Committee on Academic Planning and Resource Allocation (CAPRA)
Minutes of Meeting
January 31, 2023

Pursuant to call, the Committee on Academic Planning and Resource Allocation met at 12:30 pm on January 31, 2023 in via Zoom. Chair Kevin Mitchell presiding.

I.   Consultation with Professor Suzanne Sindi
   A. Data Science proposal (School of Natural Sciences). The proposal was linked on today's agenda.

   Professor Sindi presented a series of slides on the data science proposal. The School of Natural Sciences (SNS) is creating a new Data Science and Computing major to prepare students in core data science skills and the ability to apply those skills to domain-anchored questions. The proposed major is modeled after the successful Data Science major at UC Berkeley and would build on UC Merced's strengths: 1) Multidisciplinary research and teaching, 2) Connecting theory to applications, 3) Emphasis on communication and impact, and 4) Commitment to inclusiveness and ethical outcomes. The job market for Data Scientists is increasing rapidly, and similar majors at other UC campuses have been very popular. Professor Sindi explained in her presentation that the backbone of the proposed major is a set of ten core courses that teach the mathematical, statistical and computational tools and ethical principles of Data Science. The Data Science and Computing Minor is designed to be accessible to students all majors. The authors of the Data Science proposal collaborated with the UC Berkeley Data Science team on a pathways and interdisciplinary proposal to the California Learning Lab program in Data Science Education.

   Professor Sindi pointed out that the proposed major would require relatively few courses. The courses are based on curriculum that has either already been taught at UC Merced or the proposers can leverage with the existing UC Berkeley curriculum. CAPRA Chair Mitchell asked about the necessary faculty FTE lines. Professor Sindi replied that Applied Math is currently attempting to hire three new faculty members; if they are successfully hired, and assuming the campus projections for this proposed major are accurate, then the program will not require additional faculty for the next few years. A CAPRA member asked about the transfer pathways and the referral pool. Professor Sindi stated that Berkeley and Merced data science personnel attended an event together to set up connections and Berkeley is working on transfer pathways between its campus and community colleges. This is why it is a good thing for the proposed UC Merced major curriculum to match Berkeley's as mentioned earlier so it meets the transfer standard. With regard to the referral pool, Professor Sindi pointed out that the campus has data science emphasis tracks, but potential students often do not see that and instead only look into the applied math major. Professor Sindi suggested that the campus needs to elevate its emphasis tracks and make them more visible to potential students.

A CAPRA member asked for elaboration on the data ethics element of the proposed major and pointed out that Cognitive Sciences is also developing in this area. Professor Sindi replied that she and her colleagues are very interested in teaching data ethics, and they plan to offer cross-listed courses. Another CAPRA member pointed out that it appears that several data science tracks are being proposed at the same time and he encouraged collaboration and interfacing between them. Professor Sindi confirmed that she and her colleagues are collaborating and communicating with those faculty in other Schools and programs and that the courses will be crossed listed. But she also pointed out that there are differences within data science: the domain that researchers work in influence the algorithms, coding, and data bases they use and the skills they need. It also depends on what computing skills researchers use, how big their data is, and what their fundamental, technical skills are. All data science study needs an ethics component but having multiple data science tracks is not uncommon.

A CAPRA member asked about the inclusion of social sciences in the proposed data science major. Professor Sindi responded that she and her colleagues have created a pathway to build in the social sciences after speaking with faculty in the social sciences.

CAPRA Chair Mitchell asked for the status of the data science proposal. Professor Sindi answered that she submitted the proposal to the SNS Executive Committee. It will then be sent to the dean, and then to the Senate for a campus review. CAPRA Chair Mitchell noted that there is another data science related proposal that will be reviewed in the School of Engineering. Professor Sindi replied that she and her colleagues wrote support letters for the other proposal and their proposers did the same for the SNS data science proposal. The two groups are communicating.

Professor Sindi ended her consultation by informing CAPRA that it is critical that the campus provide the necessary computational infrastructure for the proposed major and additional support for Unix. The resource needs are listed in the proposal.

II.   Consultation with EVC/Provost Camfield and Interim VC/CFO Schnier
    A. New funding streams coming to the campus outlined by the Chancellor

CAPRA Chair Mitchell asked EVC/Provost Camfield to clarify the new funding for UC Merced as mentioned by the Chancellor at an event last week.

EVC/Provost Camfield stated that during last year's annual budget strategy session with UCOP, UCOP leadership asked how it can help UC Merced grow. The result was that UCOP will provide one-time seed funding to UC Merced to build capacity in order to enroll more students. Funding will be provided for: hiring new faculty, building more programs in order to increase the campus's revenue base, and hiring more research and general staff to support faculty research and relieve faculty of administrative burdens so they can focus on the core university mission.

UCOP is also providing a $10 million line of credit to support faculty research and hire research staff. This funding will go to ORED, the Schools, and other areas to bolster the research mission. This funding must be repaid to UCOP. EVC/Provost Camfield stated that he hopes the campus grants overhead will substantially increase so it will be easier for the campus to repay this loan. Interim VC/CFO Schnier added that he is developing performance metrics including student credit hours and requests CAPRA's help this semester.

CAPRA Chair Mitchell summarized the various new funding sources as follows (which he gathered from the Chancellor's remarks at an event last week):

- $20 million for site improvement for medical education. Approved by the UC Regents.
- $14.5 million for debt service for the medical education building. Approved by the Governor.
- $31 million times three, to be released in three tranches, for campus expansion. The first tranche is to be used to build the future COB 3 which would house most of SSHA. This money is being provided directly to UC Merced and is not a loan that needs to be repaid. There is no debt for this building. The timeline for the groundbreaking is likely 2024. EVC/Provost Camfield cautioned that it will be a lengthy process which requires issuing an RFP for an architect, then having the faculty and staff consult with the architect. He mentioned that a consultant was on campus recently and held a charette with faculty. At this time, EVC/Provost Camfield is unsure where on campus COB 3 will be built. A CAPRA member strongly encouraged speaking with faculty to ensure their needs will be met in the new building. Faculty in the BSP building are spending a lot of money fixing things that were incorrect from the beginning.
- ACE funding. $24 million over five years from UCOP for UC Merced programmatic expansion. Interim VC/CFO Schnier stated that $21 million will be used for new programs and $3 million will be used for Innovation and Entrepreneurship (I&E). These are one-time funds. This is not a loan, so no repayment is necessary. EVC/Provost Camfield informed CAPRA that UCOP does not provide this money to UC Merced up front. Rather, the campus has to prove how it will commit the funding and explain how the campus will accomplish its goals and then UCOP will release the funding. CAPRA Chair Michell asked whether this means the campus cannot simply provide each School a pot of money to hire faculty as they see fit which was the campus plan moving forward. EVC/Provost Camfield confirmed that unfortunately, this is accurate. Even though the campus intended to give Schools a pot of money and the authority to allocate as they see fit, this funding is more or less "managed" by UCOP.

EVC/Provost Camfield informed CAPRA that the campus will conduct more staff hiring than faculty hiring next year. For spring 2023, the campus needs to decide on the staffing needs to best support the faculty. The plan is to hire the new staff over the summer so they are in place for AY 23-24. After that, the campus can focus on determining which faculty FTE lines

to allocate. He also pointed out that student credit hours are not the only way to generate income. There are other ways, such as student retention and indirect cost return on grants. Interim VC/CFO Schnier has done some modeling on staff support and the Schools will receive additional staff. Two CAPRA members strongly encouraged the EVC/Provost to provide staff support directly to the departments rather than the Schools/Deans' offices. EVC/Provost Camfield asked for CAPRA's assistance in understanding what the staffing levels should be. He also asked for assistance in determining which staff should be "localized" (assigned to departments) and which can be centralized/clustered (Schools/Deans offices).

Senate Vice Chair Keske strongly encouraged the EVC/Provost to remember the staffing needs of the Senate Office.

EVC/Provost Camfield emphasized that UC Merced needs new programs that will bring in more students. He suggested that the name of a program can influence potential students' decisions. It also matters how programs are coded in the Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS) because it is seen by marketers who do national rankings. He stated that the campus must get savvier about student demand.

A CAPRA member pointed out that some faculty are not on board with the proliferation of new programs when their own, existing programs are under-resourced. VP Spitzmueller replied that she understands why there is a lack of buy-in and she stated that campus leadership will not cannibalize existing programs. She pointed out that according to national data for larger institutions, UC Merced is at the bottom in terms of the number of majors that satisfy students. She invites faculty to contact her so she can explain student demand and job prospects. EVC/Provost Camfield emphasized that it is not a zero-sum game.

B. Campus budget call
EVC/Provost Camfield stated that there will be a campus budget call that will have normal components but will also include the aforementioned ACE funding. Given that ORED is receiving money for research support, they will not be submitting a budget request as part of the campus budget call. There will also be a second budget call for faculty FTE lines. The second budget call will require thinking about current program needs, programs that have lost faculty, and how these faculty positions should be replaced. CAPRA Chair Mitchell stated that there is a backlog of faculty FTE lines and asked if the EVC/Provost will bring them back. EVC/Provost Camfield confirmed he will, and those older lines will be available in addition to the new faculty FTE lines made possible by the ACE funding. EVC/Provost Camfield asked for CAPRA's assistance in determining what the criteria should be for faculty FTE lines.

      C. New administrative positions
         Action: Due to time constraints, EVC/Provost Camfield will discuss this topic at the next CAPRA meeting.

III.   Consent Calendar
      A. Today's agenda
      B. January 17 draft meeting minutes

Action: the Consent Calendar was approved as presented.

IV.   Centers Policy

At the December 13 CAPRA meeting, the committee agreed to submit a memo to CoR with specific, requested revisions to the proposed policy on the establishment and review of Centers. CAPRA's previous memo on the proposed Centers policy was linked on today's agenda.

Action: CAPRA Chair Mitchell will take the lead on drafting a memo which he will distribute to CAPRA this week.

V.   Revised Proposal: Masters in Data Science and Analytics (MDSA)
The Graduate Council is inviting CAPRA, CoR, and LASC to review the revised MDSA proposal. Specifically, CAPRA is asked to comment on whether its concerns from the original review in 2021 were addressed in the revised proposal. The revised proposal – and CAPRA's 2021 memo – were linked on today's agenda.

CAPRA identified a lead reviewer.

Action: The lead reviewer's comments will be discussed at the February 14 CAPRA meeting. CAPRA's comments are due to the Graduate Council by Friday, February 17.

VI.   Campus Review Item - *Michael Findlater*
      A. Proposal to create a Department of Electrical Engineering in the School of Engineering.

      The proposal documents, the relevant policy, and the lead reviewer's comments were linked on today's agenda.

      CAPRA briefly discussed the lead reviewer's comments.

      Action: The lead reviewer will send his revised memo to the committee analyst who will distribute to the committee for review and approval. CAPRA's memo is due to the Senate Chair by Friday, February 3.

VII.   Draft Proposal for Faculty and Staff Strike Compensation – Carolyn Jennings

At the January 17 CAPRA meeting, CAPRA members suggested to the EVC/Provost that faculty and staff who had to do additional labor during the strike could complete a form that attests to their extra labor and the university could provide them funding. The EVC/Provost asked for a proposal. The draft proposal was linked on today's agenda.

Action: Due to time constraints, CAPRA will review the draft proposal over email.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 2:00 pm.

Attest: Kevin Mitchell, CAPRA chair