

Research Strategic Planning Task Force

Final Report

May 21, 2011

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Members:

Dianne Rush Woods, Task Force Chair (Social Work and Chair, Academic Senate)

Jed DeVaro (Management and Economics, joined Task Force November, 2010)

Nan Maxwell (Economics, left Task Force December, 2010)

Lettie Ramirez (Teacher Education)

Jeffery Seitz (Earth and Environmental Sciences)

Aline Soules (Library)

Diana Wakimoto (Library and Chair, Committee on Research)

Evaon Wong-Kim (Social Work)

Introduction

The Research Strategic Planning Task Force was commissioned by Provost Houpis and Vice President Shawn Bibb to create a strategic plan to transform CSUEB into a faculty and student-focused research institution. This faculty task force was further charged with creating mission, values, and vision statements as well as providing recommendations to move the university's research agenda forward. Provost Houpis indicated that one of the major goals of CSUEB is to double the award of external research funds within five years. The task force undertook an in-depth analysis of CSUEB's current situation; an exploration of other institutions' research environments, including everything from vision to implementation, in order to identify best practices; and a data collection process to understand fully the perceptions and concerns of the faculty.

Data collected by the Task Force included

- documents related to pre- and post-award grant administration from CSUEB and other institutions;
- interviews with administrators from CSUEB, the CSU Chancellor's Office, and other CSU campuses;
- a confidential survey of CSUEB faculty perceptions of research and grant administration
- focus groups (with a SWOT analysis of the results)

Members began work in late August, gathering and reading background materials.

Apart from confidential documents, the list of consulted resources is given at

<https://sites.google.com/a/csueastbay.edu/rac/resources-consulted>.

Research Vision

California State University, East Bay strives to be known for the following:

Affirmation of the importance of integrity in research and creative endeavors

Faculty-driven and faculty-prioritized engagement in research and creative

Data Collection

Interviews

The Task Force conducted interviews with the following:

CSUEB:

James Houpis, Provost

Linda Dobb, Interim Associate Provost

Rhea Williamson, AVP ORSP

Chris Brown, AVP Enterprise Operations/Foundation

Mike Tomasillo, Corporate & Foundatio

Best Practices Identified during Interviews

Interviewees were most generous in sharing their policies, practices, and challenges. There was general agreement that, in spite of challenges, there were some organizational and innovative approaches that worked effectively to improve the research climate and opportunities for faculty.

These included:

- A Research Foundation that is separate from other foundations and other auxiliaries and whose Vice President is affiliated with and comes from the academic side of the university,

- A fully integrated pre- and post-award structure with the same administrative person handling both pre- and post-award processes and providing a single point of contact and help for faculty,

- Partnerships with other research universities and institutes in the area, including Joint PhD programs,

- Incentives for faculty to participate in research, including faculty grants, communities of practice, showcases for faculty research, participation in CSU programs, such as the Grant-related-Specially-funded Instructional Faculty Classification (<http://www.calstate.edu/hradm/pdf2004/HR2004-07.pdf>)

- Continuous communication with faculty about research issues, organizational structures, and potential opportunities,

- Release time for faculty,

- An “intentional” university climate that supports faculty research and creative activities through training, events, newsletters, etc., and

Adequate and appropriate research space, including labs, studios, offices, and a faculty commons

Survey

Task Force members began to identify issues and concerns. At the task force's request, the Academic Senate's Co

Key suggestions from the faculty and representative comments from the survey included:

64% reported that they have not had a grant administered by the Foundation in the last three years.

3.68 was the mean number of grant proposals written in the last (3) years by faculty

1.85 was the mean number of grant proposals funded

0.66 was the mean number of grant proposals currently pending

61.9% of faculty have not applied for an internal grant in the last three (3) years due to lack of time

48.1% of faculty would find having access to a grant writer valuable in writing grant/contract applications

47.6% would find having “experienced faculty member support” valuable in writing grant/contract applications

Results pertaining to ORSP

- All services provided by OR

“ORSP tries to help but they often have too many grants and can’t provide the assistance needed. One time they even forgot to send my grant.”

Results pertaining to the Foundation

All services provided by the Foundation were rated by the majority of respondents as Adequate, Poor, or Don’t Know

Negative comments outweighed positive comments with an approximately 6 to 1 ratio (only 2 responses were positive)

Selected sample of positive and negative comments

“Wish we could do with out[sic]”

“changing of procedures without notification is unconscionable[sic]”

“My experiences with the Foundation have been awful. This is the most unfriendly, difficult organization at CSUEB. It is the primary reason I decide NOT to apply for grants.”

“Frustrations with the Foundation are discouraging my colleagues and me from submitting future proposals. It just isn’t work[sic] the hassle to work with them.”

“Very responsive to my needs and willing to go extra miles even before being asked. Very different than ORSP, way better customer service.”

“Gives conflicting information. Change process, rates, etc[sic] without notice. Poor communication skills.”

My experience with the CSUEB Foundation has been dreadful. The organization cannot even keep a set of financial records. CSUEB Foundation is not open or forthcoming with their financial statements. I have removed all my research and community interests from the

auspices of this organization because I do not feel comfortable with their ethical choices.”

One of the major barriers noted by the faculty respondents was frustration with unclear policies and procedures regarding post-grant administration at the Foundation. Recommendations to address this and other barriers can be found in the Recommendation section below.

Focus Groups and SWOT Analysis

A major charge given to the Task Force was to determine what CSUEB needed to do to double its grant capacity. In order to facilitate discussion by faculty of those issues that impede or encourage their participation in the research process, eight focus groups were conducted on January 18, 19, 20, and 24, 2011 and, in order to assure objectivity, the groups were facilitated by Dr. Maria Ochoa of Ochoa Design and Research. There were 57 participants, distributed across the colleges as follows: College of Business and Economics (12), College of Education and Allied Studies (15), College of Letters, Arts and Social Sciences (17), College of Science (10), and the University Libraries (3).

In the focus groups, participants were asked four open-ended questions:

1. Identify and describe a successful interaction regarding your research/creative work funding experience at CSUEB.
2. Identify and describe something that you would alter, which would improve your research/creative work experience at CSUEB.
3. Describe why research/creative work is personally important.
4. Identify and describe anything that has not yet been touched up on in discussion that you would like to bring forth.

In her report, the focus group facilitator stated that a rigorous SWOT analysis was complicated by the fact that the respondents identified only a few strengths in comparison to weaknesses. She also stated that it was important to note the faculty community pride, and enthusiasm for research, scholarship, and creative work. Appendices C and D present the cover memo and SWOT matrix based on an analysis of the focus group sessions, respectively. Because the SWOT included specific materials related to University personnel, the comments remain confidential.

Issues/Barriers Identified by Survey and Focus Groups

Pre- and post-award administration is not in agreement on details of policies and procedures and often faculty members are caught in the middle of these units.

Critical post-award administrative functions have not been integrated with pre-award functions during the recent reorganization.

Grants administration has been treated as a business activity (profit/loss center) rather than as an activity that supports the primary goals of CSUEB.

There is inadequate staff support (in terms of numbers) for grant preparation and post-award financial reporting.

There is a lack of communication on procedures and policies, especially in relation to IDC, Human Resources, and financial reporting.

There are insufficient incentives for faculty to participate in research.

Faculty lack the time to participate in research due to their high teaching load.

There are inadequate facilities to support research and creative activities, for

example, the lack of research laboratories, studios, faculty offices, etc.

Recommendations

A number of themes emerged in the process of data collection and analysis. These relate to grants policies and processes, organizational structure, communication, incentives, time, support, and overall university climate. It is clear that faculty wants to engage in creative endeavors, both intellectually and as a way to engage students; however, the primary focus of these themes is on the barriers faculty encounters. As a result, the Research Strategic Planning Task Force offers the following recommendations:

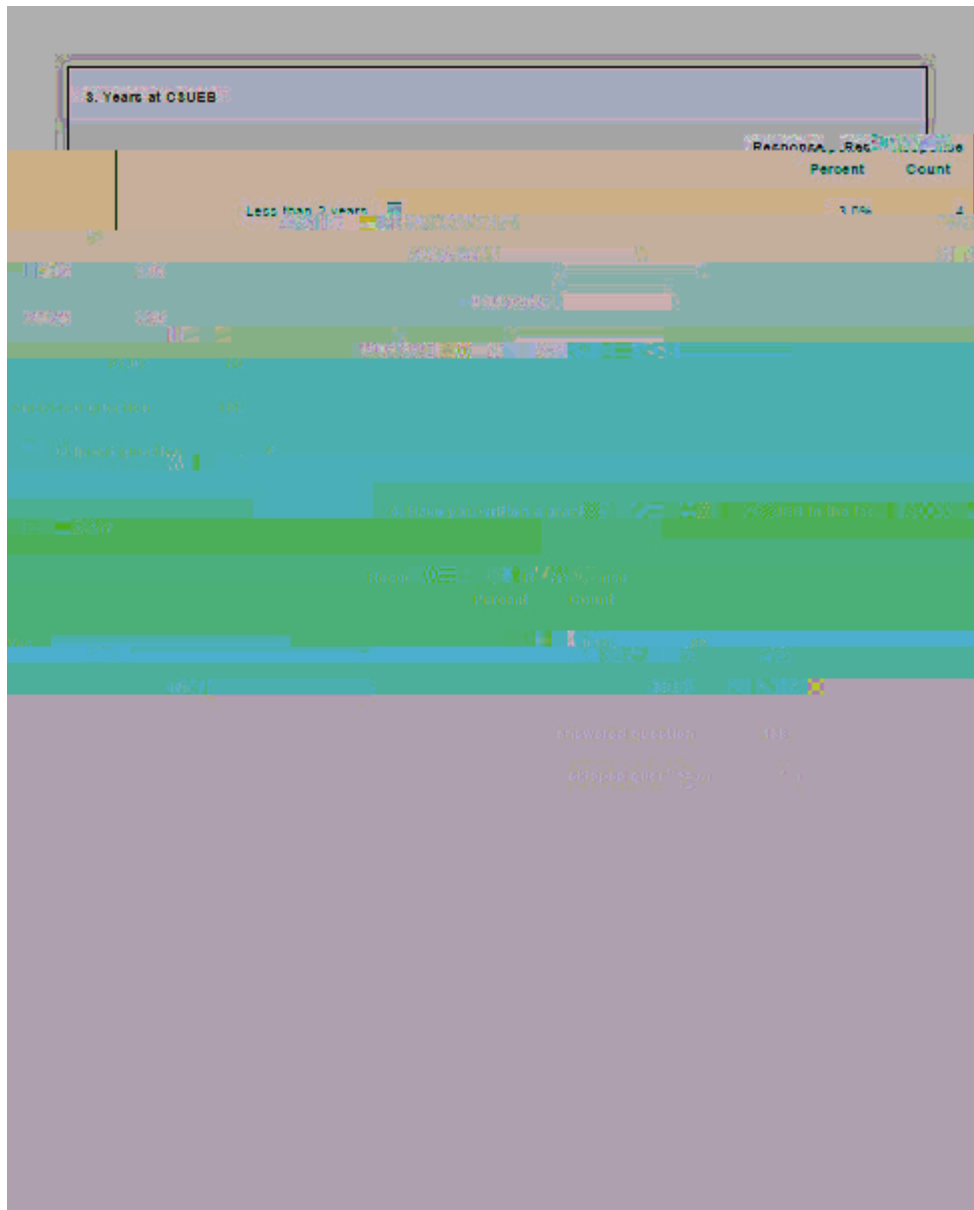
- Fully integrate pre/post award administration
 - Step 1: Fully integrate pre- and post-award administration and functions into one office by integrating critical post-award functions (e.g., human resources, financial reporting) with pre-award functions. This was not fully achieved in the recent reorganization (see Appendix E for organizational chart).
 - Step 2: Clearly communicate to faculty the changes that have resulted from the recent reorganization. At present, many faculty members do not know which department is responsible for different aspects of research and sponsored programs and express concerns about receiving timely responses to their questions.
 - Step 3: Create a Research Foundation. Enterprise Operations (bookstore, catering, etc.) should be separate from grants administration in its own auxiliary.
- Authorize the emerging Office of Grants and Sponsored Projects to hire more support staff positions for pre- and post-award administration in order to double the amount of grants received by CSUEB.

- Communicate pre- and post-award policies

- Hire a staff person to provide grant writing support for faculty. This support includes: collaborating with faculty on grant ideas and proposals, copyediting, checking for compliance, budgeting, etc.
- Establish a Faculty Advisory Committee for Sponsored Projects and Research. It should consist of PIs from each of the Colleges and the University Libraries and the Chair of Committee on Research.
- Refer the position of Director of Sponsored Projects and Research to the Academic Senate's Faculty Affairs Committee (FAC) for inclusion on the administrative review calendar.

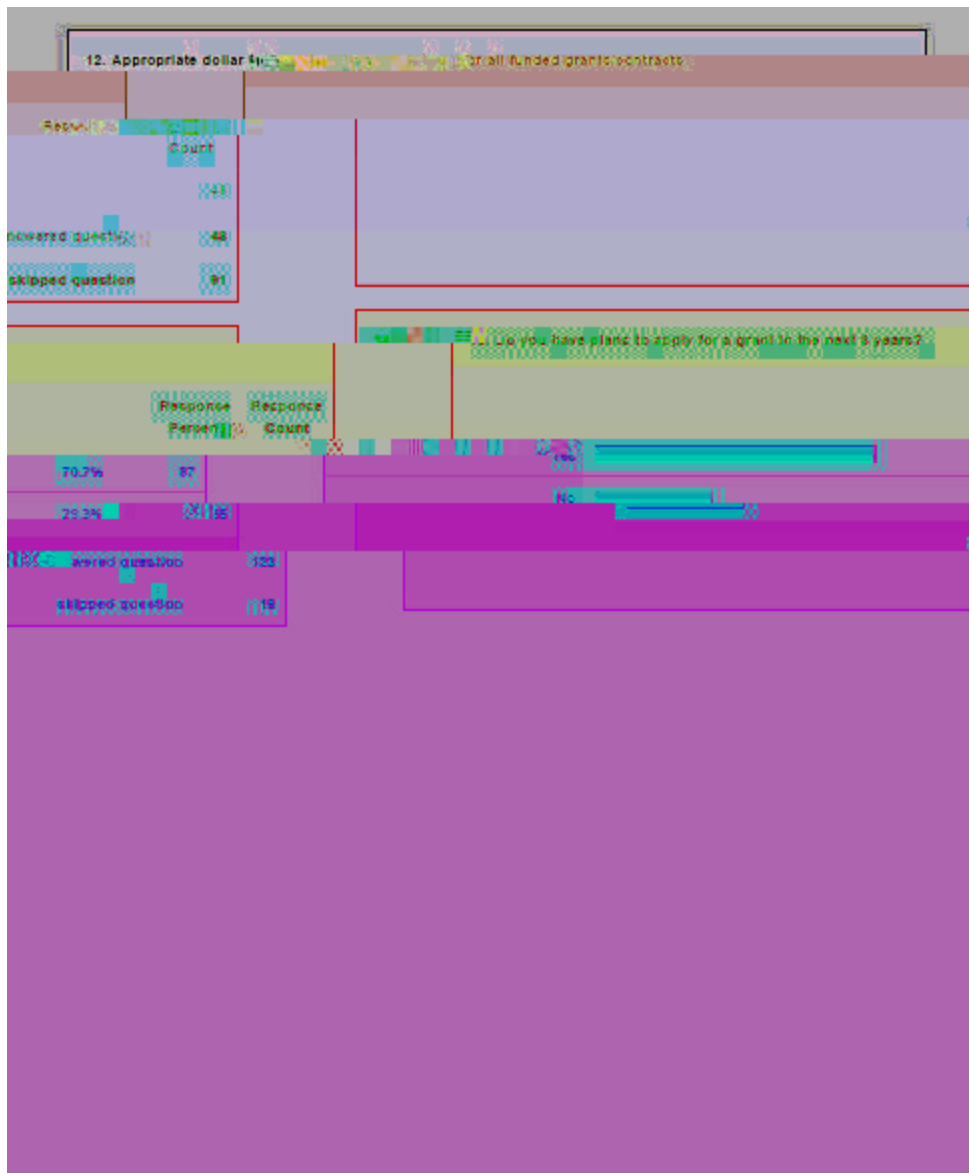
Appendix A: Survey on Research, Scholarship & Creative Activities at CSU East Bay: Questions and Numerical Results

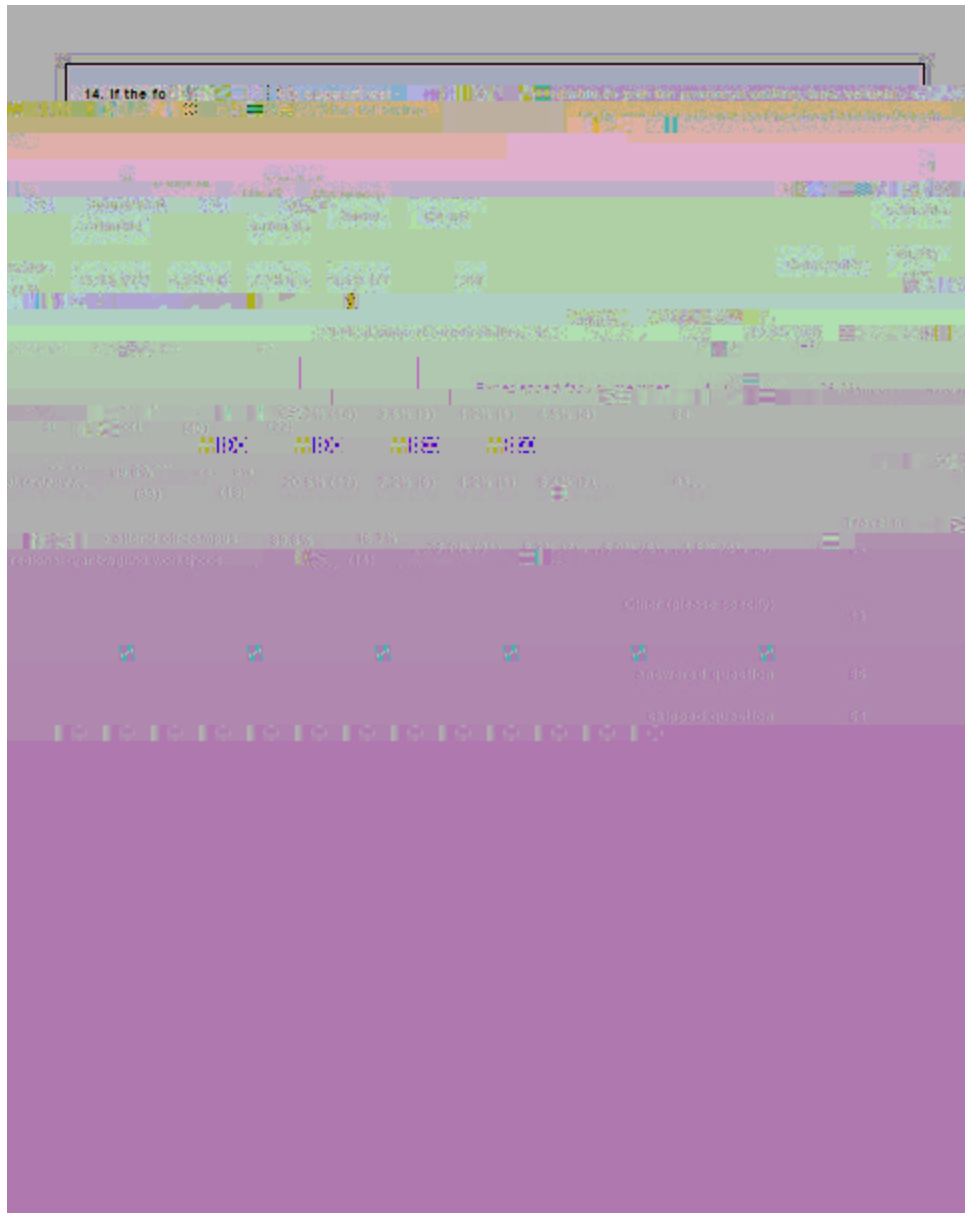




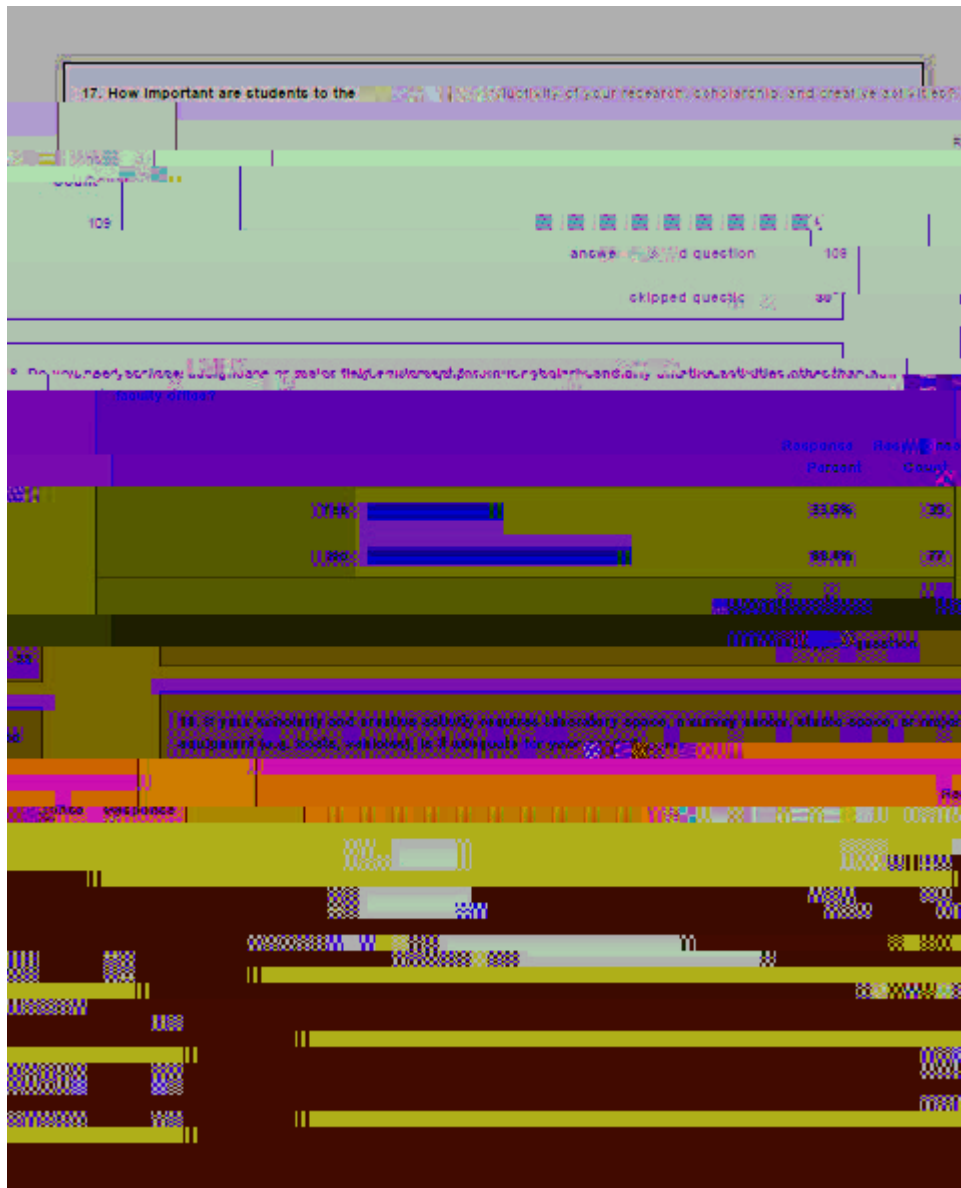




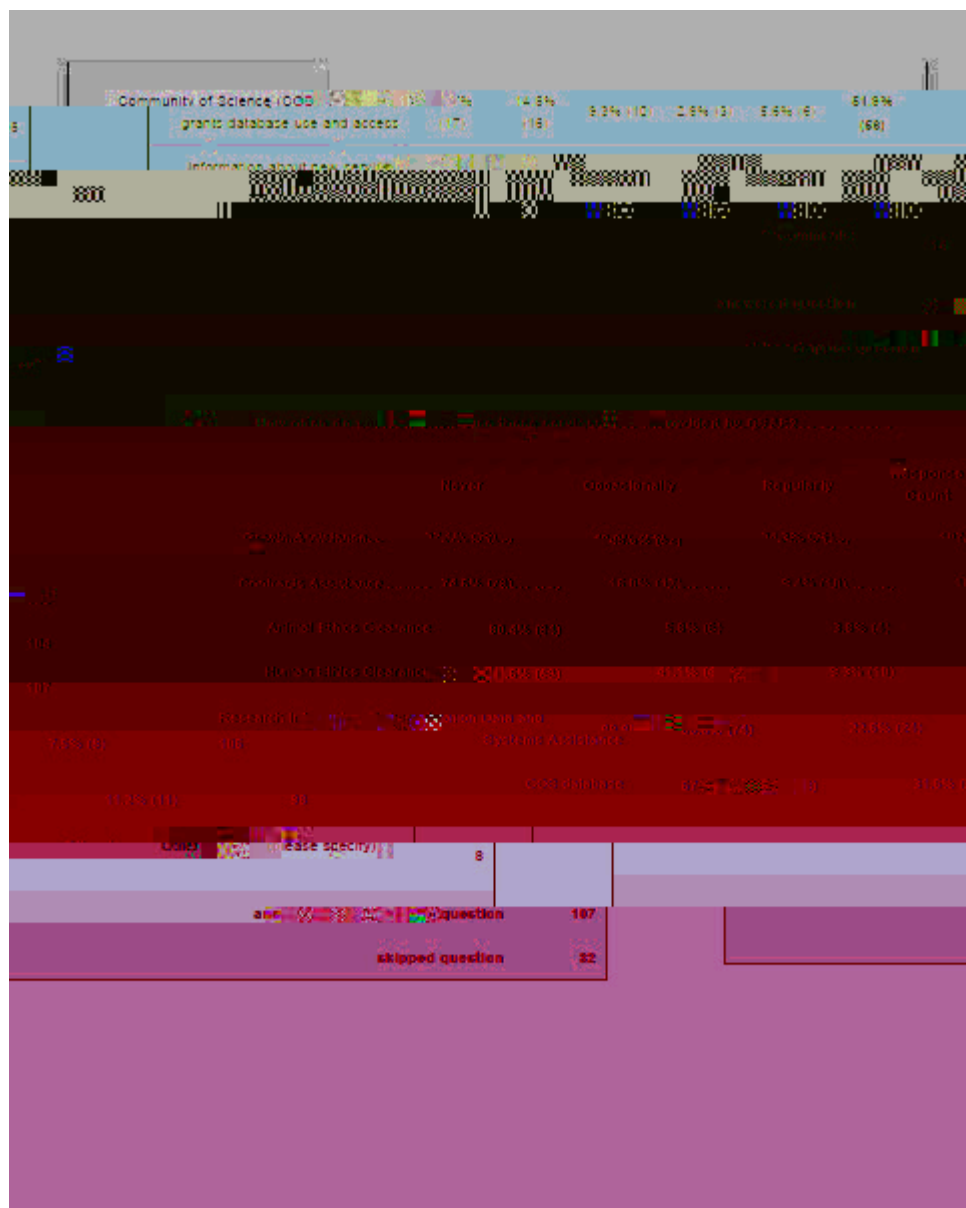


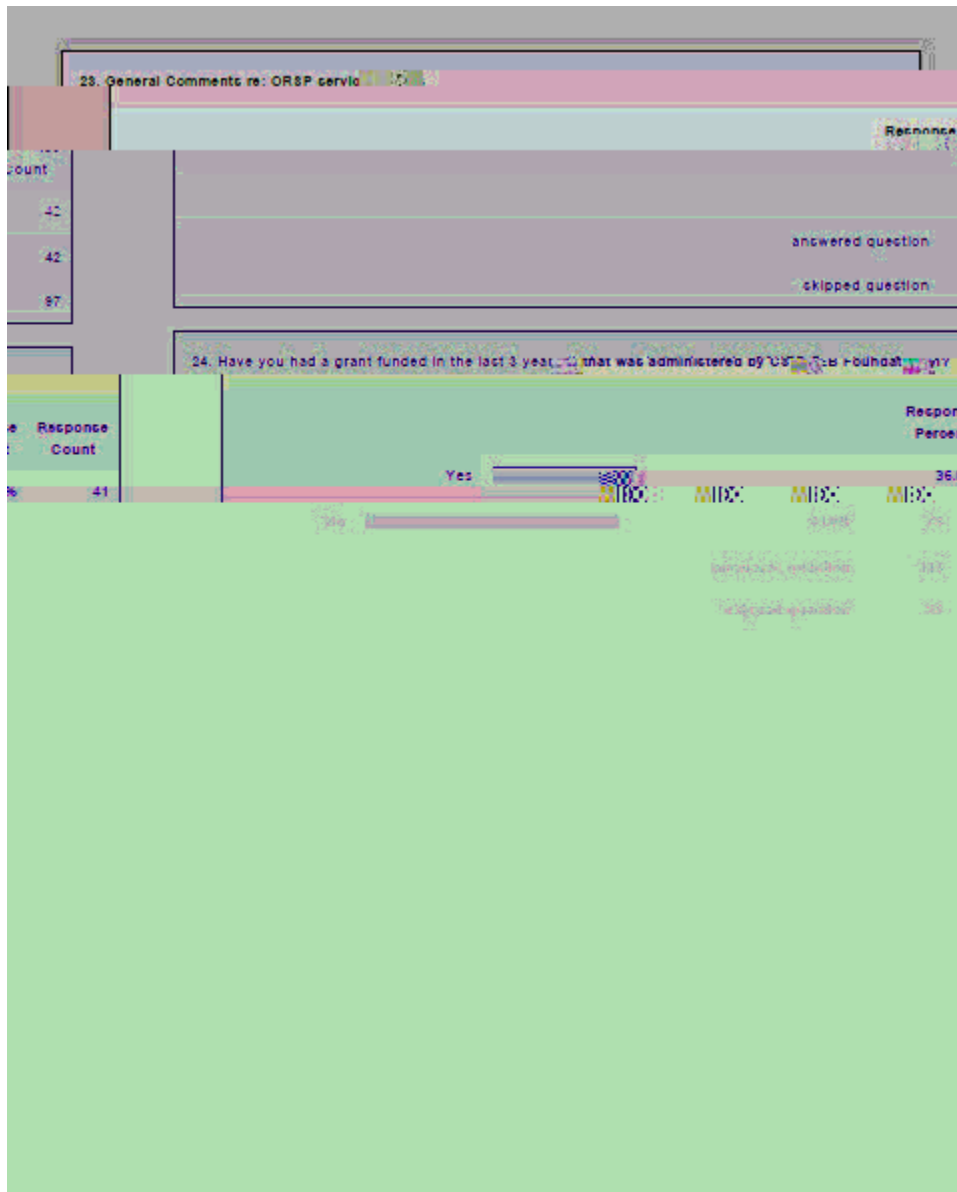






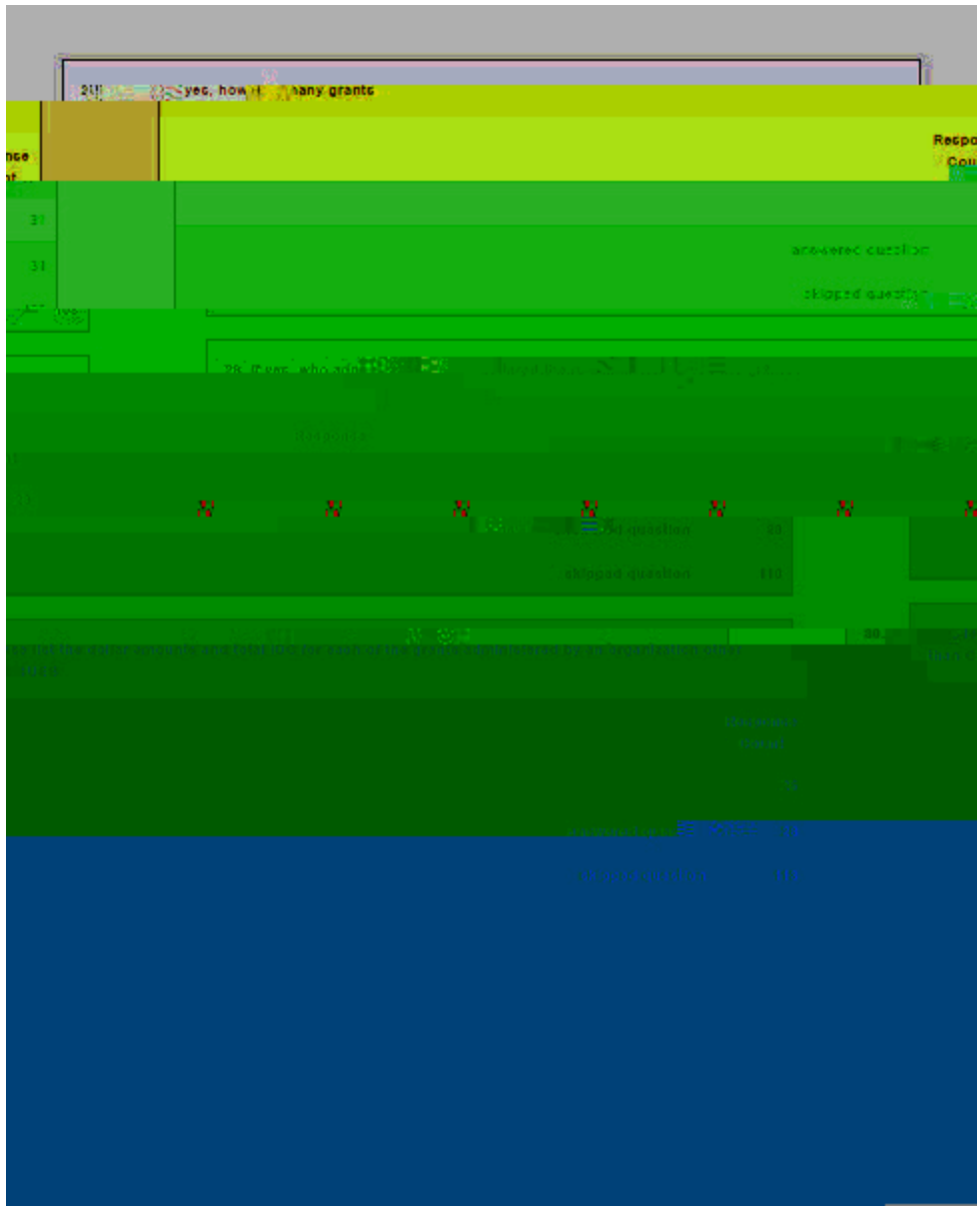




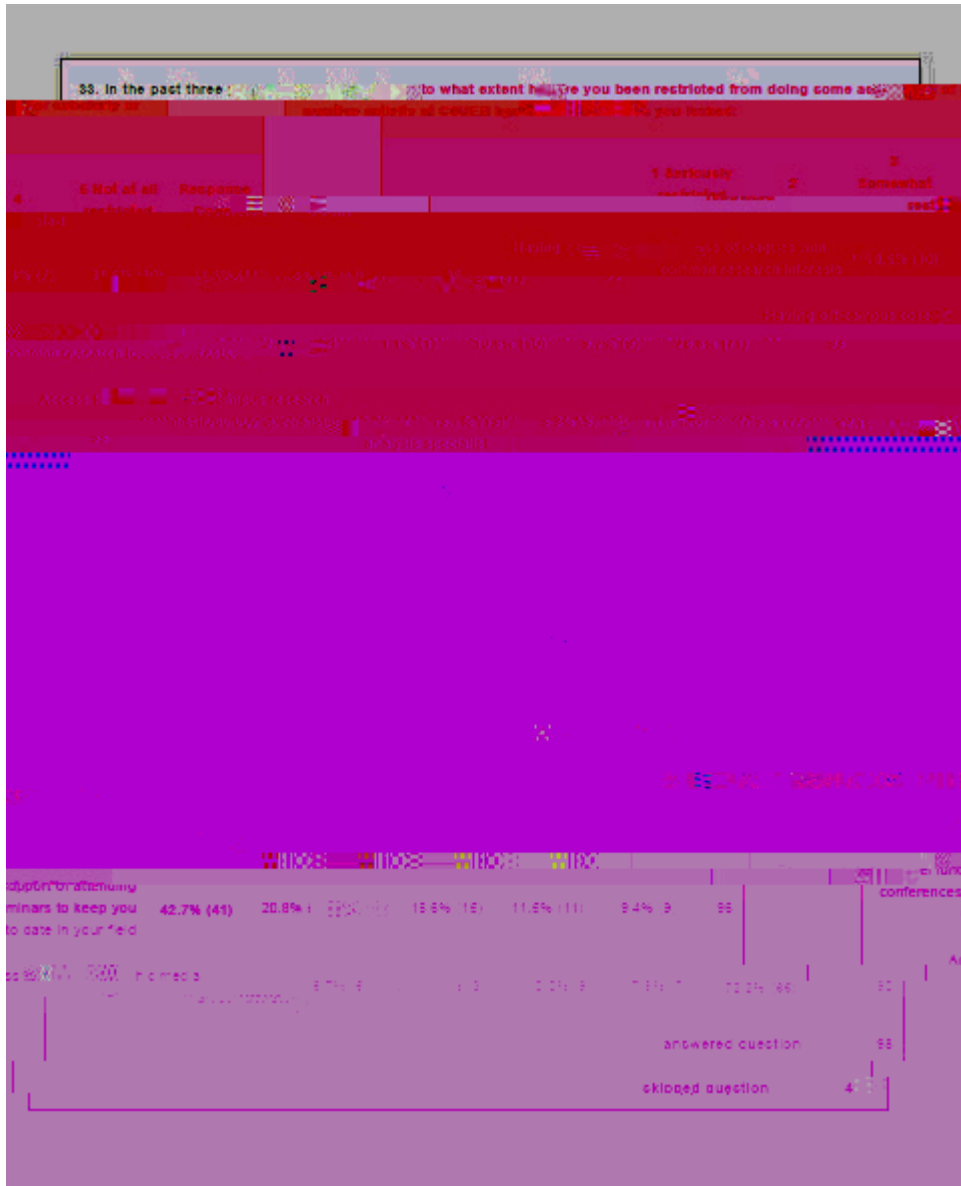


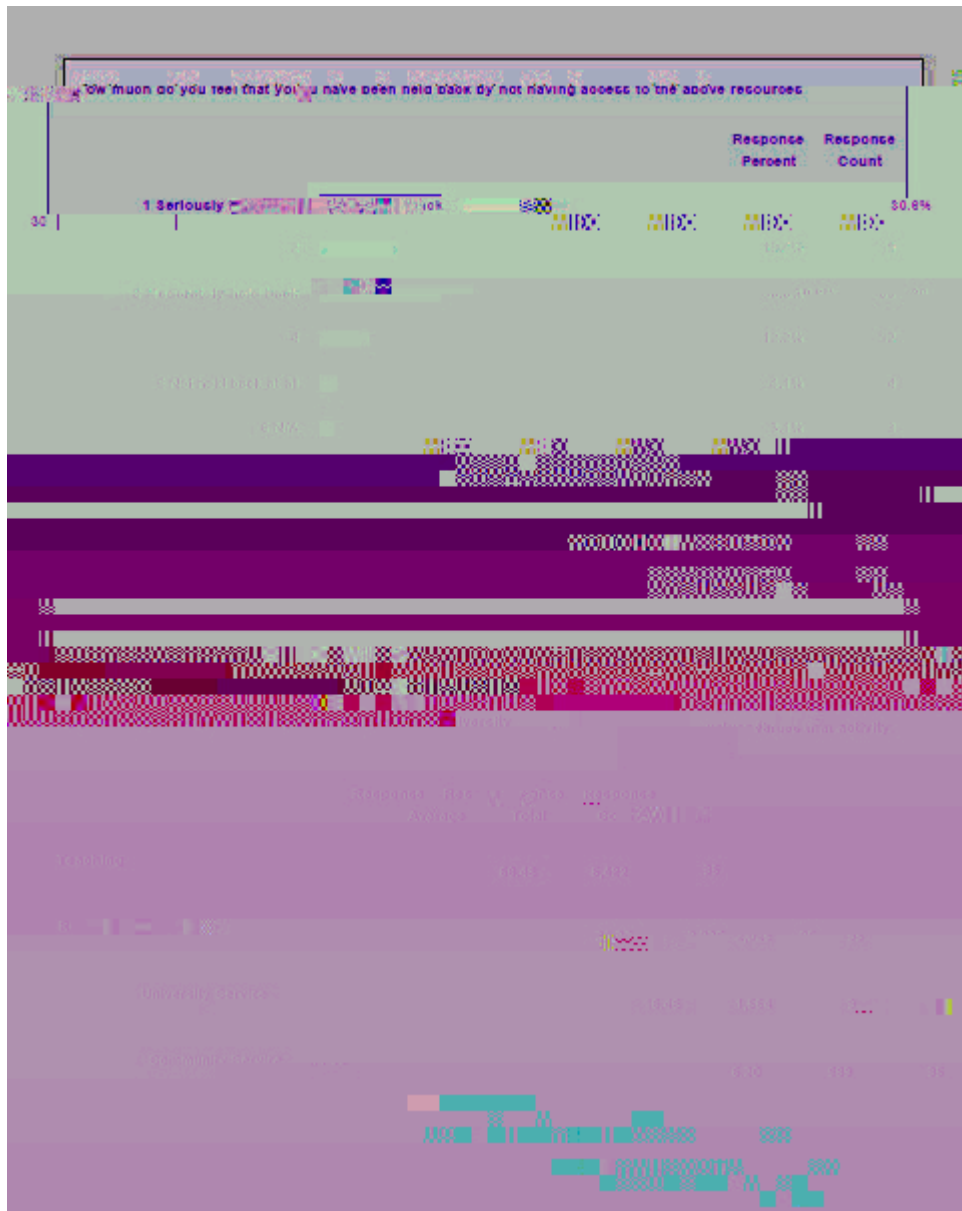












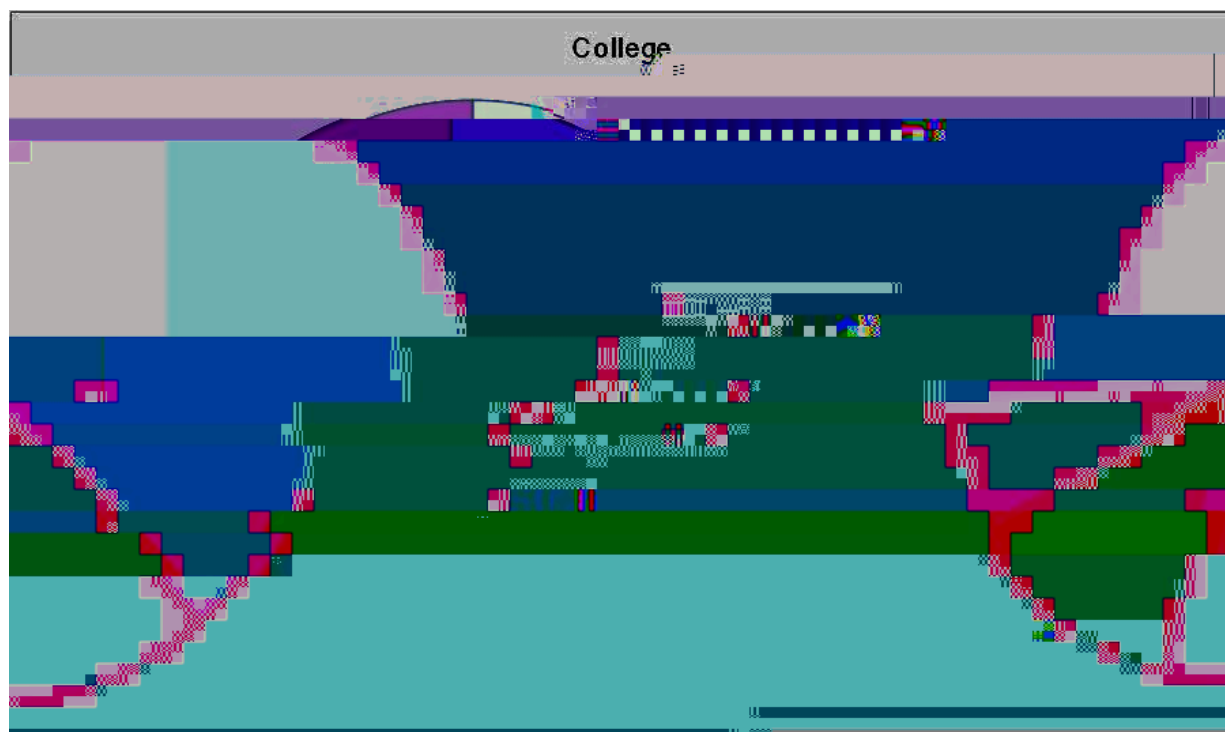
38. In your view, to what extent SHOULD the university value each of the following activities? Please assign a numerical rating to each, making sure the 4 numbers you assign are between 1 and 100 and that all of them add up to 100. (You may use the slider to help you.)

Activity	1-100	100-100	100-100	100-100
Research	100	100	100	100
Teaching	100	100	100	100
Service	100	100	100	100
Administration	100	100	100	100
Other	100	100	100	100

Appendix B: Summary of Results from Online Survey of CSUEB Faculty Basic Information about Faculty and Response Rates

California State University, East Bay has approximately 699 faculty (this includes tenure/tenure-track, FERP and lecturers; numbers vary slightly based on number of lecturers hired each quarter). 139 faculty members began the survey and 109 completed the survey. The completed survey response rate was 15.6%. 132 faculty members gave their college affiliation on the survey. The number of respondents and percentage response for each college based on number of faculty in each college is given in Table 1. Graph 1 shows the percentage of total survey respondents came from each college.

College	# of respondents	% Response
CBE	17	23.3%

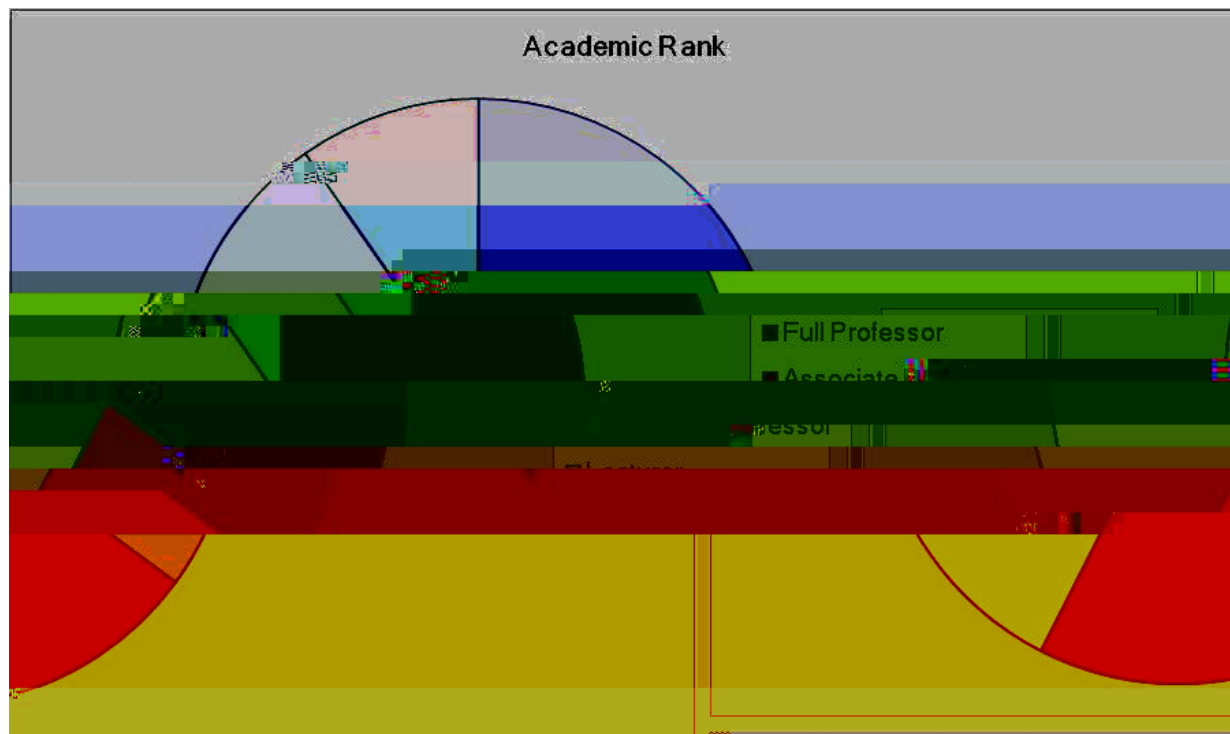


Graph 1. Percentage of respondents to the survey broken down by college affiliation.

The breakdown of survey respondents by rank can be seen in Table 2 and Graph 2.

Rank	Number of Respondents	% of Total Respondents
Full Professor	47	35.1%
Associate Professor	30	22.4%
Assistant Professor	44	32.8%
Lecturer	13	9.7%

Table 2. Breakdown of respondents by Academic Rank.



Graph 2. Percentage of Respondents by Academic Rank.

Results pertaining to Grants

70.7% of faculty plan on writing a grant proposal in the next three (3) years.

64% reported that “lack of time” was the main barrier to writing grants.

64% reported that they have not had a grant administered by the Foundation in the last three years.

3.68 was the mean number of grant proposals written in the last (3) years by faculty

1.85 was the mean number of grant proposals funded

0.66 was the mean number of grant proposals currently pending

61.9% of faculty have not applied for an internal grant in the last three (3) years due to lack of time

48.1% of faculty would find having access to a grant writer valuable in writing grant/contract applications

47.6% would find having “experienced faculty member support” valuable in writing grant/contract applications

Results pertaining to ORSP

- All services provided by ORSP were rated by the majori

“Wish we could do with out[sic]”

“Changing of procedures without notification is unconsciousable[sic]”

“My experiences with the Foundation have been awful. This is the most unfriendly, difficult organiza

Community Service	6.20	9.89
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Table 3. Valuation of Teaching, Research, and Service at the University.

Results pertaining to Importance of Students in Research/Scholarship Endeavors

Responses to the importance of students in research/scholarship endeavors were split into two main categories:

Very important to have students involved for benefits to students and faculty, most comments fell into this category

Not important because research was not conducive to involving students

Selected comments

“Extremely. I focus on my work with students in all areas of research and scholarship. Am planning a project with students at the moment.”

“Not so important in my area.”

General Comment Themes from Faculty Responses

55.9% reported being “restricted from doing some aspect of your scholarly or creative activity at CSUEB” due to lack of “reasonable teaching load”

42.7% reported being restricted due to lack of “travel funds/support of attending conferences/seminars to keep you up to date in your field”

Lack of time for research, scholarly, and creative activities due to heavy teaching load was the overwhelming response noted in free-text comments.

Also, noted was the lack of University support and a culture conducive to research productivity.

Sample representative comments:

“teaching load at CSUEB is absurd”

“As long as we are required to teach 9 courses a year there is no way research activities or productivity will increase.”

“The climate is horrendous....This system needs to be revamped to retain faculty.”

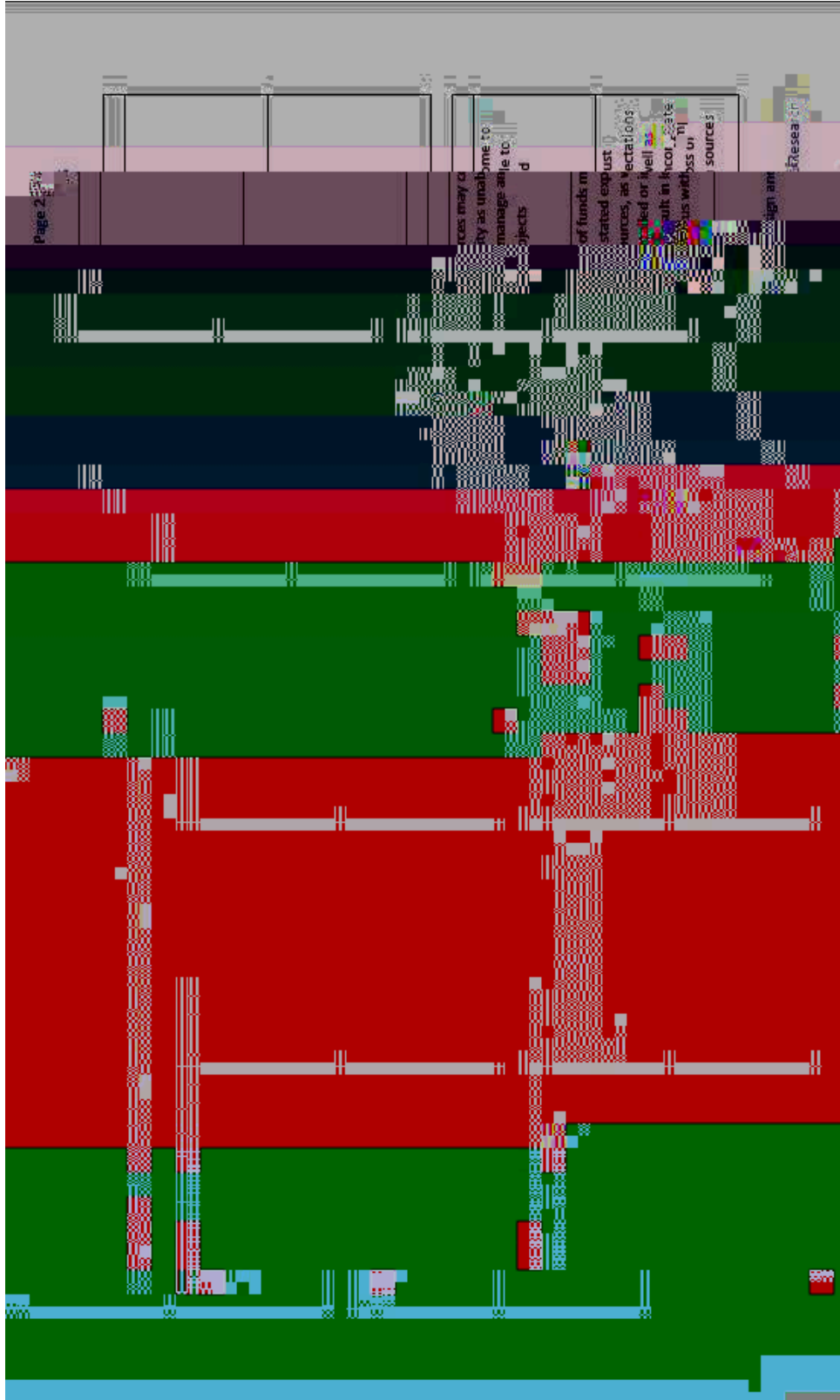
“In addition, the U. should recognize that some faculty’s main professional work IS teaching and these faculty need to be encouraged

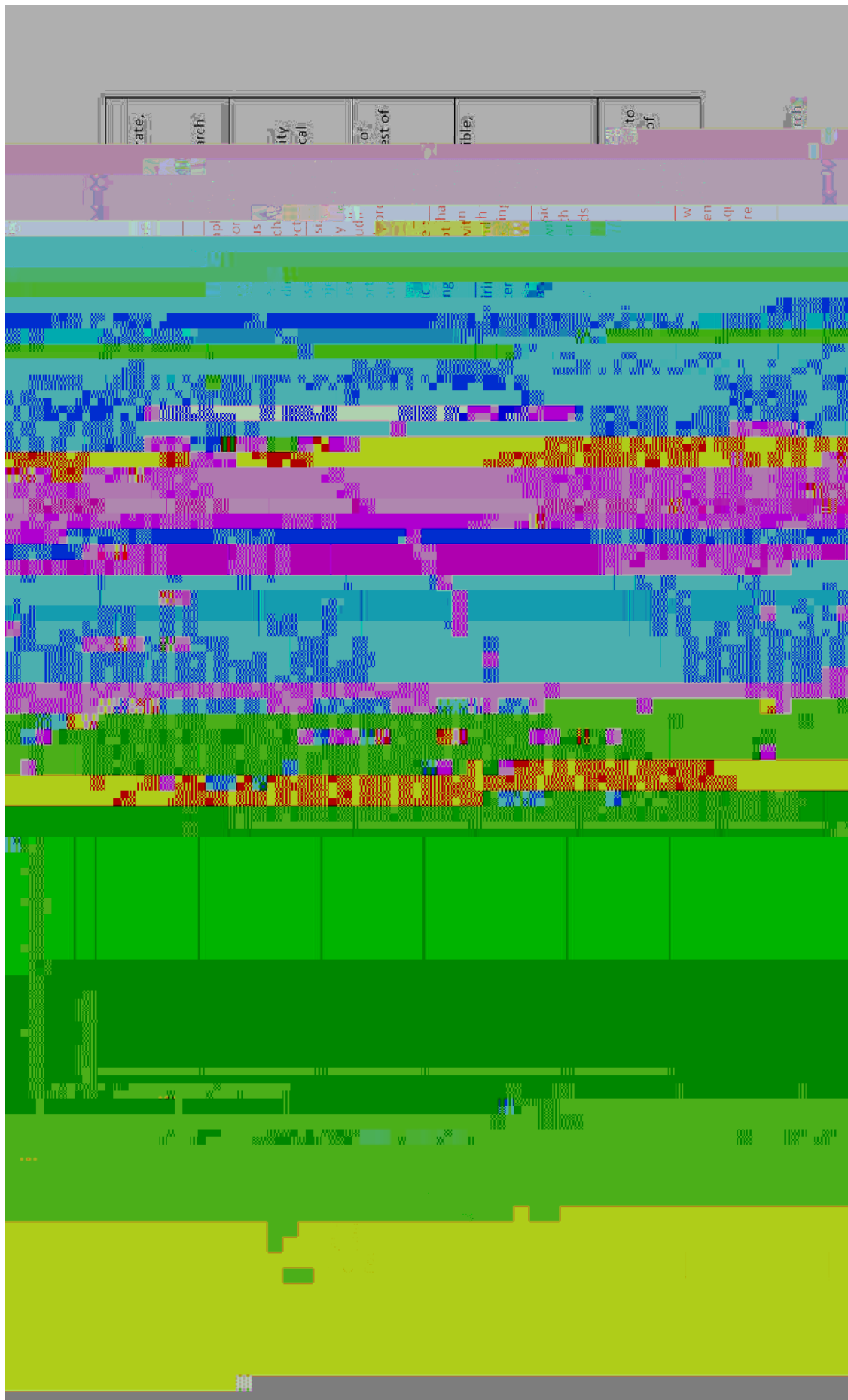
productivity, but feel unable due to the heavy teaching load and service commitments.

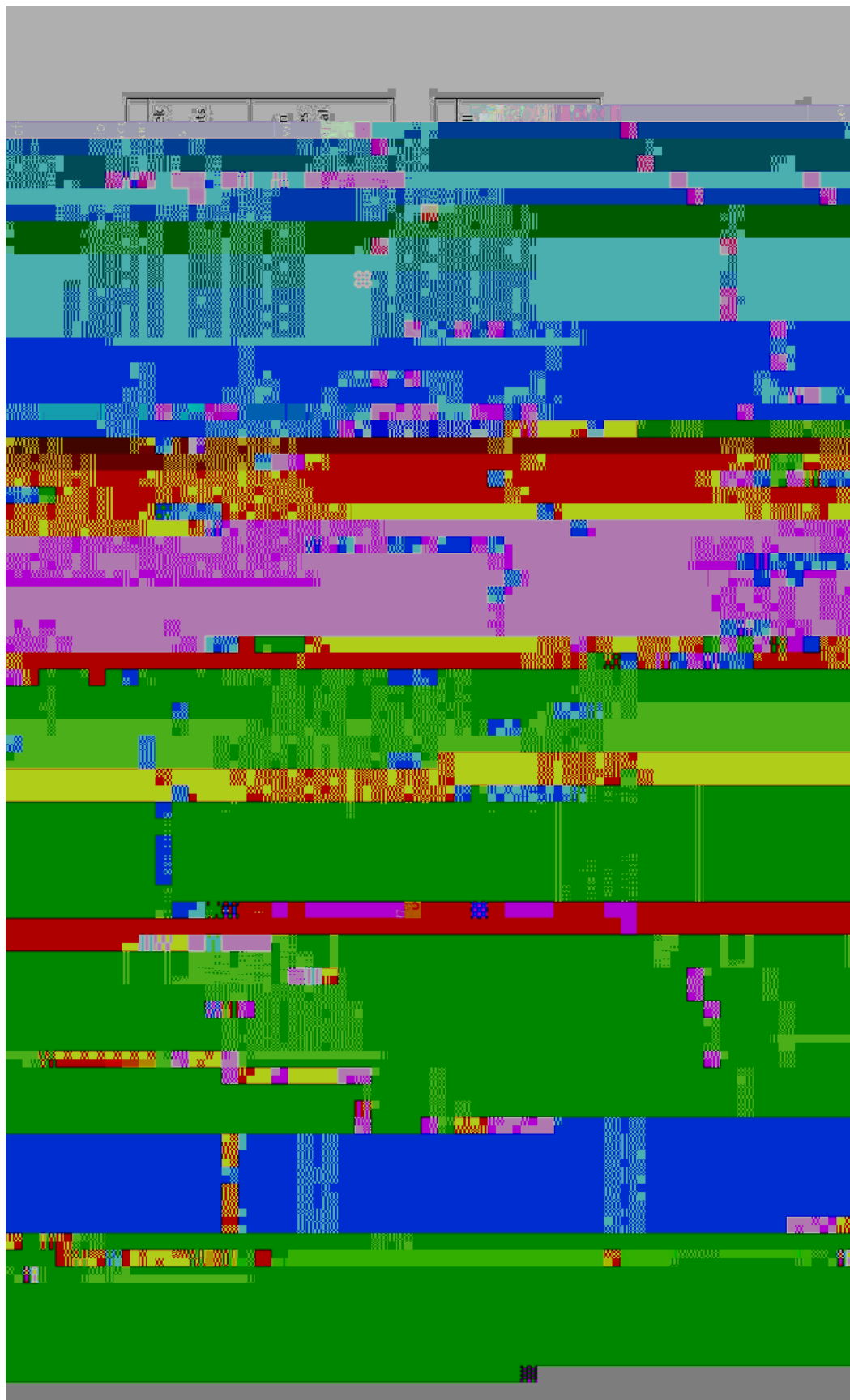
Suggestions from the faculty mirror those talked about by the Task Force, including: finding a way to have assigned time for writing grants, finding ways to relieve the teaching load, and giving more support to the faculty via monetary support and recognition. One of the major

Appendix D: SWOT Analysis of Focus Groups

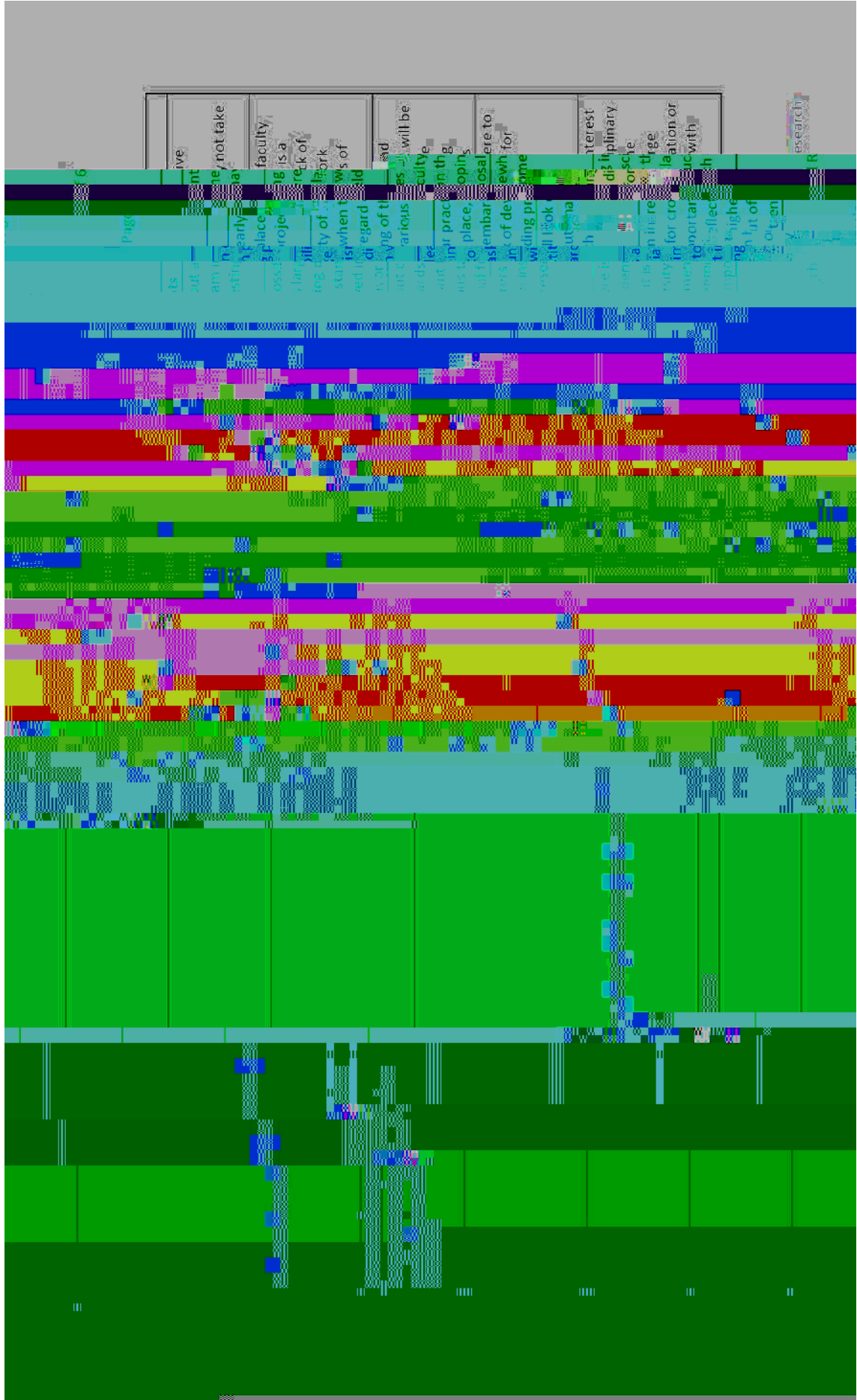
NOTE: The section referencing individual personnel has been deleted from this official report.











Appendix E: Organizational Chart as of January, 2011

