

Final Report
Faculty Research Fellows Program (FRFP) Support Project
January 25th, 2006

This the final report, as required by the May 4, 2005 memorandum describing the project. In this report, we review the project's goals and deliverables, summarize the activities we undertook in completing the project, discuss the three "challenges" we noted in our proposal and how we have dealt with them, present an overview of the deliverables (which are mostly contained in a separate Access data base), and conclude with some recommendations for enhancing the effectiveness of FRFP.

Project Goals and Deliverables

The project was presented to us as having three goals with three associated deliverables:

Goal: Identify appropriate contacts at each campus of the CSU to receive FRFP requests for proposals and other materials and recruiting those contacts as active supporters of FRFP.

Deliverable: A data base of appropriate contacts at each campus

Goal: Identify faculty at each campus of the CSU actively engaged in research activities likely to be relevant to the type of public policy research sponsored by FRFP and familiarize those faculty members with FRFP.

Deliverable: A data base of relevant faculty researchers at each campus

Goal: Identify ongoing research, public opinion survey projects and similar activities at each campus of the CSU that could be of interest to state policymakers and which FRFP could distribute to state policymakers.

Deliverable: A description of ongoing research, public opinion projects and similar activities at each campus that could be of interest to state policymakers and which FRFP could distribute to them

In addition, a fourth deliverable was required: a final report on the results of the project, the activities we undertook, and recommendations for increasing the effectiveness of FRFP. This report, along with the Access database, constitute the set of deliverables.

Summary of Activities Undertaken

This section is a brief summary of actions undertaken. They were detailed fully in progress reports of August 31, 2005 and November 28, 2005.

Our activities were divided into three stages. In Stage 1 we developed a list of policy topics to use for limiting and organizing the data base on faculty researchers. We did this by reviewing a number of sources to identify the most salient policy topics. We then submitted this list to Tim Hodson for approval. The topics are:

Education	Transportation
Community/economic development	Governance
State funding and taxation	Crime/Corrections
Health/mental health	Aging
Social services/children/families	Housing
Energy	Water
Other environment/resources	Immigration

Also in Stage 1, we interviewed research office staff and others on three campuses to develop a strategy for working with the campuses to collect the necessary information about campus contact persons and faculty researchers. Our strategy involved working through three sets of individuals at each campus: the director of research, directors of those centers and institutes we could identify as being actively engaged in relevant policy research, and deans of appropriate colleges, including education, health and human services, and others. We prepared the materials that we would use to communicate with each of these individuals via email.

Stage 2 involved data collection. First, we engaged in extensive web research to develop draft listings of centers and institutes and faculty policy researchers at each campus. We did this in order to give campuses something to react to, so as to minimize the work we were asking them to do. It also gave us the opportunity to frame the list around our identified policy topics and to illustrate the kinds of centers, institutes, and researchers that we wanted to include. Next, we sent out well over 200 emails to the three groups of individuals (directors of research, heads of centers and institutes, deans) along with an attachment of those faculty and those centers and institutes that we had identified from our web research. The email explained that the data base is being developed in part to assist with disseminating FRFP proposals but more importantly (since that process works fairly well) as a first step in pulling folks together to devise collective strategies for strengthening the connections between CSU faculty researchers and state policy audiences. In fact, the phrase “connecting CSU faculty researchers with state policy audiences” should have some cachet now because it was the subject heading on several rounds of emails that reached hundreds of individuals across the CSU system.

We asked the recipients of the email to (1) add to or delete from our draft list, based on their knowledge of the campus, and (2) note any ongoing survey or other projects that

would be of interest to state policymakers. We included in the email a formal description of the FRFP so as to enhance awareness of that program across the CSU system.

Stage 3 involved compiling the responses into a searchable database, as well as following up on non-respondents. The response rate was extremely high – about 70 percent of recipients either responded directly or had someone else on campus respond on their behalf. The last step was to get confirmation from campuses as to who the primary campus contact for the FRFP would be. We indicated that the Center for California Studies would look to this contact person to (1) disseminate RFPs, (2) update, or coordinate the updating of the campus listing of centers, institutes, and policy researchers, likely on an annual basis, and (3) participate in any follow up activities aimed at strengthening the connections between CSU faculty and state policy audiences.

Meeting Identified Challenges

In our initial proposal we anticipated three challenges. One was to limit research areas to those that were of real interest to state policymakers. We believe we easily met this challenge by devising our categories based on a review of sources such as Governor’s addresses, past FRFP reports, Senate Office of Research Reports, proposed legislation, and California Research Bureau reports to focus on salient policy topics.

Another challenge we anticipated was to identify researchers who are truly active policy researchers and who would be effective representatives of the CSU in the state policy environment. We were relatively effective in meeting this challenge. In the email that we sent to directors and deans, asking for updates to our lists, we emphasized that we did not want to create an “experts” list but instead wanted their “short list” of faculty who were truly active, applied researchers who are “interested in, and skilled at, producing findings of relevance to state policy and communicating those findings effectively to non-academic audiences.” We believe that this strategy worked well in cases where the individuals we sent the draft list to responded to us directly. But, there were a number of cases where the recipient (for example, a dean) apparently forwarded the email to his or her faculty, because we received maybe 15-20 “responses” from individual faculty saying they had seen the email and wanted to be included. It was our judgment that, at this point in the effort to build connections, it was politically prudent to simply add those individuals to the listing, and not even “flag” them or do anything other than continue to include them. We were, in fact, quite gratified by the high level interest in the project that we received both from official recipients of the communication and others who subsequently were informed of it.

A final challenge we anticipated is that of keeping the data base relatively current. We hope that this can be met through the campus contact undertaking an annual, or periodic, review of the current listing for their campus and contacting the appropriate persons on their campus to make the necessary changes. We cannot predict how well this update process will work. We can say that the contacts are aware of this responsibility and that

the Access data base can readily generate campus specific reports that staff in the Center for California Studies could email to the contact persons.

Primary Deliverable: the Database

The deliverables for the project, along with some additional data, are contained in a Microsoft Access data base from which a number of tables can easily be generated. Although several of the reports were not specifically requested as deliverables, we compiled the data in the process of doing the project and felt that the information might be useful to keep in the database.

FRFP CSU Contacts (project deliverable)

This is the list of each CSU's primary contact person for the FRFP program. Their responsibilities include (1) disseminating RFPs, (2) updating the campus database of faculty researchers and centers and institutes, and (3) advising or participating in any subsequent efforts by the Center for California Studies to strengthen connections between CSU faculty and state policy audiences. In some cases, they have told us that they will share responsibilities with others, but they can serve as the single contact point.

Faculty Researchers (project deliverable)

This is the master list of all identified faculty whose center/institute affiliations, research, or expertise correspond with one of the identified overall policy areas. Faculty were identified through web research and direct feedback from campuses. There are two tables: one sorted by campus and the other sorted by policy area. Attachments A and B show a sample table for one campus and one policy area.

Ongoing Projects (project deliverable)

There are two tables in the database that show ongoing projects. One is a list of specific campus centers/institutes whose research and/or projects consist of survey research or polling that have potential policy implications in the identified policy areas. The second is a list of centers and institutes whose products appear to be of a recurring, periodic nature. This was admittedly a subjective call because it is not always clear from the website what the nature of the product is. In addition, some campuses offered for inclusion on this list projects that appeared to us to be merely one-time "works in progress" rather than recurrent projects and activities. We have not included those in this listing, although they are included in the master list of centers and institutes. We tried to make this more of a "short list" of projects with the most potential to influence state policy. Both tables (for survey research/polling and ongoing projects) include a short description of the project or activity that would be appropriate to distribute to state policymakers.

CSU Centers/Institutes

This is a master list of all CSU centers/institutes that were identified through research and campus feedback to have the potential for policy impact in California. It was not identified as a project deliverable but identifying all of the relevant centers and institutes

was a necessary first step in developing the list of “ongoing projects” so we thought it might be useful to the Center to have such a master list. In particular, we think it could be an excellent resource for deciding where to send RFPs under the Faculty Research Fellows Program. We did not include all centers and institutes that are listed on campus web pages. Instead, we included only those that, through web research, we judged to be active in the relevant policy areas. There are a few cases where campus respondents asked us to add some centers or institutes that we would not have selected for the list. However, for the same reasons of political prudence that we discussed earlier, we have included them here. A few of these carry a “miscellaneous” designation if they don’t appear to clearly fit one of our categories.

Faculty Expert Pages

Although not a requested deliverable, over the course of research several links to the official “faculty expert pages” were found. We included them in a table in the event that they are useful a later date.

Master List of Policy Area Abbreviations

Also included is a master list of the major policy areas that were identified, as well as their abbreviations that are used within the database. This is provided in Microsoft Word format.

How to Search Within Tables

Information can be sorted or filtered using these options under the “Records” heading in Access. There are usually icons that can be used as shortcuts for these options in the toolbar as well. The data can be narrowed down into very specific parameters by using these features. For example, a filter can be created to sort for faculty within a specific policy area or department, such as “A (Aging)” or “Economics”. When the filter is applied, it will bring up all results that meet the filter’s specified keywords or categories.

Conclusions and Recommendations

We view the project as having two related goals. One – an institutional goal – is to expand access by CSU faculty to the state government community and to showcase the resources of the CSU. The other is to materially affect public policy debates and outcomes through the collective knowledge of CSU faculty.

Based on our communications with many people across all of the campuses, we believe there is tremendous support for the first goal. Reaction was uniformly positive. People wanted to know more about what the Center had in mind for subsequent steps to build on the database. There was no suspicion or resentment or fear that the Center is trying to control or limit access to policymakers. As previously noted, many faculty submitted their own names and asked to be included. Many of those whom we approached to be the principal campus contact, based on their role at the campus, replied with enthusiasm, not simply compliance. We encourage the Center to take some next steps so as to build on this interest and not risk raising, but not fulfilling, expectations across the system.

With respect to the second goal, it is clear, and surely no surprise, that there is abundant policy interest and activity occurring across the CSU system that can be of benefit to the state policy process. Some campuses – SLO, for example – have a dedicated policy research center that enjoys support from top leadership, whose purpose is to assist faculty to engage in policy research in a variety of fields. The Faculty Research Fellows Program was initially founded on the premise that in such a large system, there will almost always be experts in priority areas who are already working on an issue. That is largely the reason why FRFP reports can be commissioned and completed in a relatively short timeframe. The faculty listing by policy area confirms that there are plentiful resources available to the state in priority areas.

We suggest that the first step be to hold a meeting for all of the designated campus contacts and the directors of those major policy centers and institutes that are included in the “ongoing projects” table. The meeting should be billed as a “summit” or planning session to develop possible strategies for achieving closer connections between CSU policy researchers and the state capital community. Karen Zamarripa should be invited as well. She has expressed great interest in this project, as it is a good complement to some of the major efforts her unit is undertaking to demonstrate the value that CSU adds to its many communities.

Some ideas that the Center could bring to the meeting might include:

- Create a board from among attendees to follow up on suggestions that come out of the meeting, and possibly to meet with some key capital policy folks.
- Select 2-3 issues each legislative session and bring appropriate CSU faculty to present to committee staffers and others with an interest in the issues.
- Form an association of CSU policy-oriented centers and research institutes to share ideas and strategies for affecting policy debates.
- Develop a series of policy briefs or other kind of publication organized by key topic in a legislative session, linking readers to CSU policy institutes and publications.

These ideas, along with others that will undoubtedly arise at the summit, could help to generate more RFPs for the Faculty Research Fellows Program from the Senate, Assembly, and Governor’s Office as well as to increase the degree to which policymakers come to see the CSU as a valuable resource in the development of public policy to address key state issues.