

UC Merced

Introduction: Historical Overview of American Research Universities

Title

Transcript & Video

Permalink

<https://escholarship.org/uc/item/3rz9c6pg>

Author

Kang, Sung-Mo "Steve"

Publication Date

2009-11-13

Supplemental Material

<https://escholarship.org/uc/item/3rz9c6pg#supplemental>



**Academic Innovation and the American Research University
Symposium**

University of California, Merced
November 13, 2009

Introduction: Historical Overview of American Research Universities

[Sung-Mo "Steve" Kang, Ph.D.](#)

Chancellor

School of Engineering, Distinguished Chair Professor
University of California, Merced

**CHANCELLOR;
PROFESSOR OF
ENGINEERING, UC
MERCED.
SUNG-MO "STEVE"
KANG, PH.D.**

I'd like to welcome you all to our Academic Innovation Symposium. Thank you very much for being here. Because you are here, it's going to be, I'm sure, a very exciting day for UC Merced. I'd like to introduce some of our guests. To save time, I will skip introducing our own people, but you know, I'd like to briefly introduce first Regent George Marcus who is sitting here. So let us welcome our regent. [*applause*]

And you may recall Regent Marcus' visit when he was serving as chair of the Education Policy Committee, and he really shared the vision for UC Merced as the new campus. He always promotes excellence in [the] UC system and he wants UC Merced to be an excellent university. So in support of excellence, in support of UC Merced, Regent Marcus gave a very generous sponsorship for this Academic Symposium. So we'll hear from him later on.

President Mark Yudof is also here, so let us welcome President Yudof. [applause] By the way, he was just selected to be one of the top ten presidents in the United States by *Time* magazine. [applause]

We have our former acting chancellor, Rod Park. [applause] And I think Cathy [Park] is here somewhere. Cathy? Yes. [applause] Thank you for being here. We have my former colleague, Dr. Prith Banerjee, Senior Vice President of Research at HP labs. HP, and then he is the director of HP labs worldwide. So Prith Banerjee. [applause] Chancellor Gene Block is here from UCLA. Gene? Yes. [applause] And Chancellor Michael Drake will be here from UC Irvine. And I know Chancellor Linda Katehi will be here from UC Davis. She has said she will be late a little bit. And then also I'd like to recognize Professor Shawn Kantor who is County Bank Chair Professor of Economics at UC Merced. He has been really working with me all along to prepare for this Symposium and he will be the convener of today's meeting. Shawn? Thank you. [applause]

In total, we have actually 16 research universities nationwide represented by the panelists of today's meeting. They bring rich experience in university administration in the United States. UC Merced has just completed our Strategic Academic Vision, SAV 2025. And if you recall, the first three guiding principles are to provide interdisciplinary solutions to society's most pressing problems through our research and educational programs. Number two is our commitment to student success. Number three is inclusive excellence.

And in the process of inviting excellent people, I had a chance to talk to Steve Sample at USC [University of Southern California]. I have known him for many years. He's an Illinois graduate in electrical engineering. Steve regretted for not being able to come but he suggest we also take a look at

the book called, *Role of the American University: The Creation of the Future* [*The Creation of the Future: The Role of the American University*] by Frank Rhodes. He has written this book in 2001. And I looked at it, and in Chapter 13, he has a good message. It says, "The successful university will maintain institutional economy, lively faculty independence, vigorous academic freedom, but will enjoy strong impartial public governance, and decisive, engaged presidential leadership. We have that. You know, we have one of the top ten presidents in the nation here. Number two, is an increasingly privately supported but increasingly publicly accountable and socially committed. Number three, will be campus rooted but internationally oriented. Number four, will be academically independent but constructively partnered. Number five, will be knowledge based but student centered, research driven but learning focused. Number six, will be technologically sophisticated but community dependent. Number seven, will be quality obsessed, quality obsessed, but procedurally efficient. Number eight, professionally attuned but humanely informed.

I think it's a good guideline, particularly at this juncture. We have huge challenge due to budget cuts and, you know, scarce resources. But we are committed to maintain the excellence and build it even more.

So before I depart and introduce President Mark Yudof, I prepared some experiment for you. A demonstration right? I'm an applied physicist, to some extent, so this is like a resource, a finite resource. And if you loop around, to gain as much area as possible, the best solution is to create a circle. Actually, compare this--a square, you will have a 27% more area, actually, if you have a circle. That is why academicians are so smart. They build silos. Silo base is a circle, right? [laughter] So they know that.

Now, on the other hand, there's just a line. [*holds up a string*] If you take a two-dimensional surface area, even surface area, a given finite resource. The most volume that you can build is a sphere. [*holds up a sphere*] Compared to cubical, this will have about one-third more volume. So what do academicians do? I prepared this out of all the ping pong balls. [*holds up a cube filled with balls*] [*laughter*] So they build these spheres. [*takes a ball out of the cube and holds it up*] That's academic units. And they just keep piling up. [*drops ball in cube and holds up cube*] And the field of space, like a campus space or university space. But I did a calculation. If you do that, 47.7% will remain empty. Unused. That's the space where division markers are advocated. You should find five Nobel Prize winners. In interface space. That's the interdisciplinary research. And I'm hoping that in today's discussion, we have a good discussion how we penetrate into this empty space, become world leader in unexplored areas, right?

So with that introduction, it is my great pleasure to introduce President Mark Yudof. Mark? [*applause*]