

**COMMITTEE ON RESEARCH (COR)**  
**ANNUAL REPORT**  
**AY 2022-2023**

To the Merced Division of the Academic Senate:

During the 2022-2023 academic year, the Committee on Research (CoR) held a total of 16 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**

*Academic Senate Annual Faculty Research Grants Program*

In the last academic year (see CoR AY 21-22 annual report), the Chancellor allocated \$1 million from the \$20 million MacKenzie Scott campus gift to the Academic Senate to use for faculty research. Divisional Council agreed that several Senate committees would administer the allocation of the funds and that CoR would receive an augmentation to the Senate faculty grants program. In addition, the Faculty Advisory Committee on Sustainability informed CoR that it once again received \$10,000 in seed funding from the EVC/Provost and again requested that this funding be incorporated into the Senate's annual call for proposals for the Senate faculty grants program. The call for proposals was electronically issued to all Academic Senate faculty members on November 14, 2022 with a submission deadline of January 31, 2023. Faculty were notified with award letters on March 16, 2023. CoR funded 31 proposals out of 36 proposals received.

*Faculty Instrumentation Grants Program*

With funds from the Senate's portion of the MacKenzie Scott gift, CoR collaborated with the Office of Research and Economic Development (ORED) on launching a faculty instrumentation grants competition. The call for proposals was electronically issued by ORED to all Academic Senate faculty on December 20, 2022 with a submission deadline of February 15, 2023. CoR funded 4 proposals out of 15 proposals received.

*Policy on the Establishment of Centers*

Background:

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.

In fall 2022, the Centers policy was issued for a campus wide review. Several Senate committees had comments which CoR's policy subcommittee reviewed in fall 2022 and spring 2023. Due to the plethora of competing, time-sensitive review items this academic year, CoR will continue their review of the Centers policy (taking into account the comments received by Senate committees in fall 2022) in fall 2023.

### *Campus Research Infrastructure*

Throughout the academic year, 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 spring 2023, CoR consulted with the chair and a member of the Senate Committee on Faculty Welfare and Academic Freedom on the ongoing problems and discussed a possible collaboration in writing another memo to the administration. (Background: In fall 2021, the chairs of CoR, GC, and FWAFF 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 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. The memo was transmitted to the Chancellor and EVC/Provost in April 2022.)

In March 2023, the administration sent a memo to CoR in response to CoR's April 2022 memo. The memo stated that the administration has either implemented or is implementing nearly all of CoR's previous suggestions, and these actions have been evolving in conversation with faculty and staff users of the new financial system over the past months.

This academic year, CoR discussed the possible formation of a Research Data Infrastructure Advisory Committee. The committee could operate similarly to the current Oracle Advisory Committee but with a wider array of stakeholders. The campus has an IT infrastructure that helps

bridge the technical and service gaps that faculty and staff are experiencing. CoR suggested that the campus should engage with people who are experts at managing data. CoR is working with FWAF to draft a response to the administration's March 2023 memo early in the 2023-2024 academic year.

#### *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 15, 2023 Meeting of the Division of the Academic Senate.

#### **Consultation**

##### *Consultation with VCORED*

Throughout the academic year, CoR members benefited from updates given by ex-officio committee member, VCR Wilson. The major topics were state and UCOP funding opportunities for faculty and the creation of the proposed UC Merced Institute for Climate Resilience and Equity.

##### *Consultation with Interim VC/CFO Schnier and Campus Controller Nelson*

Interim VC/CFO Schnier and Controller Nelson provided updates on Oracle and the Oracle Advisory Committee.

##### *Consultation with Vice Provost for Academic Personnel (VPAP)*

EVC/Provost Camfield and Vice Provost for Academic Personnel (VPAP) Hansford invited a proposal from CoR on the allocation of potential COVID mitigation funds that would be provided to the Senate. CoR submitted its proposal to the VPAP which was ultimately reviewed favorably by the EVC/Provost. The EVC/Provost informed CoR that he will award the Senate \$50,000 to allocate to the faculty to mitigate COVID impacts. CoR consulted with FWAF on a possible collaboration and recommended that FWAF take the lead on drafting a call for proposals. Due to a plethora of competing, time-sensitive issues this academic year, FWAF did not issue a call for proposals. At the end of the spring 2023 semester, VPAP Hansford informed FWAF that the EVC/Provost may allow the funds to be rolled over into the next academic year.

*Consultation with Research and Creative Activities Strategic Planning Team*

CoR received updates from the Research and Creative Activities strategic planning team that was assigned to focus on these two goals in the campus strategic plan: Goal 1.2 Grow UC-quality research and creative activities by strengthening the infrastructure for, and levels of, extramural funding and Goal 1.3 Increase contributions of students and staff to research and creative activities.

*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:

- Updates from the Office of Innovation Transfer & Entrepreneurship
- Updates from UC Vice President for Research & Innovation on multi-campus research units
- Financial implications of the strike and resulting UAW contract on the UC budget
- The future of graduate education in the UC

**Campus Review Items**

- COR reviewed and commented on:
  - revised proposal to create a Masters degree in Data Science and Analytics
  - Interim Procedure on Assurance of Laboratory Safety Compliance
  - Proposed UC Merced Institute for Climate Resilience and Equity
  - Proposed creation of an Electrical Engineering Department

**Systemwide Review Items**

- COR reviewed and commented on:
  - Presidential Policy - Abusive Conduct in the Workplace
  - Presidential Policy on Sustainable Practices
  - Proposed Presidential Policy – Anti-Discrimination
  - Presidential Policy – Immigration Enforcement Issues Involving Patients in UC Health Facilities
  - Presidential Policy on Inventions, Patents, and Innovation Transfer

Respectfully submitted:

***COR members:***

Jason Sexton, Chair (SNS), UCORP representative

Tao Ye, Vice Chair (SNS)

Anand Balasubramaniam (SoE)

Mehmet Baykara (SoE)

Jeanette Cobian (SoE)

Brad LeVeck (SSHA)

David Ardell (SNS)

***Ex officio, non-voting members:***

Gillian Wilson, Vice Chancellor for Research

Samuel Chiovolini, Graduate Student Representative

***Staff:***

Simrin Takhar