

Committee on Research (CoR)
Minutes of Meeting
May 5, 2025

Pursuant to call, the Committee on Research met at 11:30 am on Monday, May 5, 2025, in room 344 of the Ruiz-Administration Building. Chair Tao Ye presiding.

I. Chair's Report – *Tao Ye*

A. Divisional Council meeting April 22

- 5% campus budget reduction. The campus should anticipate budget cuts each year in the next few years.
- CoR Chair Ye and Senate Chair Mitchell are in communication with IT about the cybersecurity requirements mandated by UCOP. May 28 is the deadline for employees to comply. At CoR Chair Ye's request, IT is drafting guidance for faculty on how to comply with the cyber security mandate. A CoR member pointed out that many faculty are concerned about data privacy.

II. Consent Calendar

A. Today's agenda

B. Draft April 21 meeting minutes

Action: The Consent Calendar was approved as presented.

III. Consultation with Physical Operations, Planning & Development (POPD)

Guests: VC Dan Okoli, AVC Jonathan Lampman, AVC Andy Boyd

- Update on process improvement for lab renovation projects

POPD has been meeting regularly to discuss improvements for the project process. They are creating a guide for faculty which will clarify phases of the projects as well as their timelines. They are also working on a library of construction details with agreements already in place so that each time a minor modification is needed, it will not have to go to the design phase. (The modifications will still require the necessary permits.)

POPD is also developing a pool of architects and engineers that the campus can call upon for future contracts.

AVC Lampman and AVC Boyd encouraged faculty to contact POPD at the inception of their projects so POPD can ensure a smooth process.

- Update on BSP permanent certification and construction of BSL-3 lab

The door actuators project is anticipated to be complete by June 2025. POPD still needs to work with EH&S on a few items. With regard to the L suites, the state fire marshal explored the BSL-3 building recently and was informed of all remaining issues.

AVC Boyd offered to return to a CoR meeting in fall 2025 to provide further updates.

Action: The committee analyst will contact AVC Boyd in early fall 2025 and invite him for further consultation with CoR.

IV. Consultation with VCR

A. UC Merced federal funding update

- UC Merced has received eighteen notifications. Of these, eleven are stop work orders, three are anticipated cancellations, one was a non-approved no cost extension, and the rest are uncertain. As per previous announcements, the G-RISE and U-RISE programs are terminated as well as the NEH infrastructure grant. There are an additional thirty outstanding sponsored projects (extensions or amendments) in limbo.

B. VCR Faculty Advisory Committee

- As stated in the most recent edition of the ORED newsletter, VCR Wilson has formulated a Faculty Advisory Committee (FAC) consisting of five faculty from SNS, five from SoE, and three from SSHA. As a first task, VCR Wilson has asked the FAC to assist with SPO/CGA process mapping and survey generation.

C. SPO/CGA process mapping/survey development

- VCR Wilson has invited the FAC to engage with DFA, SPO, and CGA to generate a survey on services.

VCR Wilson plans to issue a separate email about faculty financial reporting.

V. Consultation with Interim EH&S Director Thomas Lee

Topic: Policy on Assurance of Safety Standards. This policy was reviewed by the Senate in spring 2025. Divisional Council's memo – together with all Senate committee comments – was submitted to OPHD, Chancellor's Office, VCR Wilson, VC Okoli, Interim EH&S Director Lee, and the UCM Policy Office on April 3, 2025.

Interim Director Lee thanked CoR for their comments on the policy and shared his answers. CoR suggested more explicit procedural details for the escalation process. Interim Director Lee stated that the Research Safety Committee (RSC) purposely left out procedural details of the policy because the committee acknowledged that it treats a very wide range of stakeholders and situations. In response to another CoR inquiry, Interim Director Lee clarified that EH&S will decide if a situation meets Tier 1 deficiency criteria and that risk to personal safety is the criteria for activity suspension. Interim Director Lee also shared with CoR an updated escalation workflow which features a streamlined process and a role for the RSC. A CoR member asked whether an appeal process (as the result of a laboratory shutdown) would be included in the policy. Interim Director Lee confirmed it will be included and the appeal process will be clear on the reopen criteria and timeline. Another CoR member asked about the role of Lab Safety Coordinators and requested confirmation that PIs will be in the loop on all relevant matters. Interim Director Lee confirmed that while he wants the coordinators to have more visibility, PIs will still be engaged and will be copied on all communications.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 1:00 pm.

Attest: Tao Ye, CoR Chair