



Rural Studies Program

213 Ballard Extension Hall

Oregon State University

Corvallis, Oregon 97331-3601

T 541•737•1442 | F 541•737•2563 | rsp@oregonstate.edu

August 3, 2009

Provost Sabah Randhawa
624 Kerr Administration Building
Oregon State University
Corvallis OR 97331-2153

Dear Sabah:

As indicated in the accompanying report, the OSU Rural Studies Program, with the support of the Sustainable Rural Communities Initiative, has developed into an internationally recognized center of excellence in rural studies, with the first graduate policy degree in the nation focused on rural policy and a cutting-edge information system and engagement effort for community leaders. The \$1.5 million OSU investment in the Initiative has generated over \$3.3 million to date in new external funding to OSU for research and outreach/engagement. Half of the Initiative investment was in salary and startup costs for new OSU faculty; this \$0.75 million has leveraged over \$0.6 million in annual recurring commitments from OSU colleges, the OSU Extension Service and the Ford Family Foundation to support 7 new faculty members to do research, teaching and outreach in rural studies.

Less tangible but equally important returns to OSU from the Initiative investment have come in the form of increased national and international visibility for leadership in rural public policy teaching and scholarship, and local and state visibility for significant and sustained engagement with rural and urban Oregon leaders and citizens and for making policy-relevant information readily available in a state-of-the-art information portal.

Based on the input of RSP faculty, students and stakeholders, RSP has developed three strategic goals for the 2009-2013 period:

- To establish OSU's reputation as the national leader in graduate education in rural public policy by strengthening the rural track in the Master of Public Policy program, implementing the Rural Policy Graduate Certificate, and developing a Rural Policy concentration in the proposed Ph.D. in Public Policy
- To contribute to OSU's emergence as a national leader in Outreach and Engagement (and its designation by the Carnegie Foundation as a Community-Engaged University) by broadening and deepening our footprint in Oregon, the nation and the world through experiential and on-line education, and through collaborative community research partnerships that engage rural people and places in developing place-based knowledge addressing critical rural problems.

- To secure OSU's place as the community data center for Oregon and the Northwest, providing tools and services to state agencies, community action agencies, counties, cities, and nonprofit groups, and data for policy-relevant research on environmental, economic, social and cultural well-being in the rural United States.

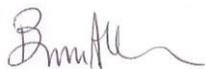
The long-term funding model for the RSP is based on a mix of e-campus revenues from the Rural Policy Graduate Certificate, and contracts and grants generated through projects that support the three Strategic Goals. You will note that our budget summary includes a balance of about \$95,000 in uncommitted resources in the RSP Strategic Investment Fund. As we transition to the long-run funding model during 2009-2010, it will be important to have access to the currently uncommitted balance of the RSP Strategic Investment Fund. Several of the e-campus, contract and revenue streams being pursued as part of our long-term funding model involve startup and matching revenues from the Strategic Investment Fund.

In previous reports, I indicated that it was our hope that, with Initiative support, the Rural Studies Program would develop into an OSU Institute in the Research Office. This past year, we submitted a Category I proposal for the creation of such an Institute. After reviewing the proposal, the recommendation of the Vice President for Research and the Research Council to you was that the Rural Studies Program become a center housed in the College of Agricultural Sciences. I would like to discuss the placement of the Rural Studies Program with you, as I believe there are several attractive options to consider that would enhance the Program's effectiveness and visibility.

The Rural Studies Program has invested the resources from the Provost's Strategic Initiative to make OSU a national leader in rural public policy/rural studies and in information systems/decision support tools for rural and urban communities. And it has created an exceptional outreach program for engagement of citizen leaders and policymakers for developing place-based strategies that address complex rural problems.

We would welcome the opportunity to meet with you to discuss the accomplishments of the Initiative, the report and recommendations of the External Review team, and the alignment of the 2009-2013 Rural Studies Program Strategic Goals with those of the University. We also hope to discuss with you the funding plan and the placement of the Rural Studies Program within the OSU administrative structure to maximize its contribution to the Strategic Goals of the University.

Sincerely,



Bruce Weber
Director