

Letter From the Deans - Issue 18

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How does UC Santa Barbara excel in research and industry partnerships? By asking the right questions. Read the Summer 2014 letter from Deans Rod Alferness and Pierre Wiltzius.



Rod Alferness



Summer 2014

In [this issue](#) [2] of Convergence magazine, there is a quote by one of our research leaders on campus, Professor Craig Hawker. When asked in a discussion, "Why do you think UC Santa Barbara's research partners renew their investments year after year?" he replied: "Sometimes it is the question that's the most important aspect of a research project."

We asked him to elaborate. "Having that question defined is absolutely critical and worth its weight in gold. To frame the problem in the best possible way and, in a way, working backward from the product while engaging our research partners," said Hawker. "That's where we at UCSB excel as researchers."

In the past year, engineering and the sciences has celebrated the renewal of several successful interdisciplinary partnerships, and the results speak for themselves. Renewing their \$6 million investment for an additional four years, the [Mitsubishi Chemical Center for Advanced Materials](#) [3] at UCSB has produced more than 100 patent applications, with an average patent cost that is two-thirds that of a technology company. The relationship is both effective and beneficial for the students, post-docs and faculty engaged in groundbreaking materials research.

At the start of 2014, an announcement was made by President Obama and the US Department of Energy that UCSB researchers, including professor Umesh Mishra, are partners in the [Next Generation Power Electronics Manufacturing Innovation Institute](#) [4], a \$140 million investment in 25 partners with the goal of boosting research in wide bandgap semiconductor-based power electronics.

This past winter, the US Army Research Office renewed their \$48 million investment with the UCSB [Institute for Collaborative Biotechnologies](#) [5], extending a decade of highly successful, unclassified basic research. Deemed "20 years ahead of their time," ICB researchers examine complex biological systems and engineer synthetic materials inspired by natural models. The partnership has produced more than 500 publications and supported hundreds of graduate students.

What does it mean for a university dedicated to both research and academics? We think it means opportunity for all our students, faculty, and researchers alike. Science and engineering breakthroughs at UCSB are made possible by our investors and partners. Great things are happening the lab, the field, and the classroom every day by the people who have chosen to study at UCSB because of our dedication to opportunity.

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