

Committee on Research (COR)
Minutes of Meeting
February 11, 2015

Pursuant to call, the Committee on Research met at 3:00 pm on February 11, 2015 in Room 362 of the Kolligian Library, Chair David C. Noelle presiding.

I. Chair's Report

Chair Noelle updated the COR members on the following:

--February 5 joint meeting of Division Council, CAPRA, and the Provost/EVC to discuss FTE allocations. The meeting is being held in response to CAPRA's requests for the release of a subset of foundational hires independent of the focus hires through the strategic academic focusing process.

The Provost/EVC stated that he believed the strategic academic focusing process is nearing completion and will soon be ready for the implementation phase. He will release some FTE lines, and he advised CAPRA to proceed with its traditional requests process. With regard to the focus areas, the Provost/EVC stated that he will make the decision on allocation but with CAPRA consultation. He added that the faculty who took leading roles in drafting the proposals for those focus areas will be expected to lead the effort to request focus FTE lines through his office.

Faculty members in attendance noted that there is no institutional structure to convene the faculty during their negotiations for focus area FTE requests or to serve as a conduit through which faculty members submit their requests to the Provost/EVC.

Faculty members were also concerned that only a small number of stakeholders would be involved (the lead authors of the original focus area proposals) and others may be marginalized.

In response to a question about whether faculty must provide 3-5 year strategic plans as they have in the past, the Provost/EVC confirmed that he has enough information in the current focus area proposals and does not require 3-5 year plans.

-- February 9 UCORP meeting.

The Governor is proposing a 4% increase in funding for UC campuses, but the increase is tied to increased enrollments of California residents. UCOP has pointed out that enrollment decisions are made on campuses, and admissions letters are being submitted in the next few weeks. Therefore, changing admissions procedures for the sake of the budget at this point is not feasible.

UCOP was to have implemented UC PATH, but this has been delayed.

Community colleges have proposed offering 15 B.A. degrees, spread among all campuses. However, community colleges are not prepared to offer upper division courses, and the CSUs are greatly impacted.

UCOP has empaneled a new committee to address transfer student challenges at the UC. There are many bureaucratic obstacles, including difficulties in determining the transfer of class credit from the previous institution. There is some concern among faculty that many students may receive the majority of their undergraduate education elsewhere and transfer to a UC in their final year.

There is no expectation that a portion of California's revenue surplus will be distributed to the UC, except perhaps the aforementioned 4% increase for enrollment of California residents.

UCORP heard reports from Senate leadership concerning interactions with members of President Napolitano's Innovation Council. While there is still some concern that these individuals do not have an appropriate

understanding of technology transfer within the context of higher education, Senate leadership was pleased at the patience, sincerity, and willingness to learn expressed by the members of the Innovation Council.

There was discussion on “reorienting” education, as some have suggested that the UC only offer upper division courses and have students complete their lower division work elsewhere. UCOP does not believe this reorienting proposal has much traction.

UCORP members discussed the fact that there are no substantial cost cutting efforts or metrics for improvement proposed for any of the large state funded programs, like K-12 and prisons, except for higher education institutions, including the UC.

State Senator Ricardo Lara (D-Bell Gardens) proposed that a constitutional amendment be placed on the 2016 ballot to strip the UC system of its historic autonomy and give the legislature authority over the UC. The UC is strongly opposed. Similar measures in the past have failed.

The Portfolio Review Group (PRG) has completed its deliberations on recommendations for continued funding for Multicampus Research Programs and Initiatives (MRPI). There was a solicitation for funds for MRPI and some awards were made for this cycle.

Due to a reduction in fees earned by the UC in 2014, the UC Lab Fees Research Program will not award grants this year. The program, which is funded by a portion of the fees the UC receives for its management of the Los Alamos and Lawrence Livermore National Labs, is unable to release a call for applications in 2015. The UC Lab Fees Research Program enhances partnerships between UC researchers and scientists at Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory and Los Alamos National Laboratory. These grants promote the development of projects and collaborations which advance the missions of the national laboratories at UC.

Investment in the commercialization of UC research products continues to be a topic of discussion. \$250 million is to be invested in an initiative which includes venture capital funds in the vicinity of UC campuses. This investment project includes efforts to provide funds to UC campuses to help “commercialize” UC research projects in return for using campus facilities.

Lastly, UCORP heard a presentation from the UC Division of Agriculture and Natural Resources (ANR). Among other functions, ANR manages research stations, funds 4-H programs, and funds scientists to provide area farmers with advice on crops. In addition, ANR supports non-Senate research faculty positions. ANR’s budget for supporting extension advisers has been reduced by half over the years and it is conducting a public relations campaign to raise awareness of the contributions of ANR and to forge systemwide collaborations that fully leverage ANR resources.

A COR member pointed out that UC Merced has ANR positions on campus and asked if they receive administrative resources.

ACTION: COR analyst will contact VCR Traina (absent from today’s meeting) for information on the funding of ANR positions.

II. Consent Calendar

ACTION: The January 28 meeting minutes were approved as presented.

III. February 12 joint meeting with Division Council, CAPRA, and VC Chancellor for Planning and Budget Feitelberg to discuss Project 2020.

Chair Noelle announced that Division Council and CAPRA members will hear a presentation from VC Feitelberg tomorrow on Project 2020 and academic space. Faculty are invited to attend the meetings with the pre-RFP teams when they visit campus to meet with stakeholders. These meetings are slated for February and March.

ACTION: Chair Noelle will provide a summary of this joint meeting at the February 25 COR meeting.

IV. Review of UC Merced Division Bylaws

Division Council has asked all Senate standing committees to review their relevant sections of the UC Merced Division Bylaws. COR previously submitted proposed revisions to its section of the bylaws in conjunction with proposing bylaws and membership for a library and scholarly communications committee.

COR members agreed on the following, additional revisions to the COR section of the Division bylaws:

--under Membership, revise the VCR's title to "Vice Chancellor of Research and Economic Development".

--under the second duty, strike "and library needs"

--under the third duty, revise the "Office of Research" to the "Office of Research and Economic Development".

--under the fourth duty, add "core facilities" after centers and institutes.

--Strike all language under the fifth duty and replace it with the current language under the sixth duty, as specified in the previous recommendation to establish a standing committee on library and scholarly communication.

ACTION: COR analyst to draft a memo with the aforementioned revisions and circulate to committee members for review. A final memo will be submitted to the Senate Chair.

V. Sponsored Projects Office Update

Chair Noelle was informed that Thea Vicari, Director for Sponsored Projects Services, is retiring. VCR Traina has asked for faculty participation in hiring a new director and welcomes faculty input on future directions of Sponsored

Projects. Chair Noelle asked COR members to be prepared to discuss this item at the February 25 COR meeting.

A COR member pointed out that some faculty find it difficult to file a patent under the new, restructured Office of Research and Economic Development. Committee members agreed that the VCR should evaluate how well the patent filing process is working now compared to how the process was conducted in the former technology transfer office.

ACTION: The Sponsored Projects future directions discussion and the discussion with VCR Traina on patent filing will be placed on the February 25 COR agenda.

VI. Senate Faculty Grants Program

In the last meeting, when discussing the process and criteria for this year's Senate faculty grants, COR members had various ideas, including 1) splitting money into pots for different purposes and 2) determining in advance how many awards will be allocated to each school. Under the latter plan, the school executive committees would be asked to provide a ranking according to COR's criteria, recommending about twice as many proposals as COR can fund, leaving COR with a small number of proposals to evaluate based, in part, on reviews given to COR by the schools.

A COR member suggested the need for a web form with objective criteria that PIs can complete. Other members recalled that COR had a difficult time last year deciding how to weigh each criterion. A lengthy discussion then occurred about the feasibility of asking school executive committees to participate in this year's grants program and the fear of imposing too great a burden on faculty at this point in the semester. A COR member suggested limiting the grants proposals to 3-5 page "specific aims" document.

COR members agreed on the following general process: 1) COR to review previous calls for proposals and draft revised criteria for evaluation of grants proposals; 2) ask the school executive committees to convene a committee

and evaluate faculty grants proposals using COR's criteria; 3) COR will receive the short-listed proposals from the schools and select the awardees.

ACTION: COR analyst to send previous GRC/COR calls for proposals to COR members to aid in the drafting of this year's call. At the February 25 meeting, COR will discuss how to weight the objective measures. The call for proposals will be submitted in mid-March, as per previous practice.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 4:30 pm.

Attest: David C. Noelle, COR Chair

Minutes prepared by: Simrin Takhar, Senate Analyst