



University of California
San Francisco

Report of the Executive Vice Chancellor's

Task Force on Community Partnerships

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The UCSF Task Force on Community Partnerships was convened by Executive Vice Chancellor Washington in July, 2004. Dr. Washington's charge to the Task Force was to:

- Perform an inventory that describes and categorizes UCSF partnerships in community-based programs within California in which UCSF faculty and staff participate as part of their University responsibilities;
- Review what is known about the benefits to the community and university of academic partnerships in community-based programs, and about the key attributes of successful partnerships between communities and academic institutions; and
- Make recommendations for improving the success and impact of UCSF's engagement in community-based programs and partnerships.

The Task Force was chaired by Kevin Grumbach, MD, Professor and Chair of the UCSF Department of Family and Community Medicine, and included 20 members representing diverse sectors of all four UCSF schools as well as the UCSF Medical Center. Between September 2004 and July 2005, the Task Force held a series of meetings of its members, sought consultation from two national experts in community partnership programs (Barbara Holland, PhD, and Joan Reede, MD), held a forum with San Francisco residents and representatives from local community based organizations, and conducted two major investigations to inform development of Task Force findings and recommendations. These investigations consisted of:

- A web-based survey to compile an inventory of existing community partnership programs at UCSF, and
- Examination of community partnership initiatives at other leading universities in the United States to identify "best practices" in organizing and administering community partnership initiatives at the institutional level.

The Task Force on Community Partnerships arrived at the following Findings and Recommendations:

Findings

1. **Community partnerships are not only in the public's interest; civic engagement is in the interest of UCSF to achieve excellence as an academic institution.**

2. UCSF has many existing assets for successful community partnerships. These assets form the substrate for developing a more robust, institutionalized community partnership initiative at UCSF.

- a. *Institutional mission and commitment:* Leaders committed to community engagement hold influential positions on campus, including positions in the Chancellor’s Office and the Offices of the Deans of the UCSF Schools, Department Chairs, and Directors of major academic units.
- b. *Experiences and a track record in successful community partnerships:* The Task Force’s initial inventory of UCSF community partnership activities found over 60 different programs, involving more than 28 different UCSF departments and units, with focus areas including community-based research, clinical training and service-learning education, among other areas. Many of these programs are exemplary models of academic-community partnerships characterized by sustained relationships between partners, sharing of leadership and power, and lessons humbly learned.
- c. *Resources and infrastructure:* UCSF has tremendous resources to contribute to community partnerships, including the “intellectual capital” of the institution’s scholarship and expertise in health care and science; experienced and motivated faculty and staff; and more. These resources are matched by the assets of local communities that are activist in orientation, sophisticated and knowledgeable, culturally competent, and, in many instances, favorably disposed to collaboration with UCSF.
- d. *Timely opportunities:* Events such as the development of the UCSF Mission Bay campus present timely opportunities for renewed efforts in civic engagement, particularly with the southeast communities neighboring Mission Bay.

3. A parallel set of barriers and liabilities also exist at UCSF impeding successful community partnerships.

- a. *A culture not conducive to civic engagement:* The biomedical research culture of UCSF overshadows and depreciates the valuing of community engagement, faculty members do not receive significant recognition and support for community engagement, and there is no explicit requirement for service-learning program participation for all UCSF students and residents.

- b. *Insufficient institutional competence in community partnerships:* Some community members, particularly those in vulnerable communities, distrust UCSF. Although it has many partnership programs that have achieved high credibility and respect among the community, the University also has been perceived to be exploitative of the community.
 - c. *Lack of greater and more formalized resources and infrastructure for community partnerships:* The absence of a more centralized infrastructure remains a limiting factor for more robust civic engagement at UCSF. There is poor coordination across individual UCSF partnership programs, resulting in duplication of effort, missed opportunities for synergy between compatible programs, and lack of collective learning and sharing of experiences. Community members seeking UCSF partners and resources face a largely impenetrable institution without an obvious entry for developing academic-community collaborations. UCSF lacks an internal grants program to provide start-up or other funding support for community partnership projects.
 - d. *Lack of sufficient academic incentives and acknowledgement of the value of community partnerships within the campus setting*
4. **Although no academic institution in the United States has a model of a community partnership infrastructure that will serve as a perfect blueprint for a UCSF initiative, a number of “best practices” at these institutions can be modified and adapted as a base for such an endeavor.**

Recommendations

1. **Create a formal University-Community Partnerships Program that will serve as the campus infrastructure for community partnerships.** This Program should support--not supplant—the diverse ecosystem of organically developed, grass-roots community partnerships that exist at UCSF by “fertilizing” and facilitating community partnerships, incubating new initiatives, and otherwise helping to overcome a number of institutional barriers and liabilities impeding civic engagement.
2. **Designate a leader within the Chancellor’s Office who is responsible for assuring that the functions of the University-Community Partnerships Program are performed.**

3. **Appoint a University-Community Partnerships Council empowered to work with the Chancellor's Office to guide the operations of the Partnership Program.** The Council should consist of UCSF members and community members in approximately equal balance, and have a meaningful decision-making role in the planning and operation of the University-Community Partnerships Program.
4. **Formally adopt explicit principles of civic engagement and community partnerships for UCSF as an institution.**
5. **Prioritize the implementation of the following components of the University-Community Partnerships Program:**
 - a. *Information clearinghouse and coordinating center:* Both the campus and the community need a centralized information clearinghouse that maintains an interactive, updated computerized database on individual UCSF community partnerships. A core staff is needed to administer the inventory, maintain the database, and serve as the human liaison to the public and members of the UCSF community, performing outreach and facilitating and coordinating projects.
 - b. *Faculty development and support:* UCSF requires an infrastructure to assist faculty members to become more adept in civic engagement and to overcome the institutional barriers to successful faculty careers in community service. A centralized infrastructure for community partnerships should provide such a service on a campus wide basis in support of faculty members devoted to community-engaged scholarship.
 - c. *Service-learning curricular development:* UCSF needs to develop a more coherent approach to service-learning for students, residents, and other learners on campus. The campus should support a process for bringing together faculty, staff and learners in disparate community-oriented educational programs to explore shared service-learning curricular needs, clarify expectations for learners, and strengthen processes for enhancing the competence of learners to work effectively with communities.

- d. *Community economic and employment development:* As a component of a new UCSF University-Community Partnerships Program initiative, the economic and workforce development efforts of the existing UCSF Community Partnerships Program administered through the Office of Community and Government Relations should continue and be augmented by additional investments in community-based “pipeline” activities in the areas of job training, partnerships with local and regional educational institutions, and other workforce development projects.
- e. *Internal grants program:* The functions of the UCSF community partnerships infrastructure should include administering a formal small grants program for projects that promote partnership activities. Community based organizations, in addition to UCSF faculty, students and staff, should be eligible to apply for grants, as long as the CBO is partnering with a UCSF department or unit.
- f. *Dissemination, communications, and recognition:* The UCSF University-Community Partnerships Program should actively disseminate accomplishments, lessons, and related information through a proactive communications program, including a high-profile web site, a periodic electronic newsletter, a list serve, and an annual or biannual printed report, community partnership recognition events, and a regular series of symposia to bring together UCSF and community partners.
- g. *Navigation, technical support and endorsement:* An important function for a centralized University-Community Partnerships Program is to assist individuals from UCSF and community based organizations to navigate each other’s customs and procedures in order to embark on and complete successful partnership voyages. New models of community-based participatory research represent highly community engaged approaches to research that involve community members as collaborators in all phases of a research study.
- h. *Champions and leadership:* A key function of the University-Community Partnerships Program is to champion civic engagement and provide visible and influential leadership for community partnerships at the highest levels of UCSF administration. This leadership does not absolve the need for broader leadership at all levels of the campus. However, leadership at the top is a key element for advancing an agenda on civic engagement at UCSF

- i. *Evaluation to assure the quality and integrity of programs:* Ongoing evaluation and assessment is essential for gauging the success of program activities and providing lessons learned to forge more successful partnerships and projects.