

Committee on Research (COR)
Wednesday, October 18, 2017
1:30 – 2:30 PM KL 362

Pursuant to the call, the Committee on Research met at 1:30 PM on October 18, 2017 in Room 362 of the Kolligian Library, Chair David Noelle presiding.

I. Chair's Report

a. Chair Noelle updated COR members on the October 16 UCORP meeting:

- i. Review of Multi-Campus Research Units (MRUs)**
- ii. Research Resource Identification Initiative.** This initiative, which is being implemented by a private contractor, involves the creation and maintenance of a database of research resources, assigning a "bar code" to items used in the biomedical sciences (e.g. reagents) to perform experiments. The goal is to increase transparency and precision in the reporting of research results, allowing researchers to detail experimental methods in a way that supports replication. The NIH supports this initiative. UCORP members discussed the possibility of requesting that the UC take a proactive approach in supporting this effort, as well as evaluating the extra workload that such processes would place on researchers and the wisdom of depending on a private contractor to lead the initiative.
- iii. UCORP met with Kim Budil, Vice President for National Laboratories at UCOP.** The discussion was prompted by the upcoming re-bidding of contracts to oversee the Los Alamos and Lawrence Livermore National Laboratories. Some time ago, staff working in the National Laboratories were directly overseen by the UC, but the government later decided that staff needed managers with more operational experience. This led to collaborations between the UC and contractors to jointly managed staff. Recently, problems have arisen, including safety violations in the laboratories, prompting concerns over the current management teams and the likelihood of their success in the re-bidding process. Vice President Budil suggested that the UC is in the best position to provide accurate and unbiased information to the federal government concerning the state of the nation's nuclear weapons arsenal. She recognized, however, that some UC faculty see some duties of the National Laboratories as being in conflict with the mission of the University, arguing that the UC should not be involved in the oversight of these organizations. Vice President Budil indicated that she will be communicating heavily with faculty and administrators on all campuses, explaining the importance of continuing to work with the National Laboratories and exploring additional ways in which UC faculty and graduate students can benefit from a strong relationship with the labs, including training and the use of sophisticated equipment.
- iv. The systemwide Academic Senate intends to actively investigate the UC faculty salary gap during this academic year.**
- v. UCORP heard updates from systemwide Senate officials on the recent judgement that allows graduate student research assistants to unionize.**

- vi. The systemwide Senate is discussing the funding models of all of the campuses. Some campuses are operating under major deficits, and other campuses may reach that point soon.
- vii. Representatives from the Office of Research & Graduate Studies announced to UCORP that there will be undergraduate and graduate student presentations to state legislators and their staff on February 26, 2018 in Sacramento. Additional information concerning this event will be forthcoming. Faculty will be encouraged to recruit students for this important advocacy event.
- viii. UCORP discussed the NIH initiative to diversify the biomedical sciences. It has been found that few students who are members of underrepresented groups in these fields pursue faculty positions, despite improved representation in the graduate student population.
- ix. The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation has offered a \$10 million endowment for the humanities. With matching funds, this endowment may total \$30 million.
- x. Legal issues are arising around research related to cannabis. California has greater legalization of cannabis than in other states, but it is not yet clear how to handle potential obstacles from the federal government to successfully pursuing research involving this substance.
- xi. UCORP consulted with the UC Chief Information Officer regarding last year's Senate review of the Presidential Policy on Information Security. Several Senate committees on the campuses, including UCM's COR, found the policy problematic. The UC CIO has responded by producing some additional documents to clarify the policy to faculty, but it was not clear that any substantial change has been made to the actual policy document. UCORP requested a copy of the updated policy document to evaluate.

II. Vice Chair's Report

- a. Vice Chair Marcia updated COR members on the following meetings he attended, some attended in place of Chair Noelle:
 - i. October 2 Period Review Oversight Committee (PROC). PROC discussed two of the essays that will be included in the materials for the campus's reaffirmation of accreditation. These materials will be used in support of the external site team visit to campus in Spring 2018.
 - ii. October 9 Division Council meeting. Director of Strategic Communications Richard Cummings shared with Council members a few updates on the 2020 project. He related that the traffic light at the corner of Lake Road and Bellevue Road, as well as an additional parking lot near the entrance to the campus, should be completed after the Thanksgiving break. Division Council also endorsed the MIST proposal to create a PDST program, discussed the cattle grazing issue on the Vernal Pools and Grassland Reserve (as well as COR's recommendation that VCORED Traina assemble a panel of experts on the topic), and campus review items including the Sustainability Strategic Plan and the Climate Action Plan.
 - iii. October 16 Academic Governance Cabinet meeting. Discussion centered on the three main campus initiatives identified by academic and administrative leadership: academic planning, school reorganization, and budget. Working groups comprised of faculty and administrators have been established to address each initiative, and each group has commenced with their meetings.

Another issue raised at the Governance Cabinet meeting was the administration's call to establish a subcommittee on the re-design of the campus supply chain. That call has not yet been widely issued. Director of Procurement Joshua Dubroff will attend the November 1 COR meeting to address COR members' purchasing questions, and he will likely discuss this subcommittee at that time.

III. Budget Working Group

- a. COR member Scheibner, a member of the Budget Working Group, updated COR members on the discussion at the October 6 meeting:
 - i. Discussion mainly consisted of outlining the three major tasks the working group will address: instructional budget, development of a campus budget policy, and revenue-generating programs. The group agreed to prioritize the instructional budget before turning to the remaining two issues. The working group was also provided with a presentation on funding flows. At the second working group meeting (later on October 18), the group will analyze the budget policies of other UC campuses, specifically examining the correlation between instructional budget and the workload of faculty and Unit 18 lecturers. Professor Scheibner also stated that the School of Natural Sciences Executive Committee invited the members of all three working groups to consult with them; the executive committees of the School of Engineering and SSHA are encouraged to do the same.
- b. Professor Scheibner also announced that there will be a meeting of the Senate Committee on Library & Scholarly Communication (LASC) on Thursday, November 2. Director of Space Planning & Analysis Maggie Saunders will attend to discuss new and backfill 2020 space. Professor Scheibner requested that COR members contact him with any research-related issues that he should bring before LASC at the November 2 meeting.

IV. Consent Calendar

- a. **Action:** the October 18, 2017 agenda and October 4, 2017 meeting minutes were approved as presented.

V. Limited Submission Policy

- a. **Background:** At the September 20, 2017 meeting, COR members reviewed the policy on limited submission proposals produced by the Office of Research Development Services (RDS). COR members noted that the policy states that RDS will attempt to notify the faculty of pending opportunities at least 12 weeks before the sponsor deadline and 4-6 weeks before the internal deadline. COR suggested modifying this language to read that RDS will attempt to notify faculty of limited submission opportunities within five days of learning of the opportunities. COR members also agreed that RDS should search for agencies/programs that offer limited submission proposals on a regular cycle, allowing RDS to make the faculty aware of these competitions even before a formal call for proposals is made available for a given year.

- b. Returning to this issue, COR members agreed upon an additional edit to the policy: RDS should submit to faculty a “historical” list of agencies/programs that place limits on submissions, communicating deadlines from recent years, allowing faculty to anticipate the deadlines likely to arise during the current year and plan their workload accordingly. In order to relay COR’s feedback to RDS in a timely manner, COR members unanimously agreed to allow Chair Noelle to finalize the draft memo and submit directly to RDS without another round of committee review.
- c. **Action:** COR’s memo will be submitted to RDS by next week.

VI. Access to Bridge Funding

- a. Numerous anecdotes have been shared with Chair Noelle from faculty who are experiencing serious funding problems and are concerned by the lack of bridge funding. Other than start-up funds, the annual Senate faculty grants, and the minimal amount of discretionary funding in each school, no other funding source for faculty exists to maintain research programs under unexpected circumstances. Compounding this problem are changes in policies (e.g., higher salaries for postdocs and safety requirements imposed by federal and state sources for certain research activities) that introduce unexpected costs, sometimes violating the budgets of externally funded research projects. Faculty must comply with policy changes, but they are finding it increasingly difficult to locate funds allowing them to do so. Dr. Motton related that the VCORED and EH&S have been in discussions with UC Berkeley’s EH&S regarding diving and boating safety services (which affects some faculty at UCM who engage in research that utilizes these activities) that they have historically provided to UCM faculty and research personnel. In the last year, the block funding that the UC Berkeley VCR set aside to provide these services to UCM ran out, and UC Berkeley’s EH&S now has to find new ways to fund these services. Neither VCORED nor EH&S’s budgets at UCM allow for any institutional funding to cover these costs, posing a problem for faculty who have depended on these resources.

COR members discussed the general problem of a lack of adequate bridge funding at UCM. This problem was seen as especially acute for those assistant professors who are nearing depletion of their start-up funds and are publishing papers, but have not yet obtained a large federal grant. Members discussed ways to address this, including seeking local donors through the campus development unit. One suggestion involved giving units sufficient flexibility in the faculty hiring process whereby units can elect to forgo hiring for one year and instead use those FTE resources as discretionary funds to support research. One COR member suggested that the committee issue a call to all faculty for brief anecdotes on challenges they face due to the lack of bridge funding. These anecdotes could be compiled and issued to the Provost/EVC with a cover memo from COR, urging him to find funding. COR chair Noelle pointed out that AY 14-15’s COR did a similar activity when it collected narratives from faculty on how much the Senate faculty grants program has benefitted them, and those anecdotes were transmitted to the Provost. (The Provost later increased the funding for the grants program for a period of three years, but refused to scale funding with the growth of the faculty.)

- b. **Action:** Committee analyst will distribute to the COR membership the memo from the AY 14-15 COR to the Provost. Chair Noelle will schedule an exploratory meeting with the CAPRA Chair to discuss a potential collaboration in pursuing solutions to this problem.

VII. Review of ORUs/Centers

- a. **Background:** At the September 20, 2017 meeting, COR tabled the discussion on the Center for the Humanities review with the intention of continuing the discussion at the October 18, 2017 meeting. There is a need to review the Academic Senate's 2014 policy on the establishment and review of research units, along with VCORED Traina's policy on the review of ORUs, with the goal of clarifying procedures for the review of a Center, such as the Center for the Humanities. Chair Noelle suggested to COR that the item be tabled once again, and stated that he intends to have a private conversation with VCORED Traina about this issue. COR members unanimously supported this suggestion.
- b. **Action:** Chair Noelle will speak to VCORED Traina to get clarity on the next steps for the review of the Center for the Humanities in the context of the Senate's policies.

VIII. Campus Review Items

- a. School of Natural Sciences' request to discontinue the Environmental Sciences & Sustainability minor.
 - i. COR members unanimously opted to not opine on this issue.
 - ii. **Action:** The Senate Chair will be informed of COR's decision.
- b. Proposed Revisions to UCM Bylaws to Establish a Reserve CAP.
 - i. COR members supported the empaneling of a Reserve CAP, but suggested one revision. As the proposed changes are currently written, points A ("Membership"), B ("Term"), and C ("Duties") under Part II. Title 3.2. all refer to the Committee on Academic Personnel (CAP). The newly-written Point D then introduces the Reserve CAP. The proposed bylaw could be clarified by modifying point A ("Membership") so as to specify the presence of both a CAP and a Reserve CAP, thereby providing a better transition to Point D. COR members unanimously approved this recommended revision.
 - ii. **Action:** A draft memo will be distributed to COR members for approval before transmittal to the Senate Chair by Friday, October 27.

IX. Systemwide Review Items

- a. Proposed Revisions to Senate Regulation 424.A.3 (Area D)
 - i. **Background:** In January 2017, the Board of Admissions and Relations with Schools charged a faculty working group with proposing revisions to the area "d" (laboratory science) requirement, to align UC's subject area expectations more closely with the new expectations for high school science curricula based on California's adoption of the Next Generation Science Standards for K-12.
 - ii. Due to time constraints, a COR member requested that the committee conduct a conversation about this item via email after the meeting, explaining that he had concerns with the proposed revisions to the Senate Regulation.

