COMMITTEE ON RESEARCH
ANNUAL REPORT
2015-2016

TO THE MERCED DIVISION OF THE ACADEMIC SENATE

In academic year 2015-2016, the Committee on Research (COR) met 11 times and conducted business via teleconference, email, and in-person meetings in order to conduct business with respect to its duties as outlined in UCM Senate Bylaw II.IV.3.B. The issues that COR considered and acted on this year are described as follows:

Consultation and Review

Consultation with Provost/EVC Peterson and VCORED Traina
o   Throughout the academic year, COR members benefited from updates on various research-related issues from Provost/EVC Peterson and VCORED Traina, an ex-officio committee member. Major topics of consultation between COR and VCORED included the distribution of indirect cost return funds, Senate faculty grant awards. The VCORED also provided updates to COR throughout the year on discussion topics at the Council of Vice Chancellors.

Future Campus Research Infrastructure
o   COR members discussed the need for increased transparency from the schools and the Office of Research (OoR) regarding the planning and development for future campus research infrastructure, specifically faculty grant support. COR supported the efforts of OoR in requesting additional staff and funding to facilitate the projected growth as publicized in Project 2020. However, COR recognized a possible gap between the grant functions supported centrally from the Research Development Services (RDS) office and what will be supported by the schools. In light of faculty agitation due to the absence of any announcement of this gap in service, COR requested a more transparent plan be developed in cooperation with the three schools and RDS, ideally to include faculty consultation. COR stated their willingness to provide the required faculty input and requested enhanced interactions with the VCORED to improve communication and planning between the schools and the Research Development Services office.

Senate Faculty Grants
o   COR was successful in requesting and receiving an increase in the total amount of funds, to $175,000, and this year, in an effort to reduce disparities between schools and remove ambiguities, the committee trialed a new structure to categorize grants: "Seed" grants for new projects, and "Research Acceleration" grants, intended for specific, critical needs to finish a research project. COR was able to fund 29 out of the 33 proposals received.

Limited Submission Policy
o   COR submitted for review a draft policy on evaluating proposals for limited submission competitions. Committee members reviewed a memo from the SNS Executive Committee which included a suggestion of eliminating school-level input. COR felt strongly that school-level input is necessary for discipline-specific expertise to be employed in the review process. COR also noted that the timeline has been moved forward to accommodate the extra time for school review. The policy was approved by VCORED Traina and adopted by Research Development Services.

Senate Awards
o   COR members reviewed nominations for the "Distinction in Research" and the "Early Career Research" awards, selecting one winner per award.

Campus Review Items
o   CCGA Proposals.
    o   Management of Innovation, Sustainability, and Technology (MIST). COR endorsed the proposal but had several concerns, including a lack of clarity as to what typical avenues for employment for "Ph.D.s in Management" are, lack of clarity about how the listed graduate numbers will be sustained, how standards across the program will be maintained consistently, with such a heavy reliance on graduate offerings from other groups, and a concern about the implication that faculty are "entitled" to a certain number of Teaching Assistants, when this is dependent on enrollment number policies in effect.
    o   Public Health. COR approved the CCGA proposal in "Public Health for the Ph.D. and M.S. Degrees".

o   Endorsement of LASC Memo on Library Funding. COR joined the Committee on Library and Scholarly Communications (LASC) in requesting increased funding and additional resources for the UC Merced Library, to align with the mission of a research university.

o   Faculty Equity Advisor (FEA). The Committee on Diversity & Equity shared a proposal for a new Faculty Equity Advisor to be implemented during faculty hiring. COR recognized the importance of diverse pools of candidates for faculty selections, but had concerns about the proposal, which were shared with DivCo.

o   Endowed Chair Proposal. The Committee on Diversity & Equity shared a proposal for the "Selection and Appointment of Endowed Chairs". COR members has no comments on this proposal.

o   Sierra Nevada Research Institute (SNRI). In Fall 2016, COR will be reviewing the Sierra Nevada Research Institute.

o   Organized Research Unity (ORU) Policy. COR members reviewed the ORU policy from UC San Diego. COR recommended that, for all other research units that are not ORUs, the Provost's policy on Centers be adapted for use. Additionally, the Chair recommended that the comprehensive policies on the establishment and review of research units, drafted in AY 13-14 and approved by the Senate, be used as a handbook for the future.

o   COR plans to work with the administration on indirect cost return, with the hope of using returns to promote the university's research mission.

Systemwide Review Items
o   APM Revisions. COR did not have any comments regarding several proposed revisions to APM, as requested by the Division Council.

o   University Committee on Research Policy (UCORP) Updates. UCORP discussed the following major issues this academic year: funding and policy development for Multi-Campus Research Units, the new position of "Senior Vice President for Research, Innovation, and Entrepreneurship", reporting

to President Napolitano, discussions on the openness of research, revision to the "Common Rule for the Protection of Human Subjects" policy.

Respectfully submitted,

COR members
Ajay Gopinathan, Chair and UCORP representative (SNS)
Steve Nicholson, Vice Chair (SSHA)
Miguel Carreira-Perpinan (SOE)
Ramen Saha (SNS)
Michael Scheibner (SNS)
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Ex-Officio
Samuel Traina, VC Research and Economic Development (SOE)

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