

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, MERCED

BERKELEY • DAVIS • IRVINE • LOS ANGELES • MERCED • RIVERSIDE • SAN DIEGO • SAN FRANCISCO



SANTA BARBARA • SANTA CRUZ

ACADEMIC SENATE, MERCED DIVISION
COMMITTEE ON RESEARCH
MICHAEL SCHEIBNER, CHAIR
mscheibner@ucmerced.edu

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, MERCED
5200 NORTH LAKE ROAD
MERCED, CA 95343
(209) 228-4369

July 13, 2020

To: Tom Hansford, Chair, Division Council

From: Michael Scheibner, Chair, Committee on Research (COR)

Re: Funding Increase for Senate Faculty Grants Program

The Committee on Research (CoR) has been developing a proposal for enhancing the research on campus. Input on this proposal has been solicited from the School Deans, the VPDGE, and Divisional Council during Spring 2020. In a follow-up discussion, APAPB Schnier and I agreed to follow the proposed process of CoR first requesting an increase of the funds to the CoR-administered Senate faculty grants program, followed by CoR refining the details of how the funds are to be made available to the faculty, taking into account the feedback received earlier.

Attached please find the request for an increase of the funds to the faculty grants program for Divisional Council's consideration, as well as the proposal and the feedback received (originally submitted to Divisional Council in April 2020).

cc: Senate Office

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, MERCED

BERKELEY • DAVIS • IRVINE • LOS ANGELES • MERCED • RIVERSIDE • SAN DIEGO • SAN FRANCISCO



SANTA BARBARA • SANTA CRUZ

ACADEMIC SENATE, MERCED DIVISION
COMMITTEE ON RESEARCH
MICHAEL SCHEIBNER, CHAIR
mscheibner@ucmerced.edu

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, MERCED
5200 NORTH LAKE ROAD
MERCED, CA 95343
(209) 228-4369

July 13, 2020

To: Juan Sánchez Muñoz, Chancellor
Gregg Camfield, Executive Vice Chancellor & Provost

From: Michael Scheibner, Chair, Committee on Research (COR)

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Michael Scheibner", is written over the "From:" line.

Re: Funding Increase for Senate Faculty Grants Program

The Committee on Research (CoR) has been administering the Senate faculty grants program, which provides seed funding to the campus research community. Traditionally this program provided awards of up to \$5,000 for single faculty, with the option of teams pooling up to \$20,000. Currently the program receives \$175,000 each year, which amounts to about \$500 per Senate faculty. This amount corresponds to 50% percent of its initial funding level of \$1,000 per Senate faculty.

CoR is requesting that the overall funding level be increased and for future years set to increase automatically with the number of Senate faculty on campus. An annual funding level of \$2,000 per Senate faculty is being recommended. CoR kindly asks that a decision to increase the funding level be made by October 1st 2020, for the committee to have time to shape the next call for proposals accordingly.

In order to determine the funding level needed to promote UC Merced's development into a R1 research institution, and to be in line with the new academic planning structure, CoR has developed a proposal that outlines a potential new structure of the faculty grants program. The proposal also served as a tool to solicit broader campus input from the Deans of the three Schools, the VPDGE, and the standing Senate committees represented on DivCo. The feedback received will be used to refine the details on how the funds will be made available to the faculty once an increase of the program funding level has been approved. This proposal, including feedback received, is attached.

The proposal outlines a two-component structure that would allow faculty to obtain funds for "local" projects and funds for projects with "campus-wide" impact or relevance. For this kind of setup an annual funding level of \$2,000 per Senate faculty would be desirable. This level would be equivalent to restoring the existing faculty grants program to \$1,000 per Senate faculty and provide another \$1,000 per Senate faculty for campus-wide projects, such as shared instrumentation, conceptualization grants for larger scale centers, or programs that serve the broader campus community.

The impacts of COVID-19 on research make an increase of intramural research funding direly needed. Faculty have been spending start-up, grant and other funds to keep their students, postdocs and research staff employed during the lock-down. Federal, state and private funding levels are at risk to decrease due to the economic

impacts. Funding has been directed to combatting COVID-19, diminishing funds for other research areas. Some funding programs (State and private foundations) even have pulled or canceled awards. The restrictions in place to mitigate the spread of COVID-19 certainly slow down research, in some cases they may even force faculty to switch research directions completely. These are just a few examples of the impacts our campus research community is facing. The additional intramural funding requested here can be part of a broader strategy that enables our campus research community to leverage its creativity and potential for innovation for emerging from this crisis strong and competitive and with the thrust needed to continue on the trajectory to becoming a R1 institution.

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, MERCED

BERKELEY • DAVIS • IRVINE • LOS ANGELES • MERCED • RIVERSIDE • SAN DIEGO • SAN FRANCISCO



SANTA BARBARA • SANTA CRUZ

ACADEMIC SENATE, MERCED DIVISION
COMMITTEE ON RESEARCH
MICHAEL SCHEIBNER, CHAIR
mscheibner@ucmerced.edu

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, MERCED
5200 NORTH LAKE ROAD
MERCED, CA 95343
(209) 228-4369

April 7, 2020

To: Tom Hansford, Chair, Division Council

From: Michael Scheibner, Chair, Committee on Research (COR)

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Michael Scheibner", is written over the "From:" line.

Re: LEAP UC Merced Research Initiative

With this memo, CoR transmits, for Division Council's review, a two-part initiative for restructuring and enriching campus-wide research support. The proposal was reviewed and endorsed by the Deans of SNS, SoE, and SSHA, as well as Graduate Council, and VPDGE Zatz.

The first of the two-part initiative concerns the existing Senate faculty grants program. In addition to requesting additional funding for the program, CoR proposes to create two components of the research awards program; one that supports the faculty research activity at the local scale (in the schools/departments) and one that supports campus-wide research activities.

The second of the two-part initiative addresses research workforce development, specifically graduate students. CoR proposes that graduate students – under the existing title Graduate Student Assistant Researcher – may support their research by taking on functions that address critical needs the campus currently has or cannot fulfill. These functions include serving as instrument/facility custodians and taking on departmental/research program support positions.

CoR appreciates Division Council's consideration of this proposal and I look forward to presenting it at the April 15 Division Council meeting.

The next steps will be to incorporate the suggestions made by the Deans, VPDGE Zatz, Graduate Council, and Division Council, and to present the initiative by April 30 to the (Interim) Chancellor, EVC/Provost and the APAPB with requests for:

1. Funding for the Research Awards Program. This is the basis for CoR to work out the specifics of the proposed award programs, taking into account any suggestions and comments received.
2. A mandate to enter a planning process for the establishment of the research workforce and infrastructure development component. The formation of a workgroup with members from CoR, GC, CAPRA, Graduate Division, Office of Research and Economic Development, and Academic Planning & Budget, will be suggested.

cc: Senate Office

Encl (6)

LEAP - Proposal I

Research Awards Program

Submitted to Division Council April 7, 2020

The CoR, with its first of two proposals in an effort to enrich and strengthen the campus-wide research support, is proposing to restructure and re-envision the Faculty Grants Program (FGP), by creating a two-component research awards program.

Background of the FGP:

The FGP was initially endowed with about \$1000 per senate faculty. The program has played an instrumental and essential role in advancing the research programs of senate faculty across campus. The FGP has long been the only mechanism for faculty to receive funds to initiate and try out new ideas. It remains one of very few sources of funding for this kind of research activity. By 2015 the per capita funding level of the FGP has dropped to ~\$700, at which point the CoR requested an increase of the funding level. A fixed increase by \$50k from \$125k to \$175k was granted by the EVC/Provost at that time. Today the per capita funding level of the FGP has dropped to ~\$500 as UC Merced kept hiring new faculty members without adjusting the FGP correspondingly. Just in light of this aspect alone additional funds for the FGP are direly needed and justified.

Other aspects that justify an increase in the budget for the FGP and/or warrant redesign of the overall discretionary research funding structure are:

- The campus has increased in its research diversity
- The campus is at an age where early investments in capital equipment and technology require either replacement or at least maintenance
- The campus is at an age where it needs to prepare itself for mid- to large scale research projects, such as the establishment of centers, institutes and foundries that will offer access to high end research facilities to the campus community as well as industry and other community stakeholders. This often requires a solid basis in research instrumentation on which faculty can demonstrate basic capabilities that are essential for running these endeavors. The scale of these endeavors also requires more planning and conceptualization prior to the proposal stage than small scale proposals.
- Start-up funds expire after 5 years, while the average time to obtain the first grant keep increasing.
- Success rate for extramural funding of novel ideas depends increasingly on the ability to demonstrate that these ideas are viable.
- Extramural funding is tied to specific projects and can't be used for trying out other novel ideas
- Compared to other research intense universities our graduate student population is about 8% low. In addition, a majority of graduate students are supported via teaching appointments.

Over the years, the FGP has been modified frequently with regard on how the proposals are being reviewed, who reviews the proposals and what the deciding criteria are. Main issues with the review process of the program are a) the lack of breadth in expertise on CoR, b) Number of proposals, c) Fairness in allocating the funds equitably across Schools, etc.

Proposed new structure of the CoR-administered Research Awards Program:

Aside from increasing the funding of the FGP, CoR proposes to create two components of the research awards program; one that supports the faculty research activity at the local scale (in the Schools/Departments) and one that supports campus-wide research activities.

Component A: Local scale research support

The CoR will make funds from the RAP available to the Schools for the Schools to disseminate those funds according to the needs in the School. The Schools will be asked to request these funds on an annual basis by providing CoR with a brief (1-2 page) proposal detailing (A) how the funds will be made available to their faculty, (B) how successful impact of these programs is measured and (C) what impact funds from the previous 3 years had. These proposals are expected to be developed in collaboration between the School Deans and the School Executive Committees and/or Department and Graduate Group Chairs. The Schools are given broad flexibility in how they make the funds available to their faculty as long as the following criteria are met:

1. The funds must be used for research activities (e.g., GSR funding, conference travel, materials & supplies, research equipment, etc.)
2. A fraction (at least 10%) of a School's portion of the funds must be allocated to inter-Departmental collaborative projects.
3. To be eligible to receive funds, faculty must either be
 - a. Untenured ladder rank, or
 - b. if tenured, have served on a campus or system-wide senate committee or working group for at least 2 semesters within the past 5 years.¹
4. Conflicts of interests in disseminating the funds must be avoided.

CoR reserves the right to withhold funds and disseminate otherwise, if a School's proposal to disseminate RAP research funds does not adhere to these requirements.

A School may propose to pool the funds of two consecutive years, for example in order to seek proposals from their faculty for larger scale seed projects or larger scale research instrumentation/infrastructure. In such cases the School cannot submit a proposal in response to CoR's funding call in the second year.

Schools may choose to propose a program similar to the current FGP. Additional ideas for disseminating the RAP funds are provided in Appendix A.

Component B: Campus-wide research support

Under this component the CoR will administer award programs that support research activities that cross School or ORU boundaries. Any such programs must comply with the following conditions:

1. The funds must be used for activities that enable, enhance, and/or stimulate research and/or scholarly creativity across School boundaries.
2. To be eligible to receive funds, faculty must either be
 - a. untenured, or
 - b. if tenured, have served on a campus or system-wide senate committee or working group for at least 2 semesters within the past 5 years.¹
3. Conflicts of interests in disseminating the funds must be avoided.

Ideas of such programs are provided in Appendix B.

Estimate of the funds required for the program:

The existing faculty grants program, if restored to and maintained at a funding level of \$1000 per senate faculty, would provide \$5k-seed funding projects for 20% of the faculty each year. That being said it needs

¹ The intent of this eligibility requirement is to broaden the participation of faculty in Senate service, by incentivizing such service through access to research-related funds.

to be taken into account that while \$5k represents significant funding in some disciplines in others it does not cover basic needs. Furthermore, in order to address needs such as that posed by research infrastructure maintenance and development and cross-disciplinary activities, additional funds are needed.

Funding needs for Component A: Local scale research support

A funding level of about \$1000 per senate faculty on average for Component A would be reasonable to start with. Whether this funding level is effective will be monitored and evaluated by CoR through the annual request for funds by the Schools, in which the Schools are asked to provide information on the impact of the programs they ran in the previous years.

Funding needs for Component B: Campus-wide research activities & facilities

The following table summarizes campus-wide programs CoR envisions to run. This includes 3 larger scale programs (\$200k) that will cycle through in a progressive order; from 1. Instrumentation Grants to 2. Research Collaboration Seed Grants to 3. Conceptualization Grants and back to 1. Of the two smaller programs, the Special Opportunity Funds, if not used-up in a particular year, may carry forward and role over to supplement the Campus-Community Communication & Creativity Grants in the next year. For more details on these program ideas please refer to Appendix B.

Funding Program Ideas	Description & Suggestions	Estimated Cost	Frequency
Instrumentation Grants	Acquisition, upgrades and maintenance of shared capital equipment.	\$200,000	Every 3 years
Research Collaboration Seed Grants	Seed grants for the establishment of new research partnerships, which may be on levels ranging from campus-wide to international.	\$200,000	Every 3 years
Conceptualization Grants	Conceptualization of large scale projects	\$200,000	Every 3 years
Campus-Community Communication & Creativity Grants	Collaborative-interdisciplinary projects that creatively place or express research in a different context or make it accessible to new and/or broadened audiences.	\$70,000	Annually
Special Opportunity Funds	Opportunities with short notice, and/or requiring special planning and/or coordination.	\$30,000	Annually
Total	Average annual funding needed	\$300,000	Annually

The annual funding need for the proposed restructured RAP, Components A & B combined, amounts to about \$2000 per senate faculty. CoR proposes an initial 10-year duration of the program. In the first half of years 4 and 7 the CoR will provide a status report on the efficiency of the two components to the

EVC/Provost, and the VCORED. Minor adjustments to the program may be made following these status reports. In year 10 a full program review takes place to assess whether the program is to be continued in its current form, modified or terminated.

It is anticipated that at least some part of the investment into this proposed restructured FGP is being recuperated through increased success in securing extramural funding, instrument/facility user fees and donations.

The needed funding level may be reduced, in part, by the following measures:

- Dropping the condition that faculty receive 5% indirect cost return on funded projects **only** if the full indirect is being charged to the grant, and instead establish that faculty are to receive 5% indirect cost return on any of their extramurally funded projects.
- Bridge funding needs may be mitigated by introducing
 - a. a line of credit model, where faculty receive a credit limit up to which they can draw funds for emergencies, and
 - b. a savings account with a research area specific upper limit. Note, research area specificity may arise across disciplines and within disciplines, e.g., experimental groups may need a higher limit than theoretical groups.

Appendix A: Suggestions for School/Department level research support:

The following ideas target the generation of preliminary research results, enable faculty to obtain and build up discretionary research funds for new projects and/or funds for sustaining research critical functions.

1. Small scale, single PI seed project funds (this might be on the same scale as the current program with grants ranging from, e.g., \$2.5k - \$20k).
2. Effort-rewards for proposal submission to extramural funding opportunities and manuscript publication.
 - a. Suggestion for proposals:
For each proposal submitted the PI receives 1% of the total IDC budgeted and the (up to 4) Co-PIs receive 1% combined of the total IDC budgeted with a cap of \$2000 for the PI and a cap of \$2000 for the Co-PIs combined. (i.e. a total capped at \$4k).
 - b. Suggestion for manuscripts:
 - i. Scientific papers: (lead) PI receives a \$ amount equivalent to the Journal impact factor times 100.
 - ii. Books: A certain fixed amount (e.g. \$500) or maybe the sales price times 5?
 - iii. Book chapters: e.g. \$50?
3. Assistance with open access publication costs, in cases where no other funds are available.
4. Emergency funds for:
 - a. Repair of research critical instrumentation
 - b. Bridging short-term funding gaps
5. Urgency funds for:
Research opportunities that arise due to special or timely sensitive situations, such as rare/unique/irregular political processes, natural disasters or phenomena.
6. Funds specifically for emeriti faculty (an exclusion from the senate service requirement would apply for this category)
7. Travel assistance to scientific meetings
8. Research funds for faculty that exceed a certain teaching load in a given academic year.

Appendix B: Suggestions for campus-wide research support:

The following ideas aim to enable larger scale research projects, support special opportunities, and/or add to a stimulating and inspiring campus-wide research environment.

1. Instrumentation grants for shared equipment in order to enhance and/or maintain the existing research infrastructure. We are at a stage where (capital) equipment is starting to require maintenance, upgrades or replacement in order to remain functional and provide a basis for internationally competitive research. The estimate of the funding required for grants in this category is guided by the observation that there exists a funding gap for equipment roughly from \$50,000 to \$200,000. In this range it is difficult to find extramural funding for equipment. Hence an annual budget of \$200,000 per year for a competitive program in which faculty may request funds for equipment and maintenance/repair costs ranging from \$10,000-\$200,000 is being estimated.
2. Seed funding for interdisciplinary collaborative projects that aim to establish new Organized Research Units (ORU), new Multi-Campus Research Units (MRUs) with UC Merced as lead campus, or new national and international research partnerships.
3. Collaborative seed project/conceptualization grant. Tied to a future mid to large scale funding opportunity (Opportunities on the order of \$5M or above for 5 or 6 years). Funded with 0.5% of

the targeted project size up to a maximum of \$150,000 for one year. These funds could be used for setting up a multi-institutional project, a larger center/foundry/user facility etc.

4. Campus-Community Communication & Creativity Grants: Collaborative-interdisciplinary projects that creatively place or express research in a different context or make it accessible to new and/or broadened audiences. For example:
 - a. Arts and design projects to enhance the campus internal environment with the intention to spark creativity, provoke thoughts and provide individual research groups with the support to create and maintain professional outward facing appearances.
 - i. Artful displays of research generated in the individual research groups for placement around campus. For example:
 1. Artistic visualizations of research data, concepts, etc.
 2. Artistic display of decommissioned scientific instrumentation.Collaborations on such arts projects between groups with vastly different research orientations are strongly encouraged for their potential to yield uniqueness in the resulting exhibits.
 - ii. Dance, sing, paint, etc. your PhD: funds to (grad) students to work towards a campus/community display/performance and/or towards participating in corresponding external competitions, such as the AAAS/Science [Dance your PhD contest](#). Such a program might be administered in coordination/collaboration with the Graduate Division and Graduate Council.
 - iii. Research group websites design awards.
 - b. Projects that reach out into the community, locally or globally, with the potential to seed lasting connections, partnerships and/or donor relations.
5. Special opportunity preparation funds. For example, for (short notice) funding opportunity that require unusual planning, coordination, travel to or for participation partners. CoR anticipates only a small number of such opportunities and estimates that \$50,000 per year should be enough.

LEAP - Proposal II

Research workforce development

A continuous challenge in a fast growing environment such as UC Merced is maintaining a healthy staffing level. This challenge is the result of various (often interconnected) reasons, including the difficulty to attract and retain qualified staff, workload, budget constraints, etc. This proposal aims at easing the strains the struggle to maintain adequate staffing exerts on the campus climate while improving the campus research environment.

Graduate students carry the majority of the research workload on campus. Currently, graduate student support is provided either directly in form of Graduate Student Research (GSR) appointments, (research) fellowships or via Teaching Assistant (TA) appointments. The two first options are the ideal case in terms of providing time for research, but they are uncertain in the existing funding climate. TA appointments, benefit the teaching mission as well as help the graduate students solidify their basic knowledge. However, TA appointments reduce the time students have available to perform research. In addition to these three, in parts uncertain, funding avenues for graduate students, the CoR proposes that graduate students may support their research by taking on functions that address critical needs the campus currently has or cannot fulfill. Specifically, the CoR proposes the following two types of functions that may be implemented under the approved category of Graduate Student Assistant Researcher (GSAR).

1. Instrument/facility fellows:

Experienced graduate students will be offered the opportunity to take on Core Research Instrumentation/Facility fellowships as an alternative to TA positions. Grad students holding such fellowships are supposed to:

- a. Provide training to students and other scholars (e.g. in form of block courses)
- b. Perform service measurements
- c. Keep instruments operational

Such instrumentation/facility fellowships would be allocated to labs that house an instrument obtained through an NSF-MRI, DOD equipment/instrumentation or a similar program (i.e. instruments intended and designated as multi-user instrumentation), and to core/user research facilities. It is the CoR's hope that such fellowships would provide additional incentive to pursue funding opportunities for instrumentation, centers, facilities, etc.

2. Departmental/Research program support positions:

Graduate students in such positions would be working in the Departments, Schools, ORUs or centralized research support units as administrative support. The tasks to be handled by the graduate students should align closely with the graduate students' research area and/or expertise. For example:

- a. Graduate students in business, management or economics might be suitable to take on functions in the sponsored projects, contracts and grants offices.
- b. Graduate students in the Arts, Cognitive Sciences or Computer Sciences might be suitable for a graphic and media design office that provides web, video, graphical design services specifically for promoting the research activities, enhancing presentations, publications and grant proposals of the research groups, research centers and facilities on campus.

The CoR further recommends to extend these programs to advanced undergraduates, in order to provide them with a stepping stone into careers on and off campus after they graduate. Such stepping stone career opportunities may also serve to help the local family centered ethnic communities embrace higher education more, as career paths requiring higher degrees become available locally.

How to fund these positions:

CoR recognizes that these positions require additional funding for salary and tuition. Especially the latter might be a challenging topic. In the following CoR provides a few suggestions on how this aspect might be tackled.

Funding Instrument/Facility Fellows:

Funds for Instrument/Facility Fellows may be generated from various sources, due to the multifaceted nature of these positions as described above:

1. **Indirect cost:** While equipment grants do not generate much indirect cost themselves, they enable follow-up project grants that do. Hence, it would be justified to support these positions (in part) with funds the campus generates through indirect cost charges to grants. In this context, it should be mentioned that maintenance of instruments will require the use of indirect cost-generated funds often anyway. CoR anticipates that with the Instrument/Facility Fellows the need for repairs will decrease as systems are being taken care of in a more consistent manner.
2. **Recharge Fees:** The fellows will provide a service to the (external) users of the instruments/facilities. Therefore, a fraction of the user fees should be used for the salary/tuition of the fellows.
3. **Educational budget:** The fellows will run training sessions for new users, modules for regular courses and/or (mini) courses for Summer REU students. Therefore, it would be appropriate to utilize funds from the campus educational budget to support these positions in part.
4. **Revenue Generating Extension Programs:** Course/training modules could also be developed for and offered as part of UCM's extension program. This would provide members from the local communities and beyond with opportunities to train on cutting-edge technology and processes. In addition, it could provide students with connections to businesses.
5. **Sponsorship by local businesses:** Well-maintained and operated world-class research instrumentation and facilities attract users from out of town. For the time they spend at UCM they will require lodging, food and transportation. Therefore, it might be possible to find local business partners who might be willing to sponsor part of these fellowships.
6. **Donations:** Particular positions, such as those in campus core facilities, might be attractive to potential donors who look to sponsor young talents through fellowships. Hence, these positions could be added to the donor relations office's portfolio.

Funding Departmental/Research program support positions:

Funds for Department/Research program support positions could come from:

1. **Indirect cost:** Schools, Departments and ORUs may use the funds they receive through indirect cost return to create such positions for graduate students.
2. **Budget line items:** Through the new academic planning process, Schools and Departments will be allocated funds. These Departmental/Research program support positions may become line items under the workforce planning in the campus budget.
3. **Donations:** Similar to Instrument/Facility Fellows, potential donors who look to sponsor young talents through fellowships may be interested to donate funds to academic areas of their particular interest.

From: [Jeffrey Gilger](#)
To: [Simrin Takhar](#); [Betsy Dumont](#); [Mark Matsumoto](#)
Cc: [Angelina Gutierrez](#); [D. B. Quan](#); [Christine Howe](#); [UCM Senate Office](#); [Fatima Paul](#); [Michael Scheibner](#)
Subject: RE: Memo to School Deans from Committee on Research
Date: Friday, March 20, 2020 3:21:47 PM

Thanks Simrin and Michael.

As per my conversation with Michael, I support this change

jeff

From: Simrin Takhar <stakhar@ucmerced.edu>
Sent: Friday, March 20, 2020 2:51 PM
To: Betsy Dumont <edumont@ucmerced.edu>; Mark Matsumoto <mmatsumoto@ucmerced.edu>; Jeffrey Gilger <jgilger@ucmerced.edu>
Cc: Angelina Gutierrez <agutierrez254@ucmerced.edu>; D. B. Quan <dquan2@ucmerced.edu>; Christine Howe <chowe2@ucmerced.edu>; UCM Senate Office <senateoffice@ucmerced.edu>; Fatima Paul <fpaul@ucmerced.edu>; Michael Scheibner <mscheibner@ucmerced.edu>
Subject: Memo to School Deans from Committee on Research

Dear Deans Dumont, Matsumoto, and Gilger,

On behalf of Senate Committee on Research (CoR) Chair Michael Scheibner, and pursuant to your recent conversations with him, I attach a memo regarding CoR's draft two-part initiative for restructuring and enriching campus-wide research support. To facilitate your review, the draft initiative is also provided in Word format.

Please note that this draft initiative is also under review by VPDGE Zatz and the Graduate Council.

As indicated in the memo, your input and/or willingness to endorse or co-sponsor this initiative would be appreciated by 12:00 pm on Monday, April 6. CoR will then transmit the initiative to Division Council for its review in mid-April.

Thank you, and please let me know if you have any questions.

Simrin

Simrin Takhar
Academic Senate office
(209) 228-4369
stakhar@ucmerced.edu

From: [Mark Matsumoto](#)
To: [Simrin Takhar](#)
Cc: [D. B. Quan](#)
Subject: RE: Memo to School Deans from Committee on Research
Date: Monday, April 6, 2020 8:48:05 AM

Simrin: The proposal seems fine to move forward. I do, however, have concerns in that it was not evident to me (at least) that there is accountability and follow-up assessment measures, particularly for Component B. What will be the return in investment?

From: Simrin Takhar <stakhar@ucmerced.edu>
Sent: Monday, April 6, 2020 8:23 AM
To: Mark Matsumoto <mmatsumoto@ucmerced.edu>
Cc: D. B. Quan <dquan2@ucmerced.edu>
Subject: FW: Memo to School Deans from Committee on Research

Dear Dean Matsumoto,

I just wanted to follow up on the below email regarding the attached campus research enhancement proposal drafted by the Senate Committee on Research. Any input you have (including suggested edits and/or endorsement) would be appreciated by 12:00 pm today.

Thank you.

Simrin

Simrin Takhar
Academic Senate office
(209) 228-4369
stakhar@ucmerced.edu

From: Simrin Takhar
Sent: Friday, March 20, 2020 2:51 PM
To: Betsy Dumont <edumont@ucmerced.edu>; Mark Matsumoto <mmatsumoto@ucmerced.edu>; Jeffrey Gilger <jgilger@ucmerced.edu>
Cc: Angelina Gutierrez <agutierrez254@ucmerced.edu>; D. B. Quan <dquan2@ucmerced.edu>; Christine Howe <chowe2@ucmerced.edu>; Senate Office (<senateoffice@ucmerced.edu> <senateoffice@ucmerced.edu>); Fatima Paul (<fpaul@ucmerced.edu> <fpaul@ucmerced.edu>); Michael Scheibner <mscheibner@ucmerced.edu>
Subject: Memo to School Deans from Committee on Research

Dear Deans Dumont, Matsumoto, and Gilger,

On behalf of Senate Committee on Research (CoR) Chair Michael Scheibner, and pursuant to your recent conversations with him, I attach a memo regarding CoR's draft two-part initiative for restructuring and enriching campus-wide research support. To facilitate your review, the

draft initiative is also provided in Word format.

Please note that this draft initiative is also under review by VPDGE Zatz and the Graduate Council.

As indicated in the memo, your input and/or willingness to endorse or co-sponsor this initiative would be appreciated by 12:00 pm on Monday, April 6. CoR will then transmit the initiative to Division Council for its review in mid-April.

Thank you, and please let me know if you have any questions.

Simrin

Simrin Takhar
Academic Senate office
(209) 228-4369
stakhar@ucmerced.edu

Simrin Takhar

Subject: FW: Memo to School Deans from Committee on Research

From: Betsy Dumont <edumont@ucmerced.edu>
Sent: Tuesday, April 7, 2020 2:57 PM
To: Simrin Takhar <stakhar@ucmerced.edu>
Cc: Angelina Gutierrez <agutierrez254@ucmerced.edu>
Subject: RE: Memo to School Deans from Committee on Research

Hello Simrin,

Please convey to the committee that I endorse the concepts underlying these proposals, which correctly identify the need for both local and central research support. With respect to the proposed support cycles, I urge the committee to leave some room for flexibility. Recent weeks have shown us that local and national needs can change very quickly. Helping graduate students acquire new skills while supporting the research enterprise is an excellent idea.

I cannot endorse the specifics of the funding model at this time. Finding a sustainable model will require working with the Provost's office, the VCRE, and the budget office. I am certain it can be accomplished but it might take some time, especially in light of the current economic crisis.

Sincerely,

Betsy



ELIZABETH DUMONT

DEAN
SCHOOL OF NATURAL SCIENCES

5200 Lake Road | Merced, California 95343
naturalsciences.ucmerced.edu/ | 209.228.2969

BUILDING THE FUTURE IN THE HEART OF CALIFORNIA

From: Simrin Takhar
Sent: Friday, March 20, 2020 2:51 PM
To: Betsy Dumont <edumont@ucmerced.edu>; Mark Matsumoto <mmatsumoto@ucmerced.edu>; Jeffrey Gilger <jgilger@ucmerced.edu>
Cc: Angelina Gutierrez <agutierrez254@ucmerced.edu>; D. B. Quan <dquan2@ucmerced.edu>; Christine Howe <chow2@ucmerced.edu>; Senate Office (senateoffice@ucmerced.edu) <senateoffice@ucmerced.edu>; Fatima Paul (fpaul@ucmerced.edu) <fpaul@ucmerced.edu>; Michael Scheibner <mscheibner@ucmerced.edu>
Subject: Memo to School Deans from Committee on Research

Dear Deans Dumont, Matsumoto, and Gilger,

On behalf of Senate Committee on Research (CoR) Chair Michael Scheibner, and pursuant to your recent conversations with him, I attach a memo regarding CoR's draft two-part initiative for restructuring and

enriching campus-wide research support. To facilitate your review, the draft initiative is also provided in Word format.

Please note that this draft initiative is also under review by VPDGE Zatz and the Graduate Council.

As indicated in the memo, your input and/or willingness to endorse or co-sponsor this initiative would be appreciated by 12:00 pm on Monday, April 6. CoR will then transmit the initiative to Division Council for its review in mid-April.

Thank you, and please let me know if you have any questions.

Simrin

Simrin Takhar
Academic Senate office
(209) 228-4369
stakhar@ucmerced.edu

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, MERCED

BERKELEY • DAVIS • IRVINE • LOS ANGELES • MERCED • RIVERSIDE • SAN DIEGO • SAN FRANCISCO



SANTA BARBARA • SANTA CRUZ

OFFICE OF THE ACADEMIC SENATE
LEROY WESTERLING, CHAIR, GRADUATE COUNCIL
lwesterling@ucmerced.edu

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, MERCED
5200 NORTH LAKE ROAD
MERCED, CA 95343
(209) 228-6312

APRIL 6, 2020

TO: MICHAEL SCHEIBNER, CHAIR, COMMITTEE ON RESEARCH

FROM: LEROY WESTERLING, CHAIR, GRADUATE COUNCIL

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Leroy Westerling", is positioned to the right of the "FROM:" line.

RE: THE LEAP UC MERCED RESEARCH INITIATIVE

The Graduate Council (GC) reviewed the Committee on Research's initiative that aims to launch, enhance, advance, and progress (LEAP) new and existing research at UC Merced (the LEAP Research Initiative) at its meeting on March 31, 2020.

Overall, GC members were supportive of the LEAP Research Initiative, which recommends an increase in the budget for the Faculty Grants Program (FGP), and restructuring and re-envisioning the FGP by creating a two-component research awards program, as well as research workforce and infrastructure development. Related to the latter, I am happy to inform you that GC unanimously voted to endorse the implementation of the GSAR title on May 6, 2019.

During GC discussion, concerns were raised regarding arts and humanities disciplines. It was also pointed out that, compared to other UC campuses, UCM faculty members who bring in grants receive a much lower percentage in the Indirect Cost Reimbursement. GC decided, by unanimous vote, to endorse the LEAP Research Initiative, with the provision that individual comments be attached at the time of transmittal.

As per this decision, member comments are attached to this memo of endorsement.

Graduate Council thanks the Committee on Research for its efforts to enhance UC Merced's research profile, and for the opportunity to opine.

CC: Graduate Council
Senate Office

Encl (2)

Many thanks to the members of the Committee on Research and to the COR Chair Michael Scheibner for their hard work and creativity designing the new LEAP Proposal I: Research Awards Program.

An overall critique is that this proposal is too complicated. What helps faculty get their research done and get it published? LEAP Proposal 1 should be simplified to serve those principles.

A second overall critique is that proposal could more thoroughly engage with arts and humanities research, expenses related to arts and humanities research, and the disciplinary expectations of arts and humanities research.

Overall, it appears that a large sum of the LEAP RAP monies will be dedicated to research done in manner disciplinarily appropriate for the sciences and engineering. Funding for Component B suggests \$200,000 for grants that alternate from 1) Instrumentation, to 2) Research Collaboration, to 3) Conceptualization of Large-Scale Projects. For the most part, arts and humanities faculty do not need large-scale instrumentation. Arts and humanities faculty often work individually not in collaborative teams. Furthermore, arts and humanities faculty often work on projects that are smaller scale because these disciplines expect them to work individually.

If these Component B \$200,000 alternating grants are intended as a means to disseminate Indirect Costs monies, as was suggested in the Graduate Council meeting discussion, then that should be clarified. It may be appropriate for these grants to primarily be designed to support sciences and engineering projects, since those are the grants bringing in Indirect Costs (recognizing of course that budgets from NEH and NEA are significantly smaller than those at NSF, DOD, DOE etc. and they do not provide indirect costs.). In order to better evaluate the LEAP Proposal 1 it would be appropriate to know what are the best practices for distributing Indirect Costs at UC Merced's aspirational peer institutions.

However, if LEAP I is not intended to distribute Indirect Costs monies, or is not intended to distribute them only to the sciences and engineering fields, then some manner needs to be designed so that arts, humanities, and some social science faculty are not excluded from competing for grants in the \$200,000 larger-scale projects. Perhaps more funding could be given to SSHA in the Component A Local-Scale Research Support than is given to SNS and SOE in recognition of different disciplinary expectations of the humanities, arts, and some social sciences. As the COR members know well, it is important that the UC Merced research funds be disseminated in a manner that is equitable.

The Campus-Community Communication and Creativity Grants (\$70,000) of Component B are the most problematic part of the LEAP Proposal 1 from an arts and humanities perspective. If this element of Component B was designed in order to fund arts and humanities research, then it should be designed to support arts and humanities research and publishing within the disciplinary expectations of those fields and not require collaboration with vastly different research orientations. Arts and humanities faculty have their own individual research projects that require research support, often without collaboration.

The text on p. 6 section 4 seems to have a problematic understanding of the arts and arts research. For example, the text in section 4 a. envisions funding for "Arts and design projects to . . . provide individual research groups with the support to create and maintain professional outward-facing appearances." This text continues: "Artful displays of research generated in the individual research groups for placement around campus." The text in section 4 on p. 6 requires careful reassessment and rewriting. Item 4 seems in places to envision arts faculty as "help mates" or "support staff" to support and disseminate scientists' and engineers' research, not as individual researchers with their own research projects and financial research support needs.

Additional Suggestions

Page 2 under Component A item 1 add "publication costs" after "research equipment" (line 10 from top).

The Leap Proposal 1 document often mentions "scientific meetings" or "scientific papers" when more inclusive disciplinary language could be used, such as "scholarly conferences" or "scholarly meetings," or "scholarly articles."

The ideas under Appendix A on p. 5 could include publication subventions. Sometimes humanities and arts books are so expensive to publish that the author must pay thousands of dollars to the publisher to assist with the cost of publication, such as image reproductions or color images. This section could also add publication licensing costs for reproducing museum art objects, song lyrics, etc. This list could also add travel funds for field research.

Under Appendix A on p. 5 section 2 b i there is a suggestion of payment of "journal impact factor x 100." Some fields in the arts and the humanities do not use impact factor.

Small issues:

- 1) 10 lines up from the bottom of page 1: "is with about 8%" meaning is unclear.
- 2) Might be helpful to put "(RAP)" at the ending of the heading on line 4 up from the bottom of p. 1



University of California, Merced
5200 N. Lake Road | Merced, CA 95343
209-228-4723

GRADUATE DIVISION

March 23, 2020

To: Michael Scheibner, Chair, Committee on Research (COR)

From: Marjorie S. Zatz, Vice Provost and Dean of Graduate Education

Re: Enhancing UC Merced's Research Profile – The LEAP UC Merced Research Initiative

Thank you for the opportunity to review the LEAP UC Merced Research Initiative. This is a very thoughtful and comprehensive initiative, well designed to position our research profile to “leap” forward quickly. The initiative consists of two distinct proposals—a Research Awards Program (RAP) and a program to enhance research workforce and infrastructure development. Together, the two proposals address four key topics: (1) discretionary funds for faculty-led research; (2) campus-wide research activities; (3) research workforce; and (4) research infrastructure.

Considering first the proposal to restructure and re-design the existing Faculty Grants Program into a Research Awards Program, I support the concept of splitting these funds such that some are disseminated by the Schools and some campus-wide. I wonder, though, why tenured faculty may only apply for these funds if they have served on a senate committee or working group for at least 2 semester during the past 5 years? While I appreciate the desire to reward service, would it further our research profile more quickly if these funds were available to tenured faculty who either have not had much success in grant writing or are beginning work in a new area and thus would benefit from some seed funding? Also, COR might want to consider requiring applicants to promise that they will submit a proposal to a funding agency within some period of time, such as 12 months of receipt of the funds, in order to receive full funding?

The proposal suggests (on page 4) that the amount of funding required could be reduced if faculty received indirect on all grants, not only those with full indirect, or if they could hold “savings” accounts which could provide bridge funding. It is not clear to me how this would help with the large requests for instrumentation or new research partnerships, or to assist those without a record of successful grants to obtain them. I do believe we need to accumulate some pots of monies for bridge funding, though that does not have to be on an individual basis.

I appreciate the suggestions for school-level and campus-level research support in Appendices A and B. These are very thoughtful examples and highlight the direction in which we should be focusing much of our effort.

I would suggest that the proposal incorporate more explicit attention to the importance of funding graduate students on these research projects, and especially in the external proposals that may result from these initiatives.

Turning to the workforce development proposal, I would be careful not to call GSARs fellows—fellows receive stipends allowing them to focus on their research but they are not employed. In contrast, the GSAR is an academic appointment, similar to a GSR. As it sounds like the fellows will provide a service with specified responsibilities, this sounds like employment, not fellowship (pg 7). I do think that hiring GSARs to assist with support of core facilities is a great idea.

I am pleased to endorse this proposal and appreciate COR's leadership in developing a strong action plan. I hope we are able to identify the necessary funds, as I believe we need to make investments such as this in our research infrastructure.