

COMMITTEE ON RESEARCH (COR)
ANNUAL REPORT
AY 2018-2019

To the Merced Division of the Academic Senate:

During the 2018-2019 academic year, the Committee on Research (COR) held a total of 16 regularly scheduled in-person meetings in order to conduct business with respect to its duties as outlined in UC Merced's Academic Senate [Bylaw II.III.7](#). Beyond these in-person meetings, some additional business was completed via electronic mail discussions.

Areas of Focus

Administering the Academic Senate Annual Faculty Research Grants Program

One of the main recurring responsibilities of COR is administering the Academic Senate faculty research grants program. The committee devoted portions of several meetings during the year to discuss ways to improve the program, including improving the processes leading to the competitive assignment of awards. As in the previous year, \$175,000 was made available for the program by the EVC/Provost.

Ultimately, the call for proposals remained largely unchanged from last year's version. The most significant modification to this year's call was a re-ordering of the criteria on which COR assessed the proposals so that time since last award would be prioritized over distributing grant funds equitably across the three Schools. (However, COR still achieved the latter.)

COR elected to shift the grants process to an earlier timeline mainly to accommodate faculty members who need to appoint graduate students in a timely manner to work on summer projects. The new timeline was also necessary due to the introduction of UC Path, which requires faculty to make hiring decisions somewhat earlier than was the case prior to the implementation of UC Path.

A call for proposals was electronically issued to all Academic Senate faculty members on November 16, 2018 with a deadline for submissions of January 22, 2019. At its February 13 meeting, COR members conducted final rankings of the 42 received grant proposals, and selected 27 awardees according to the stated criteria in the call for proposals. All of the funds (\$175,000) that were allocated to the Senate for the grants program were used. Grant recipients, together with their deans, EVC/Provost, and appropriate School staff, were notified electronically, with award letters, on February 14.

In subsequent meetings, COR members discussed ways to seek additional funding for the Senate faculty grants program, as the funding allocated to the program is not commensurate with the

number of Senate faculty on campus. Committee members' initial suggestions included heavier campus engagement in donor relations to seek additional funds through cost-matching arrangements with collaborators in industry; possibly adding a requirement in future calls for proposals that PIs must identify an external partner to match funds; and cutting various administrative costs on campus and use the saved funds for the grants program. Another suggestion involved incentivizing the publication of research in prestigious venues, i.e. faculty members would be awarded funds that is 100 times the impact factor of the journal in which the papers appear. And if the lead author of a journal article is a student, then the student would receive a stipend that is 100 times the impact factor of the journal.

COR will continue this discussion in the next academic year.

Revision of Academic Senate Policy on the Establishment and Review of Research Units

This year, COR completed the second of its two-phase project to revise the 2014 Senate policy on the establishment and review of research units. (The first phase was completed in AY 2017-2018 when COR revised the 2014 policy in order to provide detail on the establishment and review of Core Facilities. Division Council endorsed the new Core Facilities policy and submitted it to the former Provost/EVC in spring 2018.)

In AY 2018-2019, COR revised the component of the 2014 policy that relates to the establishment and review of organized research units (ORUs). Using UC San Diego's ORU policy as a guide, COR formed a subcommittee that took the lead on drafting a comprehensive policy on ORUs. In March 2019, after several iterations of the draft policy and much discussion in committee meetings, COR submitted to Division Council a proposed policy for the establishment, review, and closure of ORUs. The policy also included procedures for ORU budgets and personnel, as well as directors, advisory committees and executive committees. Division Council distributed the draft policy to Senate committees, ORU directors, and School Executive Committees for review. In late spring 2019, Division Council submitted the full set of comments to COR for consideration. COR will examine the comments in AY 2019-2020 and will draft a revised ORU policy for resubmission to Division Council.

Senate Awards for Distinguished and Early Career Research

COR is responsible for the review of nominations for the annual Academic Senate awards for Distinguished Research (tenured) and Distinguished Early Career Research (untenured). In order to execute this duty, COR formed two subcommittees, one for each award, and these subcommittees each selected one nominated individual for receipt of the corresponding award. As in previous academic years, COR was struck by the outstanding nominees in both categories. The awardees were recognized at the April 15, 2019 Meeting of the Division of the Academic Senate.

Limited Submission Proposals

As in the previous academic year, COR was requested by the Office of Research Development Services (RDS) and Vice Chancellor for Research & Economic Development (VCORED) Sam Traina who is an ex-officio, non-voting member of COR, to review the campus policy on limited submission proposals. This year, RDS posed specific questions on which they invited COR's input: 1) Who should review at the Dean/ORU Director nomination stage if the PI/applicant is the Dean or ORU Director? 2) Should RDS institute a standardized rubric for reviewers to use in their review of proposal? and 3) For opportunities that have 0 applicants, should RDS announce these opportunities to the campus again? COR provided the following suggestions: 1) VCORED should select a qualified member of the faculty (e.g. ORU director can be chosen to review a dean's proposal and a dean can be chosen to review an ORU director's proposal) to conduct the review; 2) COR agreed with the rubric; and 3) in these instances, applicants should only submit their proposed budgets, space requirements, and cost-sharing needs. If the campus does not have the capacity to support the work proposed by the applicant, then the applicant should not move forward with submitting a full proposal. In spring 2019, COR submitted their input to RDS for consideration.

Consultation and Monitoring

Consultation with VCORED

Throughout the academic year, COR members benefited from updates on various research-related issues from ex-officio committee member, VCORED Traina. In spring 2019, the COR chair established a bi-weekly consultation with the VCORED due to scheduling challenges that prevented the VCORED from attending some COR meetings.

- VCORED Traina shared various updates with regard to the federal government's proposed restrictions of research collaborations between the U.S. and China. Led by a bi-partisan faction of Congress, and prompted by security concerns, the restrictions may include, but are not limited to, revising the length of student visas for Chinese nationals who work in the U.S. If restrictions are implemented, UC faculty who conduct research in China and with Chinese entities will be adversely impacted. The UC system, as a leading research university, monitored developments throughout the academic year.
- VCORED Traina kept COR members informed about his efforts to restructure the campus contracts and grants process. This effort is a continuation from his initiative last year in which the campus retained the services of a firm to review the contracts and grants process and identify areas of improvement. VCORED Traina empaneled a Grants Working Group to provide advice on the reorganization of the pre-and post-award management process. A COR member served on this Working Group this academic year.

- COR consulted with VCORED Traina on the campus's indirect cost return formula which was also discussed in the meetings of the campus Budget Working Group (see below).
- VCORED Traina kept COR members informed of updates on the federal government shutdown that occurred this academic year that negatively affected faculty's research.

Campus Academic Planning Working Group

The Academic Planning Working Group (APWG) was established last year by the Chancellor and comprised both Senate faculty and administrators. The APWG was reconstituted this year with new membership and the COR chair formally joined the APWG in spring 2019. The COR chair kept the committee updated in spring 2019 of the APWG's main functions.

The APWG was tasked by its co-chairs (the EVC/Provost and the CAPRA chair) with three goals:

- 1) Develop a set of aspirational goals for the campus that will enable fulfillment of a UC-level research mission (achievement of R1 status), and that will guide, at the institutional level, multi-year academic planning and resource allocation as the campus moves into the post-2020 Project period;
- 2) Develop criteria, quantitative and qualitative, to evaluate the campus's efforts in meeting these institutional goals and to guide multi-year academic resource allocations that are predictable and sustainable;
- 3) Develop a process for conducting multi-year academic resource requests that appropriately involves and empowers existing Senate review structures (i.e., school ECs, CAPRA).

The APWG formed three subcommittees (Criteria, Process, and Strategy) to executive these goals and held a series of faculty town halls to elicit faculty feedback on reaching R1 status and the utility of using Carnegie indices.

In spring 2019, the APWG submitted their report and recommendations to the Senate for review. Division Council issued the report to Senate committees, including COR, for review and comment. COR had many constructive comments and submitted them to Division Council in spring 2019.

Campus Budget Working Group

Also empaneled last year and reconstituted in this academic year was the Budget Working Group (BWG). A COR representative served on the BWG throughout the academic year, and that COR member kept COR informed throughout the academic year on the main topics of BWG discussion. The BWG was broadly tasked with developing an instructional budget policy (academic budget planning), campus budget policy (carry forward policy), and revenue-generating programs. The main topics of BWG discussion this year were indirect cost return policy, salary recovery policy, Library funding model, and Summer Session and Extension planning

Consultation with Director of Space Planning & Analysis

In fall 2018, Director of Space Planning & Analysis Maggie Saunders attended the meetings of certain Senate committees, including COR, to obtain feedback on the space allocation plan (issued to campus in fall 2018) and to determine which issues can be resolved before final decisions on allocations are made. Her discussion with COR members included topics about space in the new computational building, backfill space in COB 1 and COB 2, and various types of space in the new buildings (laboratory and Core Facilities).

Consultation with Interim Vice Chancellor & Chief Financial and Administration Officer

At COR's request, Interim Vice Chancellor & Chief Financial and Administration Officer Michael Riley attended a COR meeting in spring 2019 to update members on composite benefit rates for post docs. Interim Vice Chancellor Riley announced that as of July 1, 2019, the campus will be dividing post docs from faculty in the composite benefit rate calculations. Faculty should expect to see this change in the general ledgers in August or September 2019 as the modification has to be approved by the appropriate entity in the federal government. Whenever the new rate is implemented, it will be made retroactive to July 1, 2019. Other UC campuses also separate post docs from faculty in the composite benefit rate calculations, and UC Merced elected to do the same after analyzing the cost benefits to the campus.

Consultation with Campus Biosafety Officer and the Director of Policy & Accountability

COR appreciated joint consultations with Biosafety Officer, Aparupa Sengupta and Director of Policy & Accountability, Sheryl Ireland. Dr. Sengupta updated CoR members on the high risk areas in which the campus is now compliant. She also shared the following accomplishments: implementing the Bio occupational health program, working on recombinant DNA/viral vector/gene editing risks and management training (online module), working on resource development for high containment labs, updating the EH&S webpage (for the bio program) for

easy navigation of the program and resources, implementing a new shipping program under EH&S for shipping bio-dangerous goods with DOT and IATA regulations.

Director of Policy & Accountability Sheryl Ireland reported to COR much improvement in the process of getting PIs into compliance by completing required trainings and addressing languishing items. Laboratory-related trainings have been added to the campus's online learning center and have been utilized by several individuals. New trainings including hazardous materials, fire safety, and controlled substances have been or will be added to the online learning center.

Consultation with Director of Procurement

Last year, COR members discussed systematic problems in the workflow governing purchasing, grant accounting, and central budgeting. Director of Procurement Joshua Dubroff attended two COR meetings last year to share various improvements in the procurement and purchasing process that his unit has made or is planning. In spring 2019, Director Dubroff and his staff members attended a COR meeting to announce the imminent launching of the Bobcat Buy system. Intended to replace the CatBuy system, Bobcat Buy is patterned on an Amazon-like ordering experience and will allow for, among other things, wide usage (including graduate students on fellowships); order tracking; the ability to save favorite FAUs for repeat orders; and approvals via a mobile app.

Consultation with IT

CIO Ann Kovalchick and her staff attended a COR meeting at the committee's request to clarify a few components of the campus's two-factor authentication policy that was instituted in fall 2018. Previous data breaches across the UC system prompted the campus to implement this new authentication system. One of COR's concerns was whether sufficient faculty consultation was sought before the policy was implemented. CIO Kovalchick reported that consultation occurred in the systemwide Senate.

University Committee on Research Policy Updates

The COR Chair represented UC Merced on the systemwide University Committee On Research Policy (UCORP). He kept the COR membership informed of UCORP's main topics of discussion throughout the academic year, including:

- composite benefit rates
- reviews of multi-campus research units
- consultation in generating the annual request for proposals for the Laboratory Fee Research Program

- interaction between the campuses and the National Laboratories
- negotiations between the UC system and publisher Elsevier
- impending regulations regarding research collaborations with China
- Status of UC ANR
- Policy and regulation for usage of drones

Campus Review Items

- COR reviewed and endorsed:
 - proposal for Psychology Honors Program
 - proposal from Social Sciences & Management academic unit to change name to Economics & Business Management
 - University Extension Proposal for Non-Degree Certificate in Child Development and Care
- COR reviewed and commented on:
 - Academic Planning Working Group report
 - draft Salary Recovery Policy
 - space documents submitted to the Senate by the EVC/Provost: “Office of Space Planning’s Role in the Faculty Hiring Process” and “Space Allocation and Assignment: Definitions, Process and Standards”
 - proposed revisions to Merced Division Regulations pertaining to Master’s Degree requirements
 - proposal to change the working title of L(P)SOEs to Teaching Professor
 - proposed space planning principles drafted by the Space Allocation and Planning Board in 2017 and submitted to the Senate for review by the EVC/Provost this academic year
 - draft policy to establish new Schools and Colleges
 - proposed revisions to Senate Bylaw II.IV.4.A regarding LASC membership

Systemwide Review Items

- COR reviewed and endorsed:
 - second Systemwide Review of Proposed Presidential Policy on Open Access for Theses and Dissertations
 - revised BFB-BUS-46 Policy regarding the use of vehicles and driver selection
- COR reviewed and commented on:
 - proposed APM 011 pertaining to Academic Freedom for Non-Faculty Academic Appointees
 - UC Center Sacramento Assessment Report

- interim Policy on Immigration Enforcement Issues Involving Patients in UC Health Facilities
- proposed revisions to Senate Bylaw 336 which would change the way in which divisional P&T Committees currently operate with regard to disciplinary cases of sexual violence and sexual harassment
- draft report from the UC ANR Advisory Committee
- revised Presidential Policy on Sexual Violence and Sexual Harassment
- proposal to consolidate UC-Mexico Entities
- UC Research Grants Program Office assessment report

Respectfully submitted:

COR members:

Michael Scheibner, Chair (SNS) – UCORP representative

Anand Subramaniam (SOE)

Stephen Wooding (SSHA)

Miguel Carreira-Perpiñán (SOE)

Brad LeVeck (SSHA)

Emily Moran (SNS)

Shilpa Khatri (SNS)

Xuecai (Susan) Ge (SNS) – spring 2019

Ex officio, non-voting member:

Samuel J. Traina, Vice Chancellor for Research and Economic Development

Staff:

Simrin Takhar