

**Committee on Research (COR)**  
**Minutes of Meeting**  
**May 7, 2014**

Pursuant to call, the Committee on Research met at 9:30 am on May 7, 2014, in Room 324 of the Kolligian Library, Chair Ruth Mostern presiding.

I. Indirect Cost Return

Prior to this meeting, COR drafted a request to Vice Chancellor for Business and Administrative Services Michael Reese and Vice Chancellor for Planning and Budget Dan Feitelberg pertaining to specific issues about indirect cost return (ICR). Vice Chancellor Feitelberg pointed out the timeliness of this conversation, as the campus is currently trying to budget for faculty start up and determining how to maximize unrestricted funds so that the campus can be flexible and have more choices.

Vice Chancellor Reese provided a brief background on ICR including the use of funding streams; the function of the funding streams was to provide campuses autonomy on how to spend their funds. However, we must decide what works for Merced. A new Controller has been appointed and a new AVC for Finance will soon begin so Merced will have a fresh start with reevaluating ICR.

Reese and Feitelberg requested the background on the issues surrounding faculty start up funds. COR members indicated that if start up funds are moved to non-research related purposes, the equivalent amount of money should be cycled back into the campus research enterprise. Start up funds themselves do not have to fund the research mission directly. The reason why many faculty hold on to their start up funds beyond the normal time period is that there is a lack of unit/departmental, unrestricted funding available for faculty. Faculty would eventually like to move towards autonomous graduate groups with their own funding rather than hold on to start up and make continued requests to the Provost for start up extension. Faculty are unable to conduct short-term research projects because there is no funding pool. They cannot receive funding from federal sources for a six-month project so faculty are in need of bridge funding. In addition, faculty feel compelled to keep some start up funds aside for equipment repair. While the Senate continues to maintain its annual faculty research grants program, the amount of funding allocated to this program by the Provost has not risen in proportion to the growth in

faculty numbers. COR received many meritorious, interdisciplinary, collaborative proposals this year but only 17 of 51 proposals were funded.

COR members suggested to Vice Chancellors Reese and Feitelberg that unrestricted funds could be allocated towards the Senate faculty grants program, ORUs or CRUs, deans, or graduate groups. In response to the Vice Chancellors' inquiry on the pros and cons of these allocations, COR members responded that it depends on what the campus decides it wants to accomplish and incentivize.

Vice Chancellor Reese acknowledged that what faculty want in a future ICR allocation is flexibility, predictability, and transparency. VCR Traina announced that he spoke with the Provost recently and the Provost's office plans to draft a proposed ICR model this summer which will be circulated to Senate faculty and administration.

Vice Chancellors Reese and Feitelberg stated their desire to continue this conversation with COR as well as the new Controller and the AVC for Finance.

**ACTION:** COR will draft a memo to Vice Chancellors Reese and Feitelberg summarizing today's conversation. In addition, another meeting will be scheduled in mid-August with COR, Reese and Feitelberg, the new Controller, and the new AVC for Finance.

## II. Consent Calendar

**ACTION:** Today's agenda and the April 23 meeting minutes were approved as presented.

## III. Campus Review Items

Prior to this meeting, COR reviewed SSHA's proposed minor in Community Research and Service. After a brief discussion, COR members voted to endorse the proposal.

**ACTION:** Committee analyst will transmit the endorsement memo to the Senate Chair.

Prior to this meeting, per Division Council's request, COR reviewed the memo from the Senate committee on Faculty Welfare, Diversity, and Academic Freedom suggesting that the limited number of new faculty lines next year be allocated according to diversity considerations. After a discussion, COR members agreed that diversity is essential to research excellence; when faculty create their 2020 strategic academic focusing proposals, they should be asked to include information about measures to expand faculty. However, in light of the Provost's May 1 letter to faculty about the limited number of new FTE lines for next year, COR members believe that any competitive process to allocate such limited resources at this point in time would be a significant burden to faculty with little impact on diversity given the small number of lines in play. The best way to support the campus's research enterprise is to develop thoughtful, long-term strategic academic focusing plans that include diversity considerations.

**ACTION:** Committee analyst will circulate a draft memo to committee members for review and approval before transmitting a final memo to the Senate Chair.

#### IV. Systemwide Review Items

COR members briefly discussed the request to review the proposed extension to supplement to military pay for UC employees on active duty. Members also discussed the memo from the University Committee on Academic Freedom (UCAF) regarding WASC encroachment on faculty's ownership of curriculum.

**ACTION:** Committee analyst will transmit memos to the Senate Chair stating the following: 1) COR has no comments on the supplement to military pay and 2) regarding the UCAF memo, COR supports the campus research enterprise and shared governance.

#### V. AY 13-14 Committee Accomplishments and AY 14-15 Planning

In its first year of existence, COR was proactive and set the stage for future issues. The major accomplishments by the committee this year included the comprehensive set of revised policies on the establishment and review of research units, a proposed model for indirect cost return, revisions to the Senate faculty grants competition criteria, and assisting to create the campus research safety committee to ensure lab safety across campus.

The ongoing issues that next year's committee will address include: the possible establishment of a Senate standing committee on Library and Scholarly Communications to address the open access policy and other research-related issues (Division Council needs to vote on this in fall 2014); continued revisions to the process on the Senate faculty grants program and additional requests to the Provost for increased funding proportionate to the number of faculty; lab safety via updates from the campus research safety committee; indirect cost return; research units policies which, when approved, will include review of existing units; and recharge policies (the current process is cumbersome and delayed).

The new issues for next year's COR will include: review of shared facilities (with RDS Director Susan Carter); review of the grants preparation and management system with Research Accounting staff and Sponsored Projects staff; Institutional Review Board and Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee issues; and a joint meeting with COR, Graduate Council and the new Vice Provost for Graduate Education and Dean of the Graduate Division.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 11:00 am.

Attest: Ruth Mostern, Chair

Minutes prepared by: Simrin Takhar, Senate Senior Analyst