Whereas:

RATIONALE: Universities have a central responsibility in the transmission and creation of knowledge; in democratic governance; and in addressing emerging and long-standing threats to human well-being, including pandemics, systemic racism, and climate change. Community-engaged research is instrumental to social justice and creative activities are crucial in communicating our shared humanity. In a national context dismissive of the role of evidence-based knowledge and within the current financial and COVID-19-related challenges in permitting access to critical facilities, specialized equipment, and permitting fieldwork, we reaffirm the importance of the University’s commitment to supporting Research, Scholarship, and Creative Activities (RSCA).

Whereas:

Research, scholarship, and creative activities (RSCA) is a defining aspect of being a university; and

Whereas:

The CSU strategic plan for RSCA states, “CSU research, scholarship and creative activity will positively impact student success and faculty excellence with opportunities to explore, investigate and solve the issues facing California’s diverse communities, the nation, and the world with innovative applications of discoveries and new knowledge”; and

Whereas:

The University Strategic Plan is built around five values Courage, the Life of the Mind, Equity, Community, and Resilience; and

Whereas:

The University Strategic Plan defines SF State’s faculty as “…dedicated teachers and engaged professional practitioners and scholars… where teaching is enlivened by faculty who create new knowledge in their academic fields, professional practice and community engagement;” and

Whereas:

The University Strategic Plan clarifies that “… faculty research and practice are sharpened and their stakes clarified through the privilege of teaching new skills to students at all levels …” and embraces the “… reciprocal relationship between the University and the world and between experience and knowledge that is captured by our motto, Experientia Docet;” and

Whereas:

The University Strategic Plan further recognizes that “We nourish and recognize intellectual achievement across a range of academic, creative and professional spheres, both traditional and forward-looking… and affirm the life of the mind as a continued source of meaning, purpose and commitment for all members of our intellectual community;” and

Whereas:

Academic Affairs has communicated that the core commitments of the draft Academic Master Plan are 1) Social Justice, 2) Success and well-being of students, 3) Student engagement in research, scholarship, and creative activities, and 4) Engagement with the Bay Area; and

Whereas:

The draft San Francisco State University Framework for an Academic Master Plan recognizes that many faculty come to the University because they value teaching, research, and service, and recognize contributions to all three spheres equitably, without diminishing the importance of any of the three areas; and

Whereas:

The draft San Francisco State University Framework for an Academic Master Plan articulates that graduate education and student involvement RSCA is aligned with the social justice mission of the University, empowering students to 1) enhance their credentials and life-time earning potential, 2) become more competitive in entering the workforce, and 3) become stronger candidates for Ph.D. and other professional programs; and

Whereas:
The ASCSU has long recognized the value of CSU graduate programs in providing California with the necessary pool of graduates; and

Whereas:
High impact practices in undergraduate education, including engagement in research, field experiences, service and community-based learning, and capstone projects, are powerful interventions that foster student success and learning, and are associated with a range of positive outcomes for historically underrepresented students; and

Whereas:
A report by the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine concludes that undergraduate student engagement in research is beneficial for students in STEM (science, technology, engineering and mathematics), and increases the persistence of historically underrepresented students; and

Whereas:
Undergraduates benefit from graduate student near-peer mentors in RSCA, and graduate students enhance faculty research and creativity, and create incentives for recruiting and retaining faculty; and

Whereas:
Graduate students who lack an opportunity for meaningful hands-on research experiences will be at a disadvantage for moving forward with the professional careers, whether that be towards Ph.D. programs, professional schools, or the workforce; and

Whereas:
Equitable and inclusive opportunities to engage in RSCA are critically important for the success and professional development of historically underrepresented graduate students and faculty and aligned with the social justice mission of the University; and

Whereas:
Social distancing requirements to prevent the transmission of COVID-19 have impeded the organic development of 1) the spontaneous conversations about RSCA topics that happen in shared spaces and is an important aspect of intellectual development, and 2) the development of professional soft skills that is an outcome of teamwork and shared resource utilization; and

Whereas:
Social distancing requirements to prevent the transmission of COVID-19 have impeded the spontaneous conversations about RSCA topics that happen organically in shared spaces and is an important aspect of intellectual development; and

Whereas:
Access to library materials (physical and electronic) is indisputable in its importance to conducting research, especially in non-STEM fields of study; and

Whereas:
All Colleges and the Division of Graduate Studies have vibrant showcases for student research and creative activities; and

Whereas:
The Office of Research and Sponsored Programs is essential to the ability of faculty and administrators to bring in and administer additional funding to support RSCA activities, provide students with paid RSCA opportunities, pay student tuition, enhance infusion of RSCA activities into teaching, enhance student enrollment, and to fund community-engaged research projects; and

Whereas:
Support for research activities is essential for recruiting and retaining a dynamic faculty; therefore

Whereas:
Resolved:
That University support for RSCA should not be disproportionately impacted by the contraction of the University in response to the current budget and enrollment crisis; and be it further

Resolved:
That faculty workload should continue to include equitable support for RSCA activities; and should recognize both supervision units and course units in calculating faculty workload; and be it further

Resolved:
That the University shall continue to support faculty and student access to facilities, specialized equipment, and permit fieldwork that is essential to RSCA as is consistent with public health orders, medical evidence and all due consideration for the safety of participants and the university community, but without unreasonable restriction, and that recognizes some RSCA have been formally defined as “essential work” by the community or agency sponsors of the projects; and be it further

Resolved:
That the University shall support the development and use of new mechanisms and adaptations that provide opportunities for RSCA team members to develop the soft skills and spontaneous conversations that usually happen in shared spaces, and through teamwork and the use of shared resources; and be it further

Resolved:
That the University should continue with its efforts to streamline and reduce institutional roadblocks to supporting the application for and administration of external grants and contracts that support RSCA, including student involvement in RSCA; and be it further

Resolved:
That faculty should continue to be allowed to use external resources to reduce workload to pursue RSCA opportunities; and be it further

Resolved:
That the University should pursue development strategies that bring in philanthropic resources to support and enhance RSCA, especially those that provide support for students to participate in RSCA; and be it further

Resolved:
That the University’s long-standing support for RSCA through its Research and Service Organizations should not be disproportionately impacted in response to the current budget and enrollment declines; and be it further

Resolved:
That the Academic Senate explore more ongoing opportunities for collaboration and coordination with the University Research Council; and be it further

Resolved:
That there should be regular reports on RSCA to the Academic Senate from the Office of Research and Sponsored Programs and the University Research Council; and be it further

Whereas:
Resolved:
The Academic Senate pursue the revival of the Library Advisory Committee, in consultation with Library stakeholders, to provide advice and recommendations regarding the Library’s strategic directions and initiatives, including those related to support for RSCA; and be it further

Resolved:
The University make expanding access to library materials including physical and especially electronic resources a priority; and be it further

Resolved:
That we continue support for RSCA startup packages and teaching release to continue to attract and retain excellent new faculty; and be it further

Resolved:
The University’s continued support for sabbaticals, leaves with pay, and difference in pay leaves continue to support our Assistant, Associate and Full Professors as they launch and further their careers; and be it further

Resolved:
That this resolution will be distributed to President Mahoney, campus Vice Presidents, the Academic Affairs Council, Academic Technology, Department Chairs, School and Program Directors, the Office of the Chancellor, Assistant Vice Chancellor for Research, CFA Chapter President Martel, the Academic and University Senates of all California State University campuses, the Academic Senate of the California State University, and the SF State Faculty.