

COMMITTEE ON RESEARCH (COR)
ANNUAL REPORT
AY 2021-2022

To the Merced Division of the Academic Senate:

During the 2021-2022 academic year, the Committee on Research (CoR) held a total of 12 meetings in order to conduct business with respect to its duties as outlined in UC Merced's Academic Senate [II.IV.5](#). 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

The Faculty Advisory Committee on Sustainability (FACS) informed CoR that it received \$10,000 in seed funding from the EVC/Provost. FACS requested that this funding be incorporated into the Senate's annual call for proposals for the Senate faculty grants program. The \$10,000 would be allocated to sustainability-oriented proposals. CoR agreed and revised the call for proposals accordingly. The call was electronically issued to all Academic Senate faculty members on November 2, 2021 with a deadline for submissions of January 24, 2022.

The Senate was later informed that the Chancellor was allocating \$1 million from the \$20 million MacKenzie Scott campus gift to the Academic Senate to use for faculty research. In spring 2022, Divisional Council agreed that the Senate could fund all proposals submitted for this year's Senate faculty grants program. The grant recipients, together with their deans, EVC/Provost, and appropriate School staff, were notified electronically with award letters on March 17, 2022.

MacKenzie Scott UC Merced Gift

At the request of the Senate Chair, the chairs of CoR, GC, UGC, CAPRA, and the Senate Chair formed a subcommittee of Divisional Council in spring 2022 to recommend to Divisional Council how to allocate the aforementioned \$1 million in funding to the Senate by the Chancellor from the MacKenzie Scott campus gift. The subcommittee put forth a proposed, multi-year spending plan that was approved by Divisional Council in spring 2022. The plan recommended: 1) spending the funds to enhance the existing base funding for the Senate faculty grants program over the next few years, 2) provide funding for faculty instrumentation grants, and 3) provide funding for faculty professional development and student support opportunities. Each recommendation was tied to the goals in the campus strategic plan.

Policy on the Establishment of Centers

In AY 2014-2015, a former EVC/Provost drafted a policy on the establishment of Centers. The draft policy was reviewed by the Senate and comments were transmitted to the EVC/Provost in spring 2015. No action was taken by the administration.

In AY 2021-2022, CoR formed a policy subcommittee comprising CoR members, ex-officio CoR member Interim VCORED Marjorie Zatz, and Assistant EVC/Provost Laura Martin to restart work on the campus Centers policy. The policy subcommittee shared their working drafts with the Chancellor, EVC/Provost, and Interim CFO twice during the revisions process to obtain their input. After several meetings throughout the academic year, and upon incorporating the edits from the aforementioned senior administrators, the policy subcommittee presented the CoR membership with a revised Centers policy in spring 2022.

CoR endorsed the revised Centers policy in spring 2022. CoR transmitted the Centers policy to Divisional Council on April 22, 2022. The policy will be issued for Senate review in fall semester 2022.

Greenhouse Core Facility Proposal

In spring 2022, CoR ex-officio member and Interim VCORED Zatz transmitted to the Senate Chair a proposal to establish the UC Merced Greenhouse core facility. The proposal had the endorsement of Interim VCORED Zatz and the EVC/Provost. The Senate Chair asked CoR to provide preliminary comments. Using the Senate's policy on core facilities as guidance, CoR members reviewed and endorsed the proposal. CoR transmitted its endorsement to the Senate Chair on May 20, 2022. At the request of the Senate Chair, the Senate Executive Director then issued the Greenhouse core facility proposal for a Senate review with a deadline for comments of June 10, 2022. CoR reiterated its endorsement of the proposal.

Campus Research Infrastructure

Throughout the AY 2021-2022, CoR members discussed the serious challenges surrounding the Oracle financial system and the debilitating impacts on the careers of faculty, postdocs, and graduate students as well as on the research reputation of the campus.

In fall 2021, the chairs of CoR, GC, and FWF drafted a detailed memo addressed to the Chancellor and EVC/Provost that articulated the issues caused by Oracle, the cost of research obstacles, and a set of recommendations for moving forward. The memo was reviewed and endorsed by Divisional Council and transmitted to the Chancellor and EVC/Provost in November 2021. The Chancellor and EVC/Provost responded in December 2021. Following more discussions in CoR with ex-officio member Interim VCORED Zatz and consultations with

Interim CFO Schnier, CoR drafted a follow up memo outlining continuing problems and suggesting additional recommendations to the Chancellor and EVC/Provost. This follow up memo was reviewed and endorsed by Divisional Council in spring 2022. The memo was transmitted to the Chancellor and EVC/Provost in April 2022.

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. The awardees were recognized at the May 12, 2022 Meeting of the Division of the Academic Senate.

CoR/Sponsored Projects Office (SPO) Working Group

The working group met periodically this academic year and CoR was kept apprised of the working group's discussions by representatives Chair Sexton and Vice Chair Ye. The major topics of discussion were the submission of complex, non-standard grant proposals (e.g. Center grants) and issues surrounding post-award management of grants and reporting.

Consultation

Consultation with Interim VCORED

Throughout the academic year, CoR members benefited from updates on various research-related issues from ex-officio committee member, Interim VCORED Zatz:

- Draft charge for campus lab safety committee
- Updates on advances in the area of innovation and technology transfer
- Data regarding UC Merced's path to R1 status
- Ongoing problems connected to the Oracle financial system
- Update on staffing (research administration and animal care)
- BSL3 updates
- Update from the Research and Creative Activities Planning Team (campus strategic plan implementation)
- New IDCR policy (sent to all faculty in March 2022)

Consultation with Interim CFO Schnier

CoR consulted with Interim CFO Schnier at various points throughout the academic year to discuss the significant problems around key areas of the Alpha Financials system and Oracle such as errors in accounting strings and issues about invoicing and data access. In spring 2022, Interim CFO Schnier established an Oracle Advisory Committee with representatives from the Senate and other campus stakeholders. CoR's representative to this advisory committee was vice chair Tao Ye.

Consultation with Gallo School Core Planning Team

In fall 2021, Director of the Division of Management & Information Paul Maglio and his colleagues on the Gallo Core Planning Team consulted with CoR on the impending submission of the revised pre-proposal to establish the E&J Gallo School of Management. (Director Maglio and the Gallo Core Planning Team similarly consulted with several Senate committees in fall 2021.)

Consultation with Former Interim VC Patrick Lenz

In fall 2021, former Interim VC Lenz updated CoR on his efforts to alleviate the problems with the Biomedical Sciences and Physics (BSP) building.

Consultation with IT

Per the Senate Chair's request, CoR consulted with IT representatives on the campus information security policy. IT representatives also shared the UCOP Recommendations to Protect UC's Digital Research Data document with CoR.

Consultation with AVC & Export Control Officer

AVC Leslie Teixeira-Porto shared with CoR the outcomes from the UC foreign influence audit. The audit was prompted by heightened awareness and increased activity related to foreign influence in academia within the federal government. AVC Teixeira-Porto urged faculty to speak with ORED about any questions regarding disclosures of foreign collaborations and stressed the need for disclosures to be complete and truthful. AVC Teixeira-Porto explained to CoR that another recommendation resulting from the UC audit is to implement a local foreign influence risk communication plan taking into consideration the systemwide guidance. She asked for CoR's input on how to communicate with faculty.

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:

- problems with Oracle and Alpha Financials
- impact of the unionization of GSRs on faculty research
- discussion of an external review of UC ANR
- discussion of the proposed Presidential Policy on University of California Research Data

Campus Review Items

- COR reviewed and commented on:
 - Proposal to establish a B.S. Degree in Electrical Engineering
 - Proposal to establish the Community and Labor Center ORU proposal (the Senate re-started the review of this proposal in AY 21-22 as it was on hold last year)
 - Faculty-Graduate Student Conflict Resolution Infrastructure Work Group proposed process (per the request of the Interim VPDGE and GC chair)
 - Revised pre-proposal to establish the E&J Gallo School of Management
 - Proposed campus wide honors program

Systemwide Review Items

- COR reviewed and commented on:
 - Negotiated Salary Trial Program Taskforce Report Phase 2
 - Presidential Policy on Affiliations with Certain Healthcare Organizations
 - Second Systemwide Review of Proposed Presidential Policy on UC Research Data
 - Proposed Presidential Policy on Abusive Conduct/Bullying in the Workplace
 - Proposed Revisions to APM 759 - Leaves of Absence/Other Leaves Without Pay

Respectfully submitted:

COR members:

Jason Sexton, Chair (SNS), UCORP representative

Tao Ye, Vice Chair (SNS)

Anand Bala Subramaniam (SOE)

Mehmet Baykara (SOE)

Jeanette Cobian (SOE)

Susana Ramirez (SSHA)

David Ardell (SNS)

Brad LeVeck (SSHA)

Ex officio, non-voting member:

Marjorie Zatz, Interim Vice Chancellor for Research and Economic Development

Staff:

Simrin Takhar