

Research and Special Education Projects at a Rural, Teaching University

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There are traditional assumptions regarding an institution's capabilities for conducting research and special educational projects. For example, it has been assumed that a university's propensity for research is inversely proportional to its dedication to teaching. It has similarly been assumed that research and special educational project activity at an institution within a system will be proportional to that institution's relative size within the system. Humboldt State University increasingly shows both assumptions to be false. Additionally, there are significant efforts underway which promise that our accomplishments will continue.

We have several accomplishments in which we can justifiably take pride. Within the nineteen-campus CSUC system, our campus ranks fourteenth in FTE. In terms of our number of research and special educational project awards, we ranked eleventh for the 1978-79 fiscal year. Our projects tend to be smaller in dollar volume, and we have ranked as high as fourth in our system in terms of the number of projects which are under \$10,000. While such statistics can provide a relative insight into our accomplishments, comparisons against ourselves tend to be more meaningful.

During fiscal year 1977-78, we received forty-three grant awards totaling \$1.5 million. In 1978-79, the number of grant awards increased to fifty-five awards with a dollar value of \$1.4 million. Thus far this year, the number of grant awards are outpacing last year by 30%. In terms of success ratio, determined by the relationship of grants received to proposals submitted, that ratio has consistently been an impressive seventy-five percent or higher. For a recent example, of the last one hundred proposals submitted through HSU Foundation, thirteen have been denied, fifty-five have been funded, and thirty-two are still pending.

Most of our faculty and staff will recall the Report of the President's Commission on the

Nature and Potential of Humboldt State University (issued September, 1977). A followup study was conducted for President McCrone's office to quantify the university's efforts toward fulfillment of the recommendations contained in that report. In response to the recommendation that financial endowment be enhanced, the followup study report noted: "An index of one such development is the significant increase in grant awards which have been received during the past three years." In response to the recommendation that faculty endowment be enhanced through research activities, the followup study reported: "The most easily documented progress related to the Commission's concerns has occurred in the increase in the number and amount of research grants." In distinguishing between research grants and special educational projects, the report noted: "Grants for research have more than doubled in two years."

Within such findings, and within statistics such as success ratios, number of awards, percent of growth, comparisons between undergraduate and graduate projects, comparisons between disciplines, etc., there is a wealth of information which would undoubtedly be of interest to our faculty and staff, but what is likely to be of greater interest are the new efforts which are going forward.

Initially, deans, division chairs, and department chairs should be experiencing an increase in the number of grant opportunities and related materials being sent from HSU Foundation. These materials include grant program announcements, RFP's, calls for papers, pending appropriations, etc. Much of the increase in the flow of such materials is the result of the efforts of Judith Wortman, Director for Federal Relations, CSUC, in our Washington, D.C. office. I am also continuing to send that office's monthly newsletter, *Dateline: Washington*, to deans and division chairs for routing. In keeping with her efforts to become more familiar with the

individual campuses, Ms. Wortman visited our campus on January 13 and 14 of this year.

Secondly, the research coordinators of the CSUC are establishing liaison with the CSUC Auxiliaries Organization Association (AOA). The AOA is an active organization which represents all the CSUC research foundations, as well as the student services' auxiliaries. It has a highly functional and effective executive committee structure, publishes a newsletter, and retains its own legal counsel (the legal advice is an active relationship involving, over recent years for example, the monthly distribution of a legal newsletter of some five to six pages in length, plus regular counsel to the AOA). The AOA holds an annual conference which is formidable in size and scope (speakers this year included Senator Rodda; Dr. Lloyd Johns — President, Sacramento State; Dr. James Jensen, CSUC Director of Governmental Affairs in Sacramento; and Richard Cutting, Program Budget Manager — Education, California Department of Finance). It is in relationship to that annual conference and to the AOA newsletter that liaison with research coordinators is being developed.

This year's AOA meeting was held January 16, 17, and 18 in Sacramento, and the CSUC research coordinators had their first annual meeting at the same site (it was, however, the second time that CSUC research coordinators had met together). I represented Humboldt State at the research coordinators meeting and am most pleased to share with you some highlights of that meeting.

In preparation for the research coordinators' annual meeting, Judith Wortman had surveyed research coordinators relative to questions we wanted answered by federal agencies (National Science Foundation, National Endowment for the Humanities, and Office of Education/Department of Education) so that responses could be thoroughly developed. Each of those agency representatives attended the Sacramento meeting, and each responded in detail to all the questions presented. Many of those responses were quite enlightening and should be of significant benefit to us.

For example, the use of preliminary proposals was discussed in regard to research projects. Each agency stressed the value of a preliminary proposal or precis of approximately three pages in length. The logic behind the agency thinking is well worth repeating. The submission of a preliminary proposal enables agency staff to engage in dialogue with the principal investigator, to become involved in the programmatic aspects of the proposed

research. (If an unsolicited proposal comes into their agency in final form, they are expected to simply process it and not become involved.) Many of their staffers are academicians (the NSF and NEH panel members had academic credits as long as the proverbial limb), and they *want* to be involved with good projects. Further, they not only long for such involvement, but it is also in their best interest to make "good" grants since successful projects enable an agency to demonstrate to Congress the need for and worth of their programs. Beyond that, if they can utilize all their funds for successful projects, they can justify an increase in the appropriations for their programs. All three panelists noted that, even if the principal investigator is discouraged from submitting a final proposal, when it is submitted anyway, it is often funded.

Resubmission of final proposals that have been rejected was discussed. The collective thinking of the panel was that those resubmissions which take reviewer comments to heart in the resubmission process tend to do rather well the second time around.

The concept of "quota grant-making" (this is my own term) was indirectly addressed. Essentially the issue here is whether grant-making agencies are "expected" to spread the wealth around — a few grants to each state, a few to smaller schools, a few to community colleges, etc. While the issue is always skirted, if it were to be answered directly, the answer would have to be affirmative. It was noted that community colleges have been "under-represented." If our campus could develop proposals which also involved the College of the Redwoods, those proposals would quite likely fare rather well. It is also significant to note that the National Science Foundation is developing a \$20 million program to encourage cooperation between universities and industry. Most of you are probably already aware that a 25% increase is anticipated in research funding through the Department of Defense.

I had an opportunity to talk with all three panelists individually, and the representative from the National Science Foundation was quite interested in seeing an increase in grants to campuses of our size. (He knew Humboldt as he had been an unsuccessful applicant for a faculty position here in his earlier years.) When I told him about the grant recipient research being conducted by a sociologist at Sacramento State, he was quite interested and will be contacting that faculty

member to obtain the survey results. He was equally interested in a survey of assistant professors as grant recipients which is being conducted by the American Association of State Colleges and Universities. Dr. McCrone is the CSUC representative to that national educational organization.

Though the research coordinators' meeting had planned to have a significant discussion regarding the newly formed Department of Education, that agency is still in transition. Unit chiefs have been submitting position papers regarding structure and purpose. The current role of the DHEW region was discussed. The regional office now has the function of assisting individuals in making grant applications to existing Office of Education programs. The submission of a preliminary proposal to that office could be beneficial and could even result in an invitation to come to San Francisco and develop a full proposal with their assistance. (In that regard, HSU Foundation would be receptive to invited-travel requests at any time, rather than just through our Small Grant competition.) The National Science Foundation also has a San Francisco office.

Concerning travel relative to grant proposals, each federal panelist stressed that is not a wise use of campus resources to travel to Washington, D.C., agency offices unless invited after having submitted a preliminary proposal or precis.

Another area which the panelists favorably addressed is the multi-campus proposal. For example, should you have colleagues at Chico, Sacramento, San Francisco, etc., who might be willing to help you address a problem common to all of northern California, federal agencies would be quite receptive. In such situations, the CSUC Foundation (Chancellor's Office) could be beneficial. Dr. McCrone has been serving on a special committee of CSUC Presidents and campus foundation managers in regard to campus involvement with the foundation at the Chancellor's Office. With significant lead time and with genesis of the idea from the campuses involved, a proposal could be developed such that the Chancellor's Office foundation could be helpful, if the campuses involved needed that help.

In regard to working with other CSUC campuses, our office has worked with the research foundation managers and some of their staff at such northern campuses as Chico, Sacramento, San Francisco, San Jose, and Hayward. If you have ideas for regional projects but do not have colleagues at other campuses identified, foundation

offices can help to identify them. We also have good relationships with southern campuses. Significant lead time would undoubtedly be necessary for such projects since, although the working relationships are in place, we have not done such collaborative proposals in the past.

Though not a matter coming out of the research coordinators' meeting, you will also be quite interested in a program developing within California. The Chancellor's Office is moving forward with a program entitled the University Services Program (USP). It is being developed through the office of Ralph Mills, Dean, Extended Education. The concept of the program is that the Chancellor's Office will work with State agencies in Sacramento to identify grant possibilities for CSUC faculty. Chancellor's Office staff is already in place in Sacramento in that regard. If *new grant possibilities*, as opposed to a repeat of grant relationships already in place, are identified, the Chancellor's Office will notify individual campuses and the State agency in regard to that commonality of interest and talent. Grants resulting from that specific process will be awarded to the Chancellor's Office, and the Chancellor's Office will negotiate such awards with the State agency involved. Such awards will then be subcontracted to individual campus foundations. The individual campus will then return a portion of indirect costs earned to the Chancellor's Office foundation. Participation with this Chancellor's Office program is voluntary, but there is a formal process necessary to initiate involvement if a campus foundation chooses to participate. Campuses choosing not to participate will not receive referrals from the Chancellor's Office. Whether campuses join or not, individual campuses can still work directly with State agencies as they have in the past in securing grant awards. Once formal involvement in the USP is established by a campus, individual proposals should not experience any unusual delay in State agency reaction time. Central to the Chancellor's Office being able to identify suitable talent on individual campuses, the Chancellor's Office wants to maintain a file of curriculum vitae of interested research faculty. (At least one School on our campus was solicited by the Chancellor's Office foundation some months ago in regard to curriculum vitae.) While there has been significant resistance throughout the system to the entire concept of the University Services Program, it is fast becoming a reality. The Chancellor's Office has even obtained contracts between the State Depart-

ment of Education and itself in the amount of \$1.8 million, and is now in the process of advising individual campuses of the various project possibilities within those funds. All those projects are in the field of nutrition education. While these particular examples of University Services Program contracts have an element of the cart-before-the-horse to them, they are indicative of the increasing interest of the CSUC in research and special educational projects.

As the foregoing items indicate, things are happening in research. Please keep our office advised as to how we can be most helpful to you. Despite the fact that grant resources will always undergo periods of constriction, new directions regularly emerge. Though our university's accomplishments are already significant, we yet have potential for growth which will complement our instructional mission.

*"Status Report on the Recommendations of the President's Commission on the Nature and Potential of Humboldt State University," Helen Batchelor for the President, May, 1979, Humboldt State University.