

## The Pursuit of Collective Excellence in Research at the University of California

An objective for the University of California (UC) research enterprise is the pursuit of both individual excellence by its scholars and collective excellence at the level of academic units (AUs), campuses and the UC system. Collective excellence is often expressed as “making the whole more than the sum of its parts.”

Although research is typically evaluated separately from teaching and service, these three elements of UC’s mission are, in fact, interdependent and can be synergistic: For example, a diverse group of graduate students receiving excellent mentoring and training in an AU helps recruit other outstanding students to pursue their degrees at UC; scholars who leverage their basic research to improve the quality of life in California’s communities create ties for UC with the public that can enhance support for the University’s research activities.

AUs can have their collective contributions to research, education and service recognized holistically in UC’s academic program reviews, where (inter)national expert reviewers typically have an opportunity to react objectively to an AU’s accomplishments and future plans, and to obtain input directly from the AU’s students, staff and faculty. It is the collective responsibility of the AU, through the leadership of the head of the AU, to address and solve issues that may be identified through academic program reviews and to determine how best to advance the AU’s pursuit of collective excellence.

The intent of this document is to raise awareness among individuals and (external) committees reviewing UC’s AUs and scholars to consider the many ways that an AU and its scholars can contribute to a thriving UC research enterprise. Emerging modes of scholarship are yielding new forms of research contributions. A more expansive view and recognition of both individual and collective research excellence is essential for the long-term health of UC and will ensure that the University maintains its global pre-eminence in research.

APM 210-1, section d., anticipates the need to take an expansive view in noting that “...the review committee shall exercise reasonable flexibility, balancing when the case requires, heavier commitments and responsibilities in one area against lighter commitments and responsibilities in another”; and “As the University enters new fields of endeavor and refocuses its ongoing activities, cases will arise in which the proper work of faculty members departs markedly from established academic patterns. In such cases the review committees must take exceptional care to apply the criteria with sufficient flexibility. However, flexibility does not entail a relaxation of high standards.”

The full spectrum of basic to applied research has been and will continue to be at the core of UC’s strength. Presented below are a set of examples that highlight trends in scholarship that UC can accommodate as part of individual and collective excellence; it should be noted that these examples - which should be regarded as illustrative, not exhaustive - are *among* the activities considered in normal faculty and program reviews. In evaluating new forms of scholarly contributions, the principal criteria of the quality and significance of the work must continue to be met. Given the dynamic nature of the UC research enterprise, these examples should be periodically updated.

**Contributions to team-based scholarly outputs.** Team-based scholarship, often spanning multiple disciplines, has become an integral part of UC’s research enterprise. Individual scholars contributing to such research through, for example, co-investigator/co-author roles have a greater incentive to participate if they receive adequate credit for their efforts from all benefitting AUs. Likewise, research contributions of faculty to both a disciplinary AU and an interdisciplinary AU (Organized Research Unit or Multi-campus Research Unit, e.g.) should be recognized through “double-counting” internally; to minimize workload, evaluations can be accomplished, for instance, by one unit providing input to another. If faculty members from multiple AUs work together to prepare proposals, their AUs should all benefit so there is no impediment to such collaborations.

**Contributions to stewardship of research tools.** The creation and maintenance of large databases and open-source software, often serving substantial communities of scholars, have led to new paradigms of scholarly activity. Similarly, core facilities supporting faculty- and student-initiated projects are taking new forms. Recognition of the contribution the faculty stewards of these resources make to their home AU(s) is appropriate.

**Contributions to translational research.** UC has a strong and unwavering commitment to basic research, recognizing its potentially transformative nature. The knowledge transfer activities undertaken by UC faculty, academic staff and students can also be transformative and are consistent with UC's role as a public institution that benefits from local, state and federal support. Examples range from intellectual property (IP) leading to new industrial products and processes; to clinical trials for "bench-to-bedside" development contributing to better health; to mid-stream research of value to businesses; to synthesis papers and consulting that assist industry, government and NGOs with policies; to gamification that uses the arts, humanities, and technology for advancing education and social awareness. UC can vigorously support such knowledge transfer that can lead to better quality of life, a stronger economy, a more secure society, and a greater appreciation for the multiculturalism - languages, traditions, values, art forms and histories - of the State of California.

**Contributions to the teaching-research nexus.** UC is justifiably proud of its education and research enterprises. With the ability of increasing numbers of undergraduate and graduate students to create new knowledge and IP through both faculty- and student-initiated research projects, there are many new opportunities to redefine the teaching-research nexus across all disciplines and engage all UC students in the scholarship of discovery. Faculty contributing to this new frontier of scholarship should be encouraged and recognized, as should the mentor's contributions to the professional development and achievements of his/her undergraduate and graduate students.

**Contributions to a diverse, globally-engaged research workforce.** Collective excellence includes ownership by AUs for initiatives related to diversity, especially those to increase the participation of groups underrepresented by race, ethnicity or gender. For AUs to recruit inclusively so as to attract the best talent from a broad demographic and multicultural candidate pool, there must be a shared commitment across the AU that all students, staff and faculty joining the AU will be mentored effectively in a supportive environment that facilitates their successful professional development. Similarly, as AUs position themselves for global engagement and benchmarking with overseas institutions through their academic program reviews, recruitments, and their creation of joint and dual degrees, self-supporting degrees, and multi-jurisdictional research initiatives, individual and collective contributions that benefit the cognizant AU(s) should be recognized.

In all such activities, the standard must continue to be the pursuit of excellence, both individually and collectively.

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<http://www.ucop.edu/research-graduate-studies/files/research/documents/Collective%20Excellence.pdf>

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