

UC Merced

AIARU: Panel 1 - Undergraduate Education and the Research University

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

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Panel #1: Undergraduate Education and the Research University

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**UC MERCED
PROFESSOR OF
BIOLOGY,
DAVID OJCIUS,
PH.D.**

So for the sake of brevity, I'll mention some of the things I heard today. So I agree with the statements made by Evan [Heit] on interdisciplinarity and Hans [Björnsson] on how this university functions as one unit. Regardless of the model that one chooses for teaching and research, any model becomes feasible if it can be funded.

And as everybody knows, we're going through a period in which the budget for the whole university is not what we would wish it to be, so we should, one way to continue insuring funding for our campus or increase the chances of continuing funding is to cater to our strengths, to cater to the community. So one reason we have a campus here is that the community wanted the campus badly here so it was built in this area.

And also, I think our students are one of our greatest strengths probably, besides the diversity of our faculty is the diversity of our student body. And our undergraduate students are probably the most diverse among large research universities in the country, and one reason also why many of them say they come here is that they have contact with their professors and they can do

undergraduate research.

And I think undergraduate research is good not only for the undergraduate students but also it's one way of training our graduate students. So most laboratories that have undergraduate students assign the undergraduate students to graduate students. And I think that the undergrad students train the grad students as much as the grads train the undergrads. So we should not view this as a weakness of a campus, you know, being a student-centered research university is our strength also. And I think this something also that maybe deserves more recognition when we evaluate careers of our faculty, is their willingness to train undergraduate students is something that maybe needs to factor in more heavily into our evaluation of the faculty. So this is all I have really to say.
[applause]