

**Committee on Research (CoR)**  
**Minutes of Meeting**  
**January 24, 2024**

Pursuant to call, the Committee on Research met at 1:00 pm on January 24, 2024, in the Administration Building Room 344. Chair Tao Ye presiding.

I. Chair's Report – *Chair Ye*

A. Divisional Council meeting January 22

- Interim EVC/Provost Zatz updated Divisional Council on the searches for the SSHA dean, VPDUE, and CREATES director.
- The administration is working to resolve an issue involving students completing their timesheets and the impact on faculty grants.
- Discussion about how to allocate the remaining funds from the Senate's \$1 million allocation derived from the \$20 million MacKenzie Scott campus gift. The Senate has allocated much of the funds over the past two academic years through Senate faculty grants and student fellowships. One idea, which arose from Senate Chair Hibbing's meeting with External Relations, is to create an endowment so that the Senate would have funds in perpetuity. The Senate must spend the remaining MacKenzie Scott gift funds June 30, 2025.
- Divisional Council endorsed Graduate Council's Revised Policy for the Establishment of Hybrid Undergraduate/Graduate Programs
- Executive Director of Recreation & Athletics David Dunham provided updates on UC Merced's application for NCAA Division II membership. While there are several benefits to NCAA Division II membership to the campus and students, Divisional Council members had concerns and questions about the financial cost to the campus.

A few CoR members stated that they did not receive an email from ORED in the fall semester with the core facilities survey link that ORED issued to faculty on CoR's behalf. The CoR chair responded that the link was in a December edition of the ORED email newsletter and asked VCR Wilson if her staff could re-send the link to faculty as a reminder.

**Action:** The committee analyst will re-send the ORED newsletter to CoR members with the link to the core facilities survey.

II. Debrief on ORED's Faculty Success Initiative – *Member Merg*

CoR Member Andrea Merg debriefed CoR on the Faculty Success Initiative sessions held in January.

A virtual grant writing workshop was held on January 5 three in-person sessions on January 8-10. About ten faculty members participated with good representation across the three Schools. ORED staff also attended. CoR Member Merg reported that consultant Lucy Deckard's input and advice was quite valuable as she discussed the various funding agencies – including different funding mechanisms outside the traditional funding agencies like the NSF. Attendees also worked on their draft grant proposals by discussing concept outlines and engaging in group exercises to fine tune their work. Another valuable element of the sessions was the mock grant proposal reviews. CoR Member Merg stated that the overall experience was excellent and junior faculty should be encouraged to participate next year.

A CoR member stated that ORED used to arrange for UC Merced faculty to visit funding agencies in Washington, D.C. VCR Wilson responded that she would like to restart that tradition but currently, there is insufficient staffing.

### III. Consent Calendar

- A. Today's agenda
- B. Draft December 13 meeting minutes

**Action:** The Consent Calendar was approved as presented.

### IV. Consultation with VCR Wilson

#### A. Department of Animal Research Services (DARS)

- i. Memo from SNS faculty member regarding the movement of mice in SE1. VCR Wilson explained that there was a leak two years ago in the ceiling in SE1 and repairs were delayed due to obtaining the proper permit. Only after the repairs began was it discovered that the damage was more extensive than initially realized and necessitated repairs in an additional room. Researchers were informed of the need to relocate the animals. Unfortunately, this was an urgent, unplanned move and came during a time of transition in the animal care program. VCR Wilson announced that Emily Werner (former UC Merced staff member with significant experience) has been hired and VCR Wilson is hopeful that the animal care program will better meet the needs of campus researchers.

A CoR member pointed out that this is one of several incidences and asked if there are plans in place to minimize future emergency situations. These types of situations have a significantly negative impact on junior faculty. VCR Wilson acknowledged the impact on faculty and reiterated that every situation is different. In this particular situation in December, the extent of

the damage was unknown until repairs began. She asked CoR members what types of improvements they hope to see. A CoR member requested clear hierarchies and workflows for faculty members in order to have a smooth communication process for emergency situations. CoR members also requested a facilities check of research spaces in advance of faculty joining UC Merced. VCR Wilson acknowledged these requests and confirmed she now has a chain of command for DARS.

B. Shared Core Research Facilities Director

VCR Wilson announced that this position is posted. ORED is advertising it as widely as possible and faculty are encouraged to distribute the position through their networks.

**Action:** VCR Wilson will send the job posting link to CoR members.

C. Climate Center Director positions update

VCR Wilson reported that invitations to apply to these positions were issued last semester. All three centers are conducting interviews for their director candidates.

D. Financial Management and Reporting taskforce

This is a high priority for the Chancellor, VCR Wilson, and the Senate. The taskforce has formed three subgroups to focus on specific areas: payroll, inflow, and reports. The subgroups are tasked with identifying 1-3 improvements and implementing a plan to address the improvements by the end of the spring 2024 semester. The taskforce is aiming to send a short communication to the campus this month and another, more detailed one to faculty and staff in February.

E. Process for large proposals

Associate Vice Chancellor Josh Viers and VCR Wilson are working on a process for large proposals which they will distribute for review.

V. Review Process for Senate Faculty Grant Proposals

Submissions are due before midnight by January 31.

CoR members discussed the AY 22-23 review rubric and made suggestions for revisions for this year's grant review process.

**Action:** The committee analyst will distribute the revised rubric to CoR members for review and approval.

VI. Campus Review Item

A. Proposal to Establish a Department of Medical Education in the School of Natural Sciences

The proposal – together with the governing policy – were linked on today's agenda.

**Action:** CoR selected a lead reviewer who will send their comments to the committee analyst this week. The committee analyst will distribute the comments to CoR for an email discussion. CoR’s memo is due to the Senate Chair by Friday, February 2.

VII. Systemwide Review Item

- A. Proposed Presidential Policy BFB-BUS-50: Controlled Substances Use In Research and Teaching

**Action:** CoR selected a lead reviewer whose comments will be discussed at the February 7 CoR meeting. CoR’s memo is due to the Senate Chair by Monday, February 26.

VIII. Other Business

- A. Funding of graduate education

CoR Chair Ye stated that this is an ongoing topic at both the systemwide and campus levels.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 2:30 pm.

Attest: Tao Ye, CoR Chair