

**GRADUATE AND RESEARCH COUNCIL
2005-2006 ANNUAL REPORT**

TO THE MERCED DIVISION OF THE ACADEMIC SENATE:

In academic year 2005-2006 the Graduate and Research Council (GRC) met three times in person and held several teleconference and email meetings to conduct business. The issues that GRC considered this year are described briefly as follows:

Faculty Research Grants

In January 2006, a call for Faculty Research Grants was distributed to all faculty. Funds in the amount of \$75,000 were provided to the Senate by the Executive Vice Chancellor and Provost and were designed to support research activities. Members reviewed the individual project descriptions to assess the quality of the proposed research. The committee also looked for evidence of recent research activity in the form of major publications, exhibitions, and performances. Another factor considered was evidence of efforts to secure external funding from government, private, or foundation sources. Because some types of research have limited access to external funding, the GRC was strongly committed to supporting such research activities. Additionally, GRC gave priority to proposals from newly-appointed and non-tenured faculty with no external support. After three grant solicitations GRC awarded approximately \$47,000 to 27 faculty.

The remaining \$28,000 has been earmarked for Shared Equipment Grants. These grants are designed to support the purchase of specific equipment that will enhance the research activities of multiple UC Merced faculty. Several commendable proposals were received by the June 30, 2006, deadline; however, GRC was unable to act on them. Next year's GRC will make the review of the proposals its first order of business.

Genome Core Facility

At its March 22 and May 3, 2006, meetings, the GRC discussed the academic merits of the proposed Genome Core Facility (GCF). The GRC agrees that the proposed GCF is central to the research success of many faculty in Natural Sciences at this time and supports its creation on academic grounds. The facility would also play an important role in recruiting future faculty with similar interests because the equipment needed for their success at UC Merced will already be in place.

It was evident to GRC that the bulk of the academic support for the proposed GCF is derived from School of Natural Sciences interests. Because the proposed facility has not attracted a significant cross-school constituency, the GRC does not recommend granting the Genome Facility campus-wide recognition as a so-called "Core" facility at this time.

GRC recommends that the Genome Facility initiate its formation as a NS "shared" facility, operated under the Dean and faculty of the School of Natural Sciences. The key distinction in the GRC's analysis is that "Core" facilities are envisioned to serve substantive interests of multiple schools, to be operated under the Vice Chancellor for Research on behalf of participating schools, and to have advisory committees with significant cross-school representation. The main purpose for designating a facility as "Core" is to ensure that the interests of all participating schools are represented in the operation of the facility.

Facilities drawing researchers primarily from one school will best serve their users if governed by that school alone. Resources for the operation of a “core” or “shared school” facility (space and operations support) should be requested by the Vice Chancellor for Research or Dean of the school, respectively. Regardless of which form a proposed facility takes, either “core” or “shared school,” resource allocation decisions should be based on how well the facility’s services are aligned with the research, teaching, and service missions of the university.

If the proposed Genome Facility were able to demonstrate broader interest among Engineering faculty in the future, then the GRC would expect a reevaluation of the facility’s status as a “core” versus “shared” facility.

GRC was joined on occasion by the Division Council Chair Roland Winston and Vice Chair Henry Forman. Ex officio (non-voting) member Vice Chancellor for Research Keith Alley was a welcomed and active participant.

Respectfully submitted,

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