

**STRATEGIC PLAN:  
PLU2010 Student-Faculty Collaborative Research and Creative Projects**

**Mission: “Why should we be doing student-Faculty collaborative research and creative projects at PLU?”**

Two central activities of a university are Faculty scholarship and student learning. The former is at the heart of Faculty’s on-going vocation; the latter is at the heart of every student’s vocation. *PLU 2010: The Next Level of Distinction* proposed Student-Faculty Research and Creative Projects as a priority for PLU because through it scholarship and learning come together in meaningful and productive ways particularly congruent with PLU’s identity and mission and with the best theory on effective pedagogy.

In a flourishing academic culture, all Faculty are appropriately engaged in research or creative projects. This activity is integral to their identity. When possible, Faculty involve students in that process. When they do, students experience the passion with which Faculty pursue their scholarship. They become partners in on-going disciplinary and professional conversations about real questions that matter.

For students, collaborating with Faculty on research or creative projects allows for the best kind of learning to take place. They begin to see the relationship between critical thinking in various fields and larger world issues. They begin asking the “big questions” in a supportive and challenging mentoring context that is informed by their academic discipline. Participating in Student-Faculty Research and Creative Projects encourages students to take responsibility for their own learning. It develops their capacities to connect what they have studied to the larger world. It nurtures their competence and confidence. Ultimately, it fosters students’ ability to engage in a lifetime of thoughtful inquiry. Student-Faculty Research and Creative Projects helps PLU achieve its mission of educating students who leave here caring about the world and with the requisite commitment, imagination, courage, and critical acumen to be leaders in addressing the challenges of the present and the future.

**Definition: “What is Student-Faculty Research and Creative Projects at PLU?”**

**”Educating for lives of thoughtful inquiry....”**

*Undergraduate research actively involves students and Faculty working in collaboration in an inquiry that makes an original intellectual or creative contribution to the field. The original contribution is produced with the intention of sharing the results with an appropriate disciplinary or professional community through recognized methods.*

This general definition brings into focus undergraduate research at PLU, and common attributes of these endeavors described below help enrich the definition.

- Students and Faculty work together and both make significant contributions to the project. The structure and division of responsibilities are often dependent on the specific field and type of project being undertaken.
- Undergraduate research typically occurs outside the traditional classroom setting. In some circumstances, a particular discipline might structure its program to allow for projects to occur within the curriculum. In general, undergraduate research provides space for an additional and valuable venue for student learning in the context of examining and creating knowledge.
- The outcomes of the activities are intended to be shared with the appropriate larger community. The outcomes are shared through methods of review commensurate with established practice in applicable disciplines and could include conference presentations, publications peer-reviewed by the larger professional area, and other discipline appropriate methods.
- Each department or school may well wish to further refine this definition as its local and national disciplines, accrediting bodies, and broader field of study require.

**A Strategic Plan: Allocation of Resources to support this Initiative or “How do we get there from here?”**

PLU2010: The Next Level of Distinction recommends, “that the university make student research and creative projects one of the hallmark characteristics of the university.” Data collected from Department Chairs, Program Directors and Deans during Fall 2004 indicated that current Student-Faculty research activities are generally accomplished with minimal support, and that these activities need to be better supported and celebrated.

Student-Faculty Research and Creative Projects are best understood in the context of Faculty scholarship generally. As Faculty mentors we invite students to apprentice with us and to begin making meaningful contributions to a field of knowledge. Within the context of a programmatic line of scholarship that Faculty mentors provide, student researchers are more likely to make such meaningful contributions independently. Thus, we appropriately locate Student-Faculty research as a subset of Faculty research. The stronger the support provided to Faculty scholarship, the greater the likelihood that an environment that puts “thoughtful inquiry” and Student-Faculty research in the forefront will flourish. The specific recommendations that follow are grounded in this synergistic relationship between Faculty scholarship and Student-Faculty Research and Creative Projects. To grow the latter requires adequate support of the former, a fact that the recommendations acknowledge explicitly. The absolute number of students and Faculty engaging in collaborative research and creative projects is unlikely to increase beyond its current level without a significant influx of resources. Further, this initiative will be sustained only if internal structural issues are discussed and resolved. Issues of Time/Space/Money create impediments to sustainable engagement in Student-Faculty Research and Creative Projects.

1. Strengthen existing Faculty development programs that support scholarship.

**Recommendation One:** Increase funding for the Regency Advancement Awards so that more awards of higher dollar amounts are available to support Faculty scholarship in any given academic year.

**Goal:** By 2010, endow the Regency Advancement Award program so that yearly 20-25 Faculty may receive up to \$6000 in support of their scholarship.

**Recommendation Two:** Increase funding to support travel of Faculty and student researchers to professional meetings for presentation of peer-reviewed scholarship.

**Goal:** By 2010, cover at least 80% of the expenses to one professional meeting for all Faculty and student researchers across all units of the University.

2. Strengthen Fellowship programs that support student scholarship directly.

**Recommendation One:** Seek further contributions to strengthen the three existing endowments that directly support Student Research Fellows in the College of Arts & Sciences, all of which are currently under-funded.

**Goal:** By 2010, grow the existing endowments in the College of Arts & Sciences so that each Division's endowment provides 8-10 Student Fellowships of \$4000 plus a \$1000 stipend for student expenses. Each Division's endowment should also provide for a \$6000 stipend for each Faculty Mentor.

**Recommendation Two:** Establish endowed Undergraduate Research Fellowships in the professional schools.

**Goal:** Establish an endowed fellowship program in each professional school by 2010. While the structure of these fellowship programs may differ across Schools, they should provide student and Faculty stipends comparable to those in the College of Arts & Sciences.

3. Provide Faculty the time and resources to work on competitive external grant proposals that will support their own scholarship and provide opportunities for students to collaborate with them.

**Recommendation One:** Revise the formula for the distribution of indirect monies to reward Faculty for securing grants and provide incentive for preparing new proposals so that 50% of the indirect monies be designated to the University for institutional overhead, 25% be designated to a central pool within the academic budget to encourage grant writing, 12.5% be designated to supplement the Faculty member's grant budget, and 12.5% be designated to the Faculty member's unit.

**Goal:** Have the revised formula fully operative by 2010.

**Recommendation Two:** Develop additional strategies and resources to encourage grant writing.

**Goal One:** By 2010, establish a competitive program that provides a two-course release or a summer stipend for Faculty to spend an entire term working on

scholarship necessary to develop and prepare grant proposals for submission to external funding agencies. Proposals that describe scholarship in which student researchers can obviously participate will be privileged. A committee of Faculty peers will evaluate applications; the program will be administered through the Office of the Provost.

**Goal Two:** By 2010, establish a program of small grants of up to \$500 to supplement the travel, research or teaching of Faculty who submit external grant proposals regardless of whether those proposals are funded.

**Goal Three:** By 2010, provide research start-up funds for all tenure-track Faculty joining the University.

**Recommendation Three:** Establish an Office of Research to provide pre- and post-award services and consultation to Faculty, provide fiscal administration for grants, and ensure institutional compliance related to grants.

**Goal:** Fully implement this Office by 2010.

4. Recognize Faculty scholarship and collaboration with students as a regular part of Faculty's normal load.

**Recommendation One:** Include Faculty scholarship and collaboration with students within the configuration of Faculty load for each department, division, and school.

**Goal:** Have descriptions of Faculty load for all departments, divisions, and schools by 2010.

**Recommendation Two:** Provide a one-semester pre-tenure sabbatical (equivalent to a three course release) to all tenure-track Faculty in their 3<sup>rd</sup> or 4<sup>th</sup> years of service.

**Goal:** Implement the pre-tenure sabbatical program by 2010.