their RSCA and to do so through the initial investment and to seek extramural funding for continuing support.
7. 1998 Revised the campus policy for indirect cost recovery (F&A) that provides funding directly to the PI’s with funded grants and some matching funds for grants.
8. 1998 Provided each new faculty member with a computer for RSCA.
9. 1998 Mandated RSCA elaborations with prime responsibility to each department for “elaborating, interpreting, and reinforcing requirements for RSCA.”
10. 1998 New faculty not evaluated in RPT process until fall semester of 2nd year of employment.
11. 1998 Created the CSU Stanislaus Journal of Research (interdisciplinary and multi-disciplinary).
12. 1999 Increased the amount of funds for each faculty member for participation in professional activities, supplemented by the deans in increasing amounts over the past few years.

13. 1999 Developed pools of modest funds in graduate studies to assist students and faculty in the conduct of their research.
14. 1999 Increased the number of funded sabbaticals for faculty.
15. 1999 Increased ORSP funding for faculty sponsors to accompany student researchers to the CSU Student Research Competition.
16. 1999 WASC expressed strong concern that the University had not yet reached consensus about research. The next accreditation review will require the university to define research consistent with our mission, ensure that expectations for research are made explicit and evident in personnel decisions (RPT), and demonstrate increased institutional support for faculty scholarship.
17. 1999 Enhanced support from the Faculty Development Committee to provide workshops related to RSCA.
18. 1999 Enhanced financial support for students and their faculty sponsors for the CSU Student Research Competition (through IRA funding).
19. 1999 Created a governance structure through the Research, Scholarship, and Creative Activity Policy Committee that provides leadership and advocacy for RSCA policy, recognition, support, and resources.
20. 2000 Defined "research" as research, scholarship, and creative activity.
21. 2000 Established the Outstanding Faculty Research, Scholarship, and Creative Activity Award with monetary award.
22. 2000 Created the Office of Service Learning in support of enhanced definition of RSCA and service projects and research (in many disciplines, particularly education and social sciences).

Student Research

1. 1997 Established continuing enrollment fee for graduate students completing theses, a portion of funding available to support theses RSCA expenses.
2. 1997 Ensured the allocation of CSU system allocations for RSCA and AA grants with specification that faculty describe the nature of student involvement in the project.
3. 1998 Secured gifts (via Development and University Relations) for graduate fellowships and scholarships.
4. 1999 Created the Student Research Council.
5. 1999 Added cash awards to campus Student Research Competition.
6. 1999 Secured IRA funding for students to participate in the CSU Student Research Competition.
7. 2002 Established graduate student fee waivers.

How goal impacts and engages members of the campus community?

Professors are scholars devoted to teaching and student intellectual development. RSCA is an essential element of faculty vitality, currency, professional development, and teaching effectiveness for both undergraduate and graduate education.

The university commits to excellence in teaching and learning in its baccalaureate, graduate, and post-baccalaureate credential programs. In addition, the university invests in its graduate programs (through its faculty) the primary responsibility for advancement of scholarly research. Pragmatically, RSCA prepares students for career advancement, entry into the professions, and doctoral study. But graduate educations' overriding goal is to educate scholars whose RSCA informs and improves society. RSCA is essential also to superlative baccalaureate programs, evidenced in undergraduate academic programs with strong components of RSCA. The Honors Program, for example, views collaborative research with faculty / students as a core value and assesses these scholarly accomplishments.

With RSCA focused on educational development that is accessible to students, it is natural to include students in such work, and this should be strongly encouraged (where appropriate), with

positive RPT impact and with funding for supporting students who contribute to that work. By encouraging and supporting student involvement in RSCA, students may inform their fields through professional presentations at conferences and through seminar presentations to regional agencies.

Objectives or outcomes necessary to achieve goal?

Faculty have discussed the importance of being explicit about what RSCA means at CSU Stanislaus. Some believe that given our CSU environment, mission, and fiscal support, we should focus on application-type RSCA (rather than major basic research) that interprets basic research and developments for undergraduate and graduate students and has an educational impact on ideas. Other disciplines, however, affirm the engagement of faculty in original research and use of primary sources as critical to quality scholarship and for faculty serving as role models to students preparing for RSCA in these disciplinary areas of study.

However, while combining the complementary roles of teaching and research is a concept embedded in the values, mission, culture, policy, and procedures at CSU Stanislaus, the amount of time by faculty to devote to RSCA remains an issue. There is wide consensus that the teaching loads inhibit the faculty's ability to devote sufficient time to professional development, RSCA, and other professional responsibilities that translate into enhanced teaching.

Priority on learning means priority on teaching and scholarship. Resource support for scholarly work and professional development is essential to excellence and educational quality.

Various strategies may be undertaken as follows:

1. Examine methods for WTU's to be distributed to provide adequate and sustained time for RSCA (e.g., consider teaching schedules and number of different class preparations).
2. Reduce instructional workload for faculty with responsibilities for graduate instruction.
3. Compensate with course reductions for supervising research (theses and projects) for graduate students.
4. Set aside each year a designated number of faculty allocations for assigned time for RSCA.
5. Hire grant writers to assist faculty in securing increased sponsored research.
6. Increase sabbatical leave formula with operating expense budgets.
7. Provide one course of released time for each new faculty for the first two years of employment.
8. Increase travel funds for professional development.
9. Increase fund raising for RSCA-related projects such as dedicated sciences research facility, honors, and graduate fellowships.
10. Encourage and reward research by contributing appropriate matching to any external funds.
11. Provide mentoring and faculty development for RSCA.
12. Reconsider the method for allocating RSCA grants to give greater support for faculty working toward tenure (newer faculty and those not previously receiving funding).

Given budget constraints, objectives critical to success of the goal?

The overarching objective is to support RSCA as integral to exemplary teaching and the highest level of student academic achievement. As such, sustaining our current commitment to RSCA is essential to a maturing university and should be reflected in our budgetary commitments during the period of budget constraints. A key strategy to sustain institutional support for RSCA is to increase the amount of extra-mural funding through grants, contracts, and gifts.

Maintaining (not diminishing) infrastructure support for teaching and RSCA takes several forms. Traditionally, the library is the core instrument for both introductory and advanced study and research in the disciplines. Quality information resources (books, periodicals, and data) in print and digital media are essential for all research areas in the humanities, social sciences, business,

and sciences; in addition, scientific equipment, academic technology, facilities, and technical staff are important for the sciences; and specialized facilities and equipment for the arts. Historians and others also require travel funds for access to specialized libraries and archives.

Evaluation of goal?

To achieve the goal of support for faculty and student RSCA, the following are possible indicators of success:

1. Increased number and quality of RSCA as defined by departmental elaborations.
2. Increased number and quality of sponsored programs (grants and contracts).
3. Increased funds from private gift support – for RSCA.
4. Sustained (in years of budget constraints) and increased fiscal support from gifts for RSCA.
5. Increased numbers of students engaged in collaborative research with faculty.
6. Removal of WASC citation through evidence of RSCA definition, support, quality, and quantity commensurate with mission and growth in faculty.
7. Revised university policies for allocation of funds in light of increased tuition for graduate education.
8. Increased allocation from fee increases for graduate students to departments with graduate programs to enhance RSCA support for faculty and students.
9. Increased hiring of new faculty with promise or record of prominence in both teaching and RSCA.
10. Increased support for and from office of Research and Sponsored Programs in enhancing faculty and student RSCA via grants and contracts.