

COMMITTEE ON ACADEMIC PLANNING AND RESOURCE ALLOCATION (CAPRA)
ANNUAL REPORT
AY 2020-2021

To the Merced Division of the Academic Senate:

The Committee on Academic Planning and Resource Allocation (CAPRA) held a total of 16 regularly scheduled in-person meetings and conducted some business via email with respect to its duties as outlined in UC Merced's Senate Bylaw [II.IV.1](#).

CAPRA also benefited from regular consultation with the EVC/Provost and Interim CFO who attended meetings this academic year.

Areas of Focus

Academic Planning

This year, the campus underwent Phases II and III of the multi-year academic planning process in which CAPRA played an integral role.

The academic planning timeline as determined by the EVC/Provost in an earlier academic year was as follows:

- Phase II, fall 2020 – CAPRA reviews the School/Division draft five-year plans which they develop using the criteria outlined in the report from the campus Academic Planning Working Group drafted in a previous academic year. CAPRA sends its input to the EVC/Provost and Interim CFO.
- Phase III, spring 2021 – Schools and Divisions will submit their final academic plans to the EVC/Provost and CAPRA by the end of May. At the beginning of fall 2021, CAPRA will evaluate the final academic plans and makes recommendations to the EVC/Provost and Interim CFO on the allocation of sums of money. The EVC/Provost would have the final decision on resource allocation.

In November 2020, CAPRA evaluated the following School and Division academic plans that were submitted in accordance with Phase II of campus academic planning:

- School of Social Sciences, Humanities, and Arts
- School of Engineering
- School of Natural Sciences
- Future Ernest & Julio Gallo School of Management
- Graduate Division
- Undergraduate Education

- Library

CAPRA submitted its specific feedback on each draft academic plan to Interim CFO Schnier on November 13, 2020. In its cover memo, CAPRA noted that two priorities for the university moving forward are likely to involve increased undergraduate enrollment and an increase in research dollars to stabilize our campus budget. CAPRA hoped that this information would assist the Schools and Divisions in prioritizing their goals and strategies over the near and long term. CAPRA also recommended that School and Division goals should be prioritized, measurable, and strategies should be action-oriented and specific. The strategies must also articulate the associated costs, should include an explanation of the activities that Schools and Divisions expect to undertake to execute the strategies, and should be clear about who is carrying out the strategy, e.g. department, dean's office, faculty committee, etc. CAPRA also recommended an articulation of what processes each School and Division will conduct to achieve desired outcomes in diversity, equity, and inclusion. Finally, CAPRA recommended that there be uniformity across Schools and Divisions in the definition and usage of *goal* (a broad, general statement of intended outcomes or results) and *strategy* (a plan of action created to achieve a goal or a vision or to address a strategic issue) in the revised academic plans for Phase III of academic planning.

On December 14, 2020, EVC/Provost Camfield added his recommendations to CAPRA's and his office transmitted both sets of input on Phase II of academic planning to the leads of each School and Division. The EVC/Provost and CAPRA's Phase II recommendations are available on the campus [academic planning website](#).

School and Divisions submitted their Phase III final academic plans to the EVC/Provost and CAPRA the end of May 2021. CAPRA will evaluate these plans at the beginning of the fall 2021 semester.

Strategic Planning

CAPRA was informed by the EVC/Provost's office this year that the new Chancellor requested the formulation of a ten-year campus strategic plan to be implemented at the beginning of AY 2021-22. Staff in the EVC/Provost's office emphasized to CAPRA that strategic and academic planning will occur concurrently. The School and Divisions' final academic plans submitted in spring 2021 should inform strategic planning. Strategic planning is intended to align efforts across campus, guide resource allocation, communicate the campus's intentions to external stakeholders, and facilitate philanthropy. The Strategic Planning Governance Committee, which included faculty representatives, two of which were on CAPRA, was charged with providing oversight of the 2020-21 strategic planning process and will make a recommendation to the EVC/Provost who will in turn make a recommendation to the Chancellor on the final, campus-reviewed strategic plan.

CAPRA expressed their concern about the strategic planning process given the amount of work that faculty had already put in to develop their academic plans. Academic planning drives the university and CAPRA members were concerned that resources may be diverted away from the research mission and towards another unit on campus whose goals are different from the research and teaching missions.

In spring 2021, CAPRA, along with all Senate committees and School Executive Committees, reviewed the UC Merced Strategic Plan 2021-2031 as presented by the administration. CAPRA acknowledged that a great deal of work has gone into crafting a document that both reflects the academic planning process that CAPRA helped to lead, while bringing the other campus divisions, units, and Schools into the University's plan. CAPRA's first recommendation was that the document more explicitly acknowledge the work of the Academic Planning Working Group and the role that it played in propelling the plan for the University. CAPRA also detailed several broad themes that they urged the administration to consider. A few of these themes were:

- The plan was too detailed to operate as a guiding framework for the University. The Strategic Plan for the University should lay out the mission, vision, and goals of the University. It should include, in an appendix, the measures that the University will use for tracking progress. Divisions, units, and Schools should be encouraged to look to the appendix to determine which measures are most relevant for them. Strategic initiatives should be developed by Divisions, units, and Schools and should be clearly connected to the metrics.
- As written the Plan does too little to describe and highlight the central role that research plays at our University.
- The Strategic Plan's goal "Cultivate a Culture of Dignity and Respect for All" appears to be unsupported by the measures and initiatives that are listed. Demographic diversity should be broadened beyond California's population. Finally, the sub goals should be more explicit about creating a supportive community that values diverse perspectives and experiences and is attentive to systemic inequalities.

Campus Budget

This academic year, CAPRA consulted with the Interim CFO and the AVC for Financial Planning & Analysis on the campus budget. In fall 2020, they presented to CAPRA their financial simulation model for the campus to aid with budget strategies. This model included the campus's revenue sources, cost structure and debt service. Interim CFO Schnier provided an overview of campus revenues and expenditures, an overview of the approach being developed to model the financial impacts of COVID-19 and illustrated the pre-and-post pandemic financials and the debt structure. The campus has a number of positive actions (e.g. revenue generation) that it can take to mitigate the impacts of the pandemic. Taking such actions can reduce the need for cost cutting measures, i.e. payroll reductions and non-salary reductions. The campus had a

structural deficit before the COVID-19 pandemic and the pandemic has exacerbated it. Given the growth capacity for the campus, there are ways to use revenue generation to mitigate the impacts, including enrollment increases, student success (i.e. retention), new programs (primarily at the undergraduate level), and cohort tuition. Both the Interim CFO and the EVC/Provost emphasized that enrollment is the main factor that can change the campus's budget outlook.

In spring 2021, Interim CFO Schnier gave a presentation to CAPRA on the total operating budget of the campus. The campus's current revenue model relies extensively on two main drivers: state funding and student enrollment. He discussed the amount of core funds, contracts and grants, auxiliaries, gifts and endowment, and other areas. The campus's core revenues come from two primary sources: state appropriations and tuition revenues.

EVC/Provost Camfield and Interim CFO Schnier also consulted with CAPRA on the future campus budget call process. The campus budget call is intended to move away from the ad hoc process of filling staff positions as the campus is transitioning from crisis budget management to a long-term budget process. He discussed with CAPRA the extent to which the committee wants to be involved in the future campus budget call. CAPRA debated whether it wants to review all budget call materials, deliberate, and then transmit its recommendations through the committee chair or whether it wishes to choose a committee representative to participate in meetings of the committee/council that is charged with making budget recommendations to the EVC/Provost.

Interim CFO Schnier shared with CAPRA his research on how other UC campus Senates are involved in their campus budget calls. One campus Senate is heavily involved by reviewing all budget requests and makes recommendations based on whether the requests fulfill the campus mission. Another campus Senate's leadership meets with its Provost and CFO to discuss academic priorities before the budget call process begins.

CAPRA agreed that it would need to first see what the UC Merced budget call looks like before it can judge how the committee would want to be involved. The formulation of a future campus budget call would require input from all of Divisional Council as such a call would affect undergraduate and graduate education, the campus research mission, etc.

Evaluation of Proposals for Academic Programs/Schools/ORUs

This issue arose from CAPRA's various discussions about academic planning and the future campus budget call. CAPRA finds it challenging to review proposals for new academic programs, Schools, and ORUs on a one-off basis and would prefer to review several proposals at the same time. This would require the campus to create a timeline for the submission of proposals for new Schools, ORUs, and academic programs. CAPRA members discussed the possibility of adopting a review process similar to that of the NSF in which the committee would utilize a ranking system when evaluating new proposals. Such a system may be necessary in the absence of budget authority. CAPRA members suggested that cross-School ORU proposals and cross-School strategic investments should roll up from the VCORED's office and proposals for

new Schools should emanate from the Schools' five-year academic plans. CAPRA would essentially review the proposals in the context of their "home" unit so that the committee can evaluate the proposals' intellectual merit and whether the proposals align with the campus's academic and strategic planning goals. CAPRA will revisit this issue in AY 2021-2022 when it sees the campus budget call and the School and Divisions' final academic plans.

Consultation

CAPRA benefited from regular consultation with the EVC/Provost on a variety of topics this academic year, mainly academic and strategic planning, plans for the future campus budget call, updates on the fall 2021 reopening of campus in the context of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, the status of research buildings and research relaunch, and the impact of the state budget on the UC.

Representation on Campus Committees

CAPRA had representation on the Periodic Review Oversight Committee, the Joint Council, and the Strategic Planning Governance Committee.

University Committee on Planning and Budget (UCPB) updates

The CAPRA chair represented the committee on UCPB and kept CAPRA members updated on topics raised by this systemwide committee. The major topics of discussion on UCPB this year were the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on the UC budget, UC retirement program, rebenching, and the reopening of campus research operations, as well as several reviews of new graduate programs on various UC campuses.

Campus Review Items

- CAPRA reviewed and commented on:
 - Proposed name change of the Chemistry & Chemical Biology department
 - Proposed name change of the Literature and Languages department
 - Pre-Proposal to Establish the Ernest and Julio School of Management
 - Proposed revisions to the UCM Senate Divisional Bylaws
 - Proposed distribution of Indirect Cost Recovery on Research Grants
 - Proposed Academic Planning Targets
 - ORU Proposal – UC Merced Community and Labor Center
 - Critical Race and Ethnic Studies Minor Proposal
 - Proposal for a Master of Data Science and Analytics Program
 - Proposal for a Major in Writing Studies
 - Proposed Master's in Public Health Program
 - Proposed Materials Science Engineering Minor

- UC Merced Draft Strategic Plan 2021-2031
- LASC Memo on Library Budget Cuts

Systemwide Review Items

- CAPRA reviewed and commented on:
 - Proposed, Systemwide Proposed Curtailment Program 2020-21
 - Proposed Presidential Policy, Business and Finance Bulletin, IS-12 IT Recovery
 - Innovative Learning Technology Initiative (ILTI) Review
 - Faculty Salary Scales Task Force Report
 - Proposed revisions to Presidential Policy UC-PS-20-0489-BUS-43 Purchases of Goods and Services; Supply Chain Management
 - Proposed Presidential Policy of Classification of Gifts and Sponsored Awards
 - Proposed Presidential Policy SARS-CoV-2 (COVID-19) Vaccination Program
 - Proposed Presidential Policy - Fee Policy for Graduate Student In Absentia Registration
 - Presidential Campus Safety Plan

Respectfully submitted:

CAPRA members:

Patti LiWang, Chair (SNS) – UCPB representative
 Sarah Kurtz, Vice Chair (SOE)
 LeRoy Westerling, Senate Vice Chair (SOE)
 Jessica Trounstine (SSHA)
 Jayson Beaster-Jones (SSHA)
 Kevin Mitchell (SNS)
 Reza Ehsani (SOE)

Student Representative:

Shayna Bennett, GSA
 ASUCM representative - none

Senate Staff:

Simrin Takhar