ACADEMIC MISSION AND GOALS

FOR SAN FRANCISCO STATE UNIVERSITY

ACADEMIC SENATE POLICY #S92-176

At its meeting of April 21, 1992, the Academic Senate approved the following mission and goals for San Francisco State University:

The mission of San Francisco State University is to create and maintain an environment for learning that promotes respect for and appreciation of scholarship, freedom, human diversity, and the cultural mosaic of the City of San Francisco and the Bay Area; to promote excellence in instruction and intellectual accomplishment; and to provide broadly accessible higher education for residents of the region and state, as well as the nation and world. To fulfill its mission, the University is committed to the following goals:

* attracting, retaining, and graduating a highly diverse student body;
* providing disciplinary and interdisciplinary liberal arts and professional education that is academically rigorous and intellectually challenging;
* providing curricula that reflect all dimensions of human diversity, and that encourage critical thinking and social and cultural awareness;
* recruiting, retaining, and supporting a diverse faculty whose teaching demonstrates an active engagement with their individual fields of study and whose creative and scholarly work is an extension of the classroom, laboratory, or studio;
* employing a staff and administration reflecting the diversity of the community and the values of the campus.
* fostering a collegial and cooperative intellectual environment that includes recognition and appreciation of differing viewpoints and promotes academic freedom within the University community; and
* serving the communities with which its students and faculty are engaged.

THE MISSION IN CONTEXT

The history of San Francisco State University contributes unique elements to its mission. The University existed solely as a teacher training institution from 1899 to 1935, first as a normal school, then as a teachers' college. Although officially a liberal arts college after 1935, and a university since 1972, one important aspect of the University's mission has remained teacher education, a function shared throughout the campus. The University established the School
of Ethnic Studies in 1969, the first such school in the nation; it offers baccalaureate and post-baccalaureate degree programs, and a broad range of courses that meet general education and other graduation requirements. Many of the University’s current discipline-based departments have been created since the early 1960s, succeeding broadly interdisciplinary divisions; and the University has continued an active commitment to interdisciplinary studies. Responsibility for general education is widely shared among interdisciplinary and discipline-specific units; new baccalaureate and post-baccalaureate programs in recent years have been largely interdisciplinary in nature.

Because San Francisco State University is the only public, comprehensive university located in San Francisco, the heart of the fifth-largest metropolitan area in the nation, its urban character contributes unique elements to its mission. For example, San Francisco is a world-renowned cultural center; hence, the University’s students have the opportunity to study with prominent literary, performing, and creative artists. The San Francisco Bay Area is an international center for science and technology, furnishing opportunities for students to study and work with leaders in these fields. San Francisco Bay forms a unique living laboratory for estuarine studies. The City is an international center for business, labor, and finance; hence, students can learn from and work with leaders in these fields. The Bay Area is a major center for higher education; hence, students and faculty have opportunities for significant scholarly interchange and interaction. The city itself provides a working environment for a variety of academic programs, including a downtown center. San Francisco’s heterogeneous population is reflected in the diversity of SFSU students and increasingly in the diversity of the faculty, staff, and curriculum. In all these ways and more, the University encourages active participation with individuals and organizations in the Bay Area, working on community projects in economic, social, scientific, and cultural areas.

The mission of San Francisco State University is defined in part by its status as one of the twenty campuses that make up the California State University, the largest four-year higher-education system in the country. Thus, the mission of the University incorporates that of the California State University, which is to provide undergraduate and graduate instruction through the master’s degree in the liberal arts and sciences and the professions; have the option to award doctoral degrees jointly with the University of California or with a private institution of post-secondary education; assume a broad responsibility to the public good and welfare of the state, which shall be particularly exercised through projects and programs aimed at regional economic, social, and cultural
development; encourage and support programs of public service for its students and faculty; and engage in research, scholarship, and creative activity that supports its instructional mission, involves students, and/or supports its public service role.

To carry out its mission, the University provides a wide range of liberal arts and professional programs and offers an undergraduate general education program intended to provide training in basic skills, expose students to major areas of knowledge, and demonstrate the interrelations of knowledge. The University is committed to providing the best possible education for all its students and to responding to their needs through special programs, co-curricular services and activities, and student governance. The University encourages both informed and readily available advising and imagination and innovation in curricula and instruction. The University seeks to enhance instruction through scholarly and creative activities; extend areas of scientific and cultural knowledge; and apply scholarly, scientific, and creative endeavors to the solutions of specific problems. The University is committed to shared governance through the Academic Senate, which recommends standards, policies, and procedures regarding the curriculum, instruction, professional performance, and related academic matters.

Through planning, the University must develop a vision of its future derived centrally from its mission and goals. The University must respond to new developments in knowledge, to the evolving needs of its ever-changing student body, and to resource realities, while fostering the commitments derived from its unique history and its engagement with the rich cultural tapestry of the City of San Francisco and the San Francisco Bay Area.

***** APPROVED BY PRESIDENT CORRIGAN ON MAY 8, 1992 *****