Grand Challenge Research Initiatives & the “Grand Challenge” of Building Partnerships Within and Outside the University

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Today’s Panelists

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UCLA Office of the Vice Chancellor for Research

By Telephone
Matthew Sharp
Senior Policy Director
Goldhirsh Foundation
Topics

- Background
- Exploration of Internal Partnerships
  - Case Study: Working with Faculty to Develop Sustainable LA Research Plan
- Exploration of External Partnerships
  - Case Study: Goldhirsh Foundation & UCLA Partnership
- A Government Relations Perspective
About Michelle
Grand Challenges

A powerful way to enhance the research enterprise, drive collaboration and strengthen relationships with partners in and outside of campus.
The Sustainable LA Grand Challenge combines the efforts of more than 140 UCLA researchers from nearly every school across campus to tackle the interrelated issues of energy, water and ecosystem health with the goal of making LA sustainable by 2050—and our commitment to deliver this plan by 2020.
The Depression Grand Challenge unites dozens of UCLA scientists and scholars with public and private stakeholders around a common goal: cutting the burden of depression in half by 2050 and eliminating it by the end of the century.
Reasons for Partnerships

• Address expertise gaps
• Means to engage stakeholders/obtain critical buy-in
• Obtain new experience
• Increase reach/breadth

→ Enhance impact
Partners or Functions on Campus*

*At various stages of engagement varying from simply identified to already immersed.*
Example 1: Engaging the Campus
Example 1: Engaging the Campus

- Hustling for votes

My LA2050 Grants Challenge: Making LA the Healthiest Place to Live
Example 1: Engaging the Campus

- Hustling for votes
- Two courses
Example 1: Engaging the Campus

- Hustling for votes
- Two courses
- Showcasing the Grand Challenges
Example 1: Engaging the Campus

- Partners:
  - Campus community,
  - Chancellor’s Office
  - Public Relations
  - Staff Assembly
  - Undergraduate Research Center
  - Marketing & Communications
Example 2: Promotion of Environmental Report Card

- **Rationale:**
  - Stimulate dialogue
  - Compel action among community members
  - Baseline measures
  - Involved existing partner
Example 2: Promotion of Environmental Report Card

Overall Grade: **C+**

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subject Area</th>
<th>Grade</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Water</td>
<td>C</td>
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<td>Air</td>
<td>C+</td>
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<td>Ecosystem Health</td>
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<td>Waste</td>
<td>B/1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Energy &amp; Greenhouse Gases</td>
<td>B-</td>
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<tr>
<td>Environmental Quality of Life</td>
<td>C+</td>
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Example 2: Promotion of Environmental Report Card

- Campus Partners:
  - Department staff
  - Faculty
  - Media Relations
  - Web team
  - Student Groups
  - Government Relations

- External Partners:
  - Goldhirsh Foundation
Example 3: Traditional Research Development

- Funding opportunity from local utility.
- Short timeline.
- Served as communicator, collector and packager of proposals.
- 39 Proposals submitted in cohesive package.

Partners:
- Faculty from about 8 departments
- Corporate, Foundation & Research Relations
- Leadership of Engineering School
- Development
- Industry Sponsored Research Office
- Research Administration
About Cassie
Casandra Rauser, Ph.D.

2014 – Director, Sustainable LA Grand Challenge, UCLA
2009 – 2014 Research Development, UC Irvine (>100 proposals, $78M, 38% funded)
2008 – 2009 Freelance Editor (technical science writer)
2007 – 2008 Director, Tamarindo Preserve Conservancy, Costa Rica
2006 – 2008 Tutorial Developer, Rapid Learning Center

Ph.D. Ecology & Evolutionary Biology, University of California, Irvine
B.S. Biology, Arizona State University
Building Partnerships Among Researchers from Different Disciplines
CASE STUDY: Development of the Sustainable LA Research Plan

GOAL: Transform the LA region to 100% sustainability in energy, water and ecosystem health by 2050
Organizing the Sustainable LA Research Committees

- **Leadership Council**
- **Steering Committee**
- **External Technical Advisory Committee**

**Steering Committee**
- Meets 1x per month

**Spatial & Discipline Integration**
- Members designate delegates to each of the other Research Committees and participate in at least one of their meetings per month

**Energy**
- Meets biweekly

**Water**
- Meets biweekly

**Ecosystem Health**
- Meets biweekly

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*UCLA Grand Challenges*
Building the Interdisciplinary Teams
What motivates individuals to collaborate?
Working within an Interdisciplinary Partnership
Working within an Interdisciplinary Partnership
Working within an Interdisciplinary Partnership
Lessons Learned

• Develop a personal relationship with individual researchers
• Be upfront about expectations and funding opportunities
• Partnerships should be strategic and mutually beneficial
• Understand individual’s motivation for collaborating
• Use food to motivate people
• Define a specific shared goal
• Be creative – use structured brainstorming exercises, sometimes
• Be flexible – tailor your facilitation to the personality of the group
• Practice diplomacy and conflict resolution strategies
• Understand the different languages among the disciplines and translate when necessary
External Partners

- Universities and Research Centers
- Government Entities (Local, County, State, National)
- Foundations
- Aligned Community Organizations
- Industry Partners
- Alumni Association & Support Groups
- Individual Philanthropists
Strategies for External Partners

- Customized approach/pitch
- Flexibility in the type of relationships
- Careful consideration of implications for other partnerships
About Matt
LA2050 + UCLA
GRAND CHALLENGES
CONNECTIONS AND LESSONS LEARNED
LA2050 is a community-guided initiative that created a shared vision for the future of Los Angeles, and is driving and tracking progress toward that vision. We do this via research & reporting, capital investment, collaboration, and activation.
RECIPE FOR PARTNERSHIP:
• A shared futurist vision
• Regional data tracking
• Multiple assets
A SHARED FUTURIST VISION

• Research teams are working on the long game
• Extraordinary depth in subject matter
• Tracking trends and visions
REGIONAL DATA TRACKING

- Our largest city is one of 88
- Few sources centralize key measures of progress
- Credibility and long-term commitment to tracking
RESOURCES THAT UNIVERSITIES CAN PROVIDE

- Thousands of engaged students
- Facilities to convene
- Alumni networks and relationships
About Marjorie
How Government Relations Supports Research
Lessons Learned about Partnerships & Working with Grand Challenges

- Richness of the campus community
- Free stuff is a good motivator
- Importance of focus
- Flexibility is key
- Perfection is the enemy of progress
- Celebrate the successes
- Partners help you realize your potential