

Standard 3: Developing and Applying Resources and Organizational Structures to Ensure Sustainability

Reflective Essay 3a: Using Our Resources Wisely

Introduction

San Diego State University is a well-regulated university with clearly defined budgetary processes, open communication among the administration, faculty and staff, and access to diverse sources of funding to sustain its institutional purposes and educational objectives. This essay highlights the development of the University's budgetary processes through the work of [shared governance](#) and addresses three points: a) how the University obtains and allocates resources to support its institutional priorities; b) how the University provides for facilities to support and maintain its mission; and c) how the University supports its commitment to the growth of graduate programs.

Providing Resources to Support Our Mission [CFRs: 3.5, Q3, Q4]

The Cabinet Budget Committee (CBC) consists of the four Vice-Presidents, the Executive Assistant to the President, three faculty members, including the Chair of the Senate and the Chair of the Committee on [Academic Resources and Planning](#), and the President of Associated Students. It is responsible for providing recommendations to the President that assure that fiscal resources are allocated effectively and equitably. The CBC continually reviews new demands upon the budget, whether due to internal adjustments of mission or external demands, and recommends allocations of resources accordingly. Overall, the administration and faculty leadership alike regard the budgetary process developed since 1997 as one of the key strengths of the university.

SDSU draws its fiscal resources from a variety of sources: state support, self-support, student fees, grants and contracts, auxiliary activities, and philanthropy ([General Fund Support Budget 2002-03](#)). Although we are a state-supported institution, the public funds we receive have been decreasing steadily and significantly. In 2002-03, only 35% of the total University revenues of \$610.8 million came from state appropriations. Grants and contracts awarded to faculty reached over \$130 million in the [2002-2003](#) fiscal year. Creation of The Campanile Foundation in 2000 has raised the level of private philanthropy. SDSU recorded \$43.3 million in private gifts for [2002-2003](#). The substantial support received from grants, contracts, auxiliaries, and private donations has allowed the University to develop in ways not typical of a CSU campus. For example, with only small allocations from the Chancellor's Office, and no graduate differential in funding of workload, SDSU has been able to bring online 14 joint-doctoral programs since 1965 and to greatly expand support of both masters and doctoral students. External funding sources also support undergraduate student research, student scholarships, new teaching initiatives, faculty research and travel, and buildings and equipment.

This diversified fiscal profile is particularly important as the University's ability to depend upon state funding is increasingly called into question. All public institutions of higher education in California began to experience the harsh reality of the state's current budget crisis in 2002-03, with deep cuts initiated in 2003-04. Our open and transparent processes that emphasize multi-year planning, together with campus community engagement through shared governance (Please see: [Budget Messages from President Weber](#); [SDSU Budget Updates](#); [CSU Budget Central](#)), are assuring that we weather the crisis in as rational and humane a manner as possible. In addition, the recent approval of a new [CSU Compact](#) with the Governor will provide some stability. The Compact provides a minimum of 3% enrollment growth funding plus an additional 3% in funding for other costs through 2010-11.

Providing Facilities to Support our Mission [CFRs: 3.5, 3.6, 3.7 & Q1; 4.1, 4.2]

The SDSU [Campus Physical Master Plan](#), which provides a comprehensive strategy for addressing academic facility and related needs (e.g., parking, housing, research space), is designed to meet the University mission. However, our ability to provide facilities to support our mission is not without its challenges. SDSU is currently master planned with an enrollment capacity of 25,000 academic year, on-campus FTES. Based on CSU formulas, the campus currently has a physical capacity of 110% in lecture, 114% in lower division laboratory, and over 200% in upper division laboratory. The huge excess in upper division laboratory is primarily caused by the inability of the California legislature or CSU by formula to recognize the research space so necessary and vital to SDSU's instructional mission. Until we raise our master planned ceiling no new space will be forthcoming and cannot be justified under the current State and CSU policies. We are now in the process of raising the ceiling to 35,000 FTE capacity by 2020 to provide some relief and allow our facilities to keep pace with enrollment and to fulfill our mission.

The SDSU program and approval review process for State funding of facilities starts with a concept and feasibility study and ends with approval of funding as part of the Governor's budget. To receive any State funding, SDSU must compete at the system-wide level with 22 other campuses. Over the past five years (1998-2003) SDSU received approval for \$83 million for State-funded facility projects, ranking third among CSU campuses. However, this success in securing funding is tempered by the following constraints: the California legislature mandates that CSU make requests for capital outlay funding for space for classrooms and laboratories based on legislatively approved utilization standards and a reasonable assumption of summer term enrollment. CSU bases its five-year capital outlay plan on utilization of instructional facilities during the summer, assuming a summer term enrollment of at least 40%. This means that until we achieve a 40% summer term enrollment, a goal that is not projected to be met for some years, no additional capacity space for lecture or laboratory will be achieved.

The constraints imposed by State and CSU policies have led to the development of a multitude of other sources (e.g., donor funds, student fees, self-support and auxiliary funding) to assist us in fulfilling our mission. SDSU acquired \$147.5 million for non-State funded facility projects, ranking first among all CSU campuses. As a result, SDSU's total of \$230.5 million for facility projects ranked first, 18% above the campus with the second largest total. Another example of the creativity used by various campus units, organizations, and individuals can be seen in the donation to SDSU of 200 acres of land near the SDSU Imperial Valley Campus ([Brawley](#)). Five of those acres were set aside and donated instead to one of our auxiliaries, [Aztec Shops](#). This enabled Aztec Shops to finance the construction of a classroom/administrative building as the first facility on the new Brawley campus site. Initial cost of this facility, which will have eight classrooms, offices, and a snack room, totaling approximately 10,000 square feet, is \$1,339,875. From concept to opening, the project will have taken approximately 18 months. The facility will be leased to SDSU for 15 years, after which Aztec Shops will donate the facility to the University. This contribution – and many others – from Aztec Shops, a not-for-profit organization which primarily runs the University bookstore and food services, is but one example of the use of non-State funded dollars received from many sources within the SDSU community.

Maximizing the use and expanding the capabilities of existing facilities are also important elements of resource acquisition and utilization. For example, the need for larger lecture halls has been in the planning stages for some time. Though SDSU has had, for some time, 300-seat lecture halls, current and future budget constraints provided the impetus for the University to expeditiously find ways of accommodating even larger numbers of students in a single lecture hall. In October 2002 SDSU embarked on converting the former Women's Gym into a 500-seat lecture hall. This project was completed in August 2003, in time for the fall 2003 semester. The facility is extremely high tech, with video screens, wireless microphones, and keypads at every

desk. Prior to the start of the fall 2003 semester, every instructor using the classroom was given extensive training in use of the technology located in the classroom and in pedagogical techniques especially relevant in large classes. Many of the course sections offered in this lecture hall also rely on breakout sessions (either lab or small lectures), which provide more opportunities for additional small group student experiences and provide an important source of funding for graduate students. Also, this large lecture hall has allowed more extensive use of existing lecture halls, creating a much more efficient use of space and an ability to help address SDSU's FTES demand in a reduced budget environment.

Not only is it essential to practice efficient and effective facility utilization, but it is also important to ensure that current facilities are maintained and updated to support the academic mission. A strong library is central to a strong university. The [SDSU Library](#) has extensive resources to support both students and faculty. The SDSU book collection remains superb, with holdings of 1,705,803 books and 6,435,109 total library collections. SDSU Library holdings are also supplemented by many scientific holdings from UCSD. Instructional support for faculty includes use of the Blackboard system, options for course readings, course reserves, electronic resource linkings, and library instruction for classes. Additionally, there are a number of on-line databases to support both student learning and faculty research. In 2002 the University Senate endorsed the need for increased funding for the Library ([SDSU Senate minutes, April 9, 2002](#); SDSU Library Committee, SDSU Library Budget Study: [Resource Needs for a Research Extensive University Report](#)). Though the current budget is projected to meet Library needs for the current academic year, there is continued concern about inflation and budget reductions eroding the library's ability to remain current and to provide the full-range of library services the University requires. Development/fundraising for the Library endowment has been difficult due in some part to lack of a ready made pool of donors. To provide some assistance, in March 2002 the SDSU student body voted a \$10/semester fee to keep the Library open for extended hours. [Supporting Our Commitment to the Growth of Graduate Programs](#) [CFRs: 3.5, 4.2] SDSU, as discussed in Essay 2b, identified research as a key part of its mission over two decades ago. While important to both undergraduate and graduate education, research is particularly central to the latter. Hence, graduate programs have an important place in the culture of the University. The California Master Plan for Higher Education defines the primary mission of the CSU as providing education through bachelor- and master-levels and includes joint doctoral programs in partnership with the University of California and other California universities. SDSU doctoral graduates have been steadily increasing, with more than 50 graduates in spring 2004. In AY 2004-05 SDSU will have 16 doctoral degree programs and anticipates graduating more than 50 doctoral students. The development and sustenance of these doctoral programs, as well as 78 masters programs [See [Graduate Bulletin](#)] is a compelling example of how the institution has allocated resources to support its mission of becoming a nationally recognized university. It has required institutional will, focus, and dedication. The required resources include money, certainly, but also a qualified research faculty, individual leadership, and institutional planning.

The CSU's funding formulas do not include any differential for graduate education. All students – from first year freshmen to doctoral students – are funded on the basis of a 15-unit FTES. There is no recognition of the supervisory work required of thesis or dissertation chairs. No special funding is assigned to the support of graduate students. Graduate education – especially in doctoral programs – is very expensive and requires creative financing. SDSU supports its programs in two ways: through the instructional budget and through grants and contracts administered by the Foundation. Instructional funding used to build joint doctorates and to offer small graduate seminars comes from the same pool that provides undergraduate courses and programs, and here lies the crux of campus debates and disagreements: Is the dedication of resources to high-quality graduate education at SDSU, including joint-doctoral

programs, harming undergraduate education? To answer this question, in 2003, the [Graduate Council](#) and Academic Resources and Planning Committee (ARP) of the Senate undertook a [study](#) that demonstrated that doctoral programs actually added value to the University. For example, grants and contract dollars generated by faculty officially appointed to doctoral programs exceeded \$242 million over the five years of their study. The study also observed that "Masters and undergraduate students receive opportunities that would not exist without the Joint Doctoral Programs" and that "Joint Doctoral programs within academic departments greatly increase the ability of the department to compete for faculty, over time, setting the direction of the department." Moreover, as noted in Essay 2b, students benefit directly from the research generated within these programs. Nonetheless, the unfunded cost of these programs creates additional challenges during this budget crisis. To assist us in weathering this financial storm, the SDSU Foundation promised the University approximately \$400,000 in AY 2004-05 to support course buy outs for research-active faculty, equipment matching funds, and library acquisitions. Without this support, some joint doctoral programs were in danger of not being able to admit students for AY 2004-05.

Instructional funds alone cannot sustain joint doctoral programs even in the best of budget years. Most programs rely on externally funded research to support masters and doctoral students. Research grants also provide equipment and facilities that enrich student learning at all levels. This has created a situation where funding opportunities, rather than University priorities, tend to drive research and program development. Most current [joint doctorates](#) are in departments that attract a substantial number of grants and contracts, and are heavily concentrated in the sciences.

Funding is only part of the resource question. Even more crucial is a qualified research faculty who can present themselves as peers to faculty at partner institutions. There must be one or more key individuals with the vision and dedication to lead programs into existence. The University is building this capacity through energetic faculty recruitment, bringing in people with strong credentials at advanced ranks and hiring and evaluating junior faculty for their research potential. In many cases, mid-career faculty are revitalized by their participation in these programs through the research opportunities that doctoral students present.

Finally, a strong graduate program requires excellent students. To attract strong students, an institution must provide some degree of financial support, including stipends, assistantships, and fee waivers. Most doctoral students receive competitive support, which includes a stipend, fee subsidy and, if applicable, an out-of-state tuition waiver, while 25% of foreign and non-resident graduate students at SDSU also receive a tuition waiver. At the masters degree level, SDSU recognized the importance of financial support some years ago and by the mid-1990s there was an unwritten rule that no new graduate program would be approved unless the department could demonstrate a commitment to fund at least one-third of its students. Like many other funding categories, graduate student support is at risk in the current budget climate, raising worrisome questions about the survival of the strong, high-quality programs already in place.

These worries are not simply abstractions. Although until spring 2004 the absolute numbers of graduate students has been steadily increasing, graduate enrollments as a percentage of overall enrollments have been declining for more than a decade, and are now lower than the national average and even the CSU average. Historically, 18% of students have been enrolled in graduate programs at SDSU. This percent, however, includes all postbaccalaureate students. Currently, that percentage is between 13% - 18%, depending on whether we include students taking post baccalaureate classes for their teaching credential (18%) or exclude these students (13%). To some extent this [decrease](#) in percent of graduate students is the result of the surge in undergraduate enrollment we have seen since the mid 1990s. But the percentage of graduate students had been

declining even before that, and in spring 2004 we experienced a surprising drop in graduate FTES. Campus conversations about increasing the percentage of graduate students to 20% began as early as AY 1993-94. In AY 2003-04 the Graduate Division clearly defined its goal to reach 20% of overall enrollment, not including postbaccalaureate students, and initiated a new approach to research and planning. In the past, the Division merely responded to department plans and faculty interest. At present, the Graduate Division is becoming more aggressive about University-led recruitment and stimulating new program growth. Assisted by the Graduate Council, it is gathering and analyzing data on the current situation, comparing the University to similar institutions, and conducting focus groups with departments targeted for growth. Using these results, the Graduate Division, guided by the Graduate Council, will build a strategic plan for growth.

The challenge is to increase the number of graduate students, while improving their overall quality. At first, these two goals may be contradictory: by tightening our standards we may lower our numbers initially. The long-term goal is to add programs where there is faculty expertise and student interest. In this, the key to growth lies in interdisciplinary programs, master's programs, and advanced certificate programs. For example, in 2004, the University initiated a new master's degree in [Homeland Security](#), one of very few in the country that draws upon faculty and curricula in several colleges. This interdisciplinary program is taught by faculty from the Colleges of Health and Human Services, Sciences, Professional Studies and Fine Arts, and Arts and Letters. On the other hand, we may not be able to afford many more doctoral programs because of their cost and lower student yield. The University must decide if it will continue to make growth in joint-doctoral programs a priority, or shift to a broader view of graduate program growth. Clearly, these questions will require institutional planning, leadership, and consensus-building.