

Committee on Research (COR)
Wednesday, February 22, 2017
11:00-12:00 PM KL 362
Documents available at [UCM BOX](#)

Pursuant to call, the Committee on Research met at 11:02 AM on February 22, 2017 in Room 362 of the Kolligian Library, Chair David Noelle presiding.

I. Chair's Report – David Noelle

The Chair reported on the following:

a. Division Council – February 16, 2017

- i.** UCOP is being cautious about putting together the campus vision documents for 2040. There have been concerns expressed about proposals from the individual campuses, intended to be aggregated into a single report, leaking out and producing expectations for those campuses.
- ii.** The Systemwide Assembly discussed how federal acts might affect the California state budget. It was noted that UC and CSU systems are discretionary in the state budget, and thus vulnerable.
- iii.** Committee members were encouraged to recommend peers or to self-nominate for the open UCM Division Council At-Large member position.
- iv.** DivCo approved a proposal for the creation of a "Reserve CAP". This committee would provide a pool of people who would both manage the academic personnel actions of people who are active or recent CAP members, and also handle appeals of decisions previously made by CAP. Whether the "Reserve CAP" will be a standing committee of the Division or a sub-committee of CAP remains to be determined.
- v.** DivCo is corresponding with the Dean's Council concerning the introduction of caps on faculty payment for Summer Session teaching. The Dean's Council policy is likely to be established and enforced. Still, it is not clear that the Dean's Council was the appropriate body to make this determination and that adequate consultation with faculty was made prior to the initial announcement. The announced cap is \$10,000 for instruction by senate faculty members over the Summer.
- vi.** DivCo discussed what additional content would go into the 2040 visioning document, though no summary is available at this time.
- vii.** The COR Chair presented the report of the results from the survey on support for extramural funding efforts. DivCo voted to disseminate this information to senate faculty and the Chancellor and Provost, with the recommendation that it be quickly distributed to workforce planning committee leads. There was a concern that, if the raw data was broadcast widely to faculty, it could easily be disseminated to staff members whose organizations were criticized in the survey results, potentially resulting in demoralization of the staff. The COR Chair argued that the senate faculty deserve to see the results of the survey. A compromise was reached, in which faculty would be directly provided with a copy of the summary report, along with a link to a website where they will be able to find the full results.

viii. There is an effort to establish a UC Merced Sexual Violence/Sexual Harassment Peer-Review Panel and Committee, requested from the UC Office of the President. This effort addresses the issue that, currently, decisions concerning disciplinary actions on cases of sexual violence/harassment are made by a very small number of administrators. The goal is to empanel a standing committee of people that could act as peers, with a subset of the committee tasked with evaluating a specific case when it arose. Every effort would be made to select the subset of the committee so as to avoid conflicts of interest with regard to the particular case. Those involved in the case would not know which members of the standing committee were selected for the evaluation, and those selected would not know the identities of those involved in the case. The document proposing the establishment of this panel indicates that faculty selected to evaluate a case are responsible for reporting conflicts of interest, but the COR Chair noted that this might be difficult since the committee members are not informed of the identities of the individuals involved in the case. The defenders of the proposal indicated that it was very important to have anonymity, and, if a conflict of interest was discovered by a committee member during the evaluation process, that member would then be required to declare it.

- b. UCORP Meeting – February 13, 2017
- i. This will be added to the Chair’s Report for the next COR meeting.

II. Consent Calendar

- a. The February 8, 2017 Minutes were approved as presented.
- b. The February 22, 2017 Agenda was approved as presented.

III. Sierra Nevada Research Institute (SNRI) ORU Review Committee

- a. SNRI is communicating with the review committee to schedule their site visit. VC-ORED Traina asked COR members if there is interest in meeting with the review committee before the site visit. Such a meeting could be scheduled before the site visit and would allow COR to provide guidance concerning the issues that the review committee was charged to explore. Such guidance would augment a standard list of questions that the review committee will receive. Chair Noelle suggested this topic be addressed at a later COR meeting, once the self-study is available. This approach would allow COR to think about whether they have general questions for the reviewers to address in their report and whether or not COR wants to meet with the reviewers.

IV. [Survey of Faculty Concerning Staff Support for Extramural Funding Efforts](#)

- a. As discussed during the Chair's Report, the survey report will be distributed to faculty, soon.

V. [Center for the Humanities ORU Proposal](#)

- a. We are still awaiting a revised proposal from the Center for the Humanities that meets the systemwide requirements for ORU proposals. Chair Noelle has not yet had the opportunity to have a conversation with the Provost or other bodies regarding the general status of available funding for the establishment of ORUs, and asked for COR members to provide their recommendations on how to best approach the topic. A member noted that, generally, what the Center for the Humanities proposed to do was to disseminate grant money to graduate students and faculty in the Humanities. Given

this fact, it was suggested that these funds might best be distributed through the senate faculty research grants program, so as to the benefit research across the campus. Chair Noelle expressed his opinion that the original proposal draft focused too much on acquiring funding for ongoing activities, rather than justifying the establishment of a new ORU.

VI. Administering the Academic Senate Faculty Research Grants Program

- a. Recalling the discussion from the previous COR meeting, Chair Noelle noted that there had been discussion about a template being generated to facilitate both the review process and to provide feedback to the proposal author(s). He also asked the committee to consider the possibility of subdividing the available funds into multiple subprograms, rather than the past practice of funding all proposals from a single fund but allowing for two different types of proposals (e.g., "Seed Funding" and "Research Acceleration") with different evaluation criteria.

A member voiced concern that the template would create a lot of work by reviewers, all for grants that are of a relatively small size. It was suggested that such a template could not make up for the fact that proposal rankings will likely continue to be made by non-experts who do not have a clear understanding what is being requested. Another member asked if feedback for the proposal author(s) would be asked of faculty reviewers. The Chair noted that, in the past, proposal authors have lamented the lack of feedback on submitted proposals. Also, such feedback has been cited as a way to provide some guidance to junior faculty.

A member suggested that school executive committees be explicitly asked to indicate how they weighted the various evaluation criteria, as well as scoring each proposal in terms of each criterion, providing some guidance to COR when they generate the final rankings. The separate criteria scores could also be correlated with the overall rankings that the schools assign to proposals, empirically determining the effective weight of each criterion when determining the overall quality assessment by each school.

The Chair polled the membership for agreement concerning the generation of an evaluation template, and the committee members, instead, indicated that including more explicit language within the call for proposals would be sufficient.

The Chair then asked the committee to reconsider the size of individual awards. He noted that some programs on other campuses offer easily acquired small awards, while other programs fund fewer grants with larger budgets, thus making the awards more competitive. A member called attention to an additional benefit of receiving an award – generating a sense of support and a CV entry. VC-ORED Traina noted that making the grants more competitive can hurt new faculty, who are less experienced in proposal writing. A member asked, in the future when the faculty research grants program budget might be larger, if it would be possible to deliver larger awards. VC-ORED Traina noted that the current campus funding model shows growth in discretionary funding, but it is unlikely that the pot of money for this program would expand.

Member Stephen Wooding volunteered to produce a revised call for proposals, including a table of criteria. This call is to be reviewed at the next COR meeting.

- VII. [Senate Awards - Distinguished Early Career Research and Distinction in Research](#)**
- a. COR will be responsible for forming a subcommittee with a minimum of 3 faculty, having a balanced representation of academic areas, to review the nominations and select awardees. Chair Noelle suggested the formation of two separate review groups of three COR members, one group for each of the two awards. If a COR member is nominated for an award, they would be placed on the committee for the other award in order to avoid any conflicts of interest. Chair Noelle asked members to self-identify their interest to work on one of the award subcommittees, indicating that this would be further discussed at the next meeting of the committee.
- VIII. [Proposals for Five New Academic Units in the School of Engineering](#)**
- a. Chair Noelle pointed out that materials were still forthcoming concerning this issue, suggesting that COR wait for these materials before producing a response. This topic will be added to a future COR meeting agenda.
- IX. Purchasing and Research – Ramen Saha**
- a. This will be added as a future agenda item.
- X. [UCOP Initiative - NASA AMES](#) - VC-ORED Traina**
- a. This will be added to the next COR meeting agenda.
- XI. Systemwide Review Items**
- a. [Guide to Senate Committee Membership & Executive Session](#)
 - i. This will be added to the next COR meeting agenda.
 - b. [Draft Presidential Unmanned Aircraft System \(UAS\) Policy](#)
 - i. This will be added to the next COR meeting agenda.
- XII. Upcoming Business**
- a. Identify AY 2016-2017 High Priority Issues for COR
 - b. Future Funding of Senate Faculty Grants Program
 - c. ORU Proposal - Center for Human Adaptive Systems and Environments (CHASE)
 - d. ORU Proposal Initiation Issues
 - e. Blum Center reorganization
 - f. Monitoring Progress of the 2020 Project
- XIII. Other Business**

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 12:04 PM.

Attest:

David Noelle, COR Chair