

Committee on Research (COR)
Minutes of Meeting
January 28, 2015

Pursuant to call, the Committee on Research met at 3:00 pm on January 28, 2015 in Room 362 of the Kolligian Library, Chair David C. Noelle presiding.

I. Chair's Report

Chair Noelle provided the following updates from the January 21 Division Council meeting:

--Medical Education Task Force charge. The major point of contention was the restriction of the number of HSRI faculty to serve on the task force. This was resolved by removing the HSRI restriction.

--COR's proposed bylaws for the future Library and Scholarly Communication committee were acknowledged, and COR was requested to send them to CRE for review.

--CAPRA and Division Council's joint meeting with Provost/EVC Peterson will be held on February 5. The item of discussion will be CAPRA's request for the Provost/EVC to release a subset of disciplinary hires independent of the strategic academic focusing FTE allocations.

--UGC is considering implementing a "dead week": week between the end of instruction and the beginning of finals. The feasibility of this is uncertain, as UC Merced is aligned with UC Berkeley, who does not have a dead week.

--Systemwide discussion on the proposed 3% increase of faculty salaries. The issue is how to distribute this increase. Also, if the system were to receive additional funds, campuses are opining on whether to apply the funds toward retention packages, total salaries, or salary scales. The goal is to close the funding gap between the UC and the comparison institutions included in the remuneration study. Systemwide wants a consensus from the campuses.

A COR member inquired if the 3% increase includes faculty on soft money, such as Project Scientists and Professional Researchers. COR analyst will inquire into this matter with VPF Camfield.

II. Consent Calendar

ACTION: The January 14 meeting minutes were approved as presented.

III. Campus Review Items

--Graduate Council's GC proposed revisions to procedures for submitting graduate proposals.

COR members discussed and approved the response memo that was drafted at the January 14 meeting.

ACTION: COR will transmit the memo to the Senate Chair.

--Establishment of Centers.

At the January 14 meeting, COR members discussed the policy recently drafted by the Provost/EVC on the establishment of centers. COR was concerned that the document does not recognize that Centers are CRUs, which fall under the Senate's previously approved policies, created in conjunction with administrative consultation, during the last academic year. COR requested that the Provost/EVC suggest revisions to these previously approved policies so that the Senate and Administration can establish one comprehensive policy, rather than two.

COR members reviewed and approved the response memo that was drafted at the January 14 meeting.

ACTION: COR will transmit the memo to the Senate Chair.

--ORU Review

VCR Traina – an ex-officio COR member – recently drafted procedures for ORU review and Senate committees were asked to opine. COR members reviewed the procedures and concluded that they did not contradict the policies on the establishment and review of research units drafted by COR and approved by the Senate in the last academic year. COR members offered

a few suggestions for clarification, specifically, in the sections pertaining to the review process and ORU closures. VCR Traina agreed with the suggested changes.

ACTION: COR analyst to draft the response memo, circulate for committee approval, then transmit to the Senate Chair.

--Campus Climate Action Plan

Chancellor Leland recently proposed an action plan in response to the campus climate [survey results](#) of March 2014. Senate committees were invited to comment.

COR members discussed the need for the plan to include action items focused on research support and infrastructure, as the lack thereof is one of the main reasons for faculty attrition. COR members also called for clarity on which individuals or organizations would be responsible for implementing the various components of the plan.

ACTION: COR analyst to draft the response memo, circulate for committee approval, then transmit to the Senate Chair.

IV. Faculty Research Grants

Prior to this meeting, the committee analyst compiled the responses received from prior faculty awardees of GRC/COR grants and the funding levels of other UC campuses for their Senate grants. Based on this information, a COR member drafted a graph to illustrate the declining trend of funding for Merced Senate faculty grants in relation to our growth in faculty numbers. This data is included in the draft memo from COR to Provost/EVC Peterson to illustrate the importance of increased funding of the Senate faculty grants program.

Pursuant to the action item from the January 14 meeting, the memo was revised further. COR members reviewed and discussed the new draft.

ACTION: COR analyst to revise memo to fix typographical errors and include a revised funding trend graph. The COR chair will review the memo before it is transmitted to the Provost/EVC.

COR members then turned their attention to drafting the criteria for this year's call for proposals. The COR chair provided a brief overview of the past discussions in the former Graduate & Research Council and COR. Past committee members made significant attempts to review proposals on content, sometimes using ad hoc reviewers. Proposals were ranked and funding decisions were made based on rankings and taking into account a fair distribution across schools. Invariably, this proved to be difficult and many reviewers had conflict of interest issues. Other reviewers found it difficult to compare requests for travel funding against requests for equipment or new research projects.

Last year, COR included objectively verifiable numbers in its criteria, including whether the PI had applied for the Senate grant in the past, whether the PI can identify an extramural grant program that the Senate grant would help him/her pursue, the last time the PI received funding from Senate grants program, and whether there is a junior faculty member as one of the PIs or co-PIs. Proposals were then ranked according to this data. However, the committee soon found that it was unclear how to weight these objective measures.

COR members then discussed how to draft the criteria this year. The COR chair pointed out the suggestions from last year's COR in its AY 13-14 annual report: 1) generate a form which all PIs are required to fill with the objective information that COR needs to make the objective components of the assessment more clear, 2) carefully consider how to weigh each criterion, especially that of PIs' previous funding, 3) during the fall semester, ask each School executive committee to develop criteria for quality reviews and send these criteria to COR for comment, and 4) encourage faculty to submit joint proposals.

Current COR members suggesting drafting criteria and submitting it to the schools, asking the schools to conduct an initial review of proposals using the provided criteria. COR would then review the short lists provided by the schools, rank the proposals, and award the proposals. This is similar to the campus limited submission process. COR members debated whether the proposals should be evaluated by school executive committees or by graduate groups. Another issue under consideration is whether the grants program should be broken into categories with separate pots of money for travel, equipment, and research projects. COR members inquired into how the quality of proposals would fit in with this scheme. Another committee member suggested adopting the extramural funding agencies' model, whereby, those who submit proposals must also review them.

ACTION: This discussion will be continued at the February 11 meeting.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 4:30 pm.

Attest: David C. Noelle, COR Chair

Minutes prepared by: Simrin Takhar, Senate Analyst