September 20, 2007

To: Henry Yang, Chancellor
From: Michael Witherell, Vice Chancellor for Research
Subject: Statistics on extramural funding for sponsored projects, fiscal year 2007

I am pleased to send you a brief annual report on extramural funding agencies' support for research and other activities at UC Santa Barbara.

The total funding awarded to sponsored projects at UCSB in fiscal year 2007 was $176 million, which is a record. This is an increase of $17 million over last year's total of $159 million, a very impressive increase of about 11%. As you can see in the attached chart, extramural funding to UCSB doubled in the decade 1987-1997 and then doubled again from 1997 to 2007.

The second attached chart shows another measure of research funding, the total annual research expenditures, which keeps track of the research money as it is spent, rather than as it appears on campus. The research expenditures were $146 million in fiscal year 2007, 7% more than the previous year. This measure of our research activity has also doubled over the last decade.

This steady increase in research funding is the result of two trends, one national and one specific to UC Santa Barbara. Over the last twenty years, the federal spending for research in science and engineering has increased by a factor of 2.5, which includes the effects of inflation. Our extramural funding has increased by a factor of 4 over that time, much more than the federal funding pool. This demonstrates that UCSB researchers have gotten steadily better in competing for federal research dollars. This success in attracting research funding comes about because of the stature of UCSB researchers and the quality of their scholarship. When looking at the details of these increases in research funding, the most striking feature is how broadly they are distributed across many departments.

I would like to call your attention to two trends that demonstrate the growing impact of non-federal funding on the UCSB research program. A total of 103 companies awarded $11.6 million to our researchers in fiscal year 2007, an increase of 33% in such funding over the previous year. For about one-third of these companies, this was their first partnership with UCSB. In addition, private funding sources provided $28 million in research awards, an increase of 40% over the previous year. UCSB researchers are becoming more successful at competing for large research grants with private foundations such as the Allen, Dana, Keck, Mellon, Packard, and Mericos foundations.
The National Science Foundation renewed both the National Center for Ecological Analysis and Synthesis and the Kavli Institute for Theoretical Physics in fiscal year 2007. Each of these national centers was given a new cooperative agreement for the next five years, each with a funding level of over $4 million per year. Each center went through a rigorous review process and received a resounding vote of success from its scientific community.

The success in attracting research funding goes beyond the fields of science and engineering that dominate federal funding, as I can demonstrate with a few examples. Professor Patricia Fumerton of the English Department received $325,000 for two years of work on creating an online archive as part of the Ballad Archive Project. Associate Professors Miriam Metzger and Andrew Flanagan of the Communication Department received a two-year grant of $520,000 from the MacArthur Foundation for their research on credibility in the digital age. Finally, Associate Professor Mary Bucholtz of the Linguistics Department received a three-year grant of $564,000 from NSF for her research on how to retain undergraduate women in science majors. These are large awards for these fields in the humanities and social sciences, and they give some indication of the breadth of excellence across our research program.

Are we going to be able to sustain this growth of research funding in the future? That is hard to predict, but I would like to point out one leading indicator in which UCSB does very well. The top science and engineering assistant professors in the country all apply for certain research programs aimed at giving future research starts a fast start, including the NSF CAREER awards and young investigator programs funded by the Sloan, Beckman, and Packard Foundations. Assistant professors at UCSB have won 26 of these awards in the last three years, 14th among all universities in the country. This is true despite the fact that UCSB has the smallest number of assistant professors of any of the top 20 universities. Although we have made a relatively small number of appointments of junior faculty, we have done extraordinarily well in attracting the best.

The attached charts and the tabulated data used to make them are available on the Office of Research web site at http://research.ucsb.edu/pubs/research_statistics.shtml.

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