

Committee on Research (CoR)
Minutes of Meeting
October 16, 2024

Pursuant to call, the Committee on Research met at 1:30 pm on October 16, 2024, in room 344 of the Ruiz-Administration Building. Chair Tao Ye presiding.

I. Chair's Report – *Chair Ye*

A. October 7 Divisional Council meeting

- There is a work group that is looking into transitioning all UC campuses to a semester-based calendar
- The current year's budget is fairly positive for the UC; however, next year, there will potentially be an 8% cut depending on the state budget outlook.
- There is an effort to redevelop the Gallo School proposal on a smaller scale centered on the Department of Economics and Business Management Betsy consultation.
- Increased costs of graduate students and lack of support from the campus to help faculty offset these costs. CAPRA and GC are also interested in this topic.

B. October 14 University Committee on Research Policy (UCORP) meeting

- The systemwide Senate Chair provided updates on transfer pathways between the UC and community colleges.
- The report from the future of doctoral education work group is being finalized.
- UC Vice President for Research & Innovation Theresa Maldonado gave an update on the CHIPS Act of 2022, a congressional bill previously signed by President Biden to carry out activities relating to the creation of incentives to produce semiconductors in the United States. A semiconductor research institute will be established and California is one of the states being considered to house this institute. The research will not be classified, however, it may have citizen and publication restrictions and this conflicts with UC values.
- UC Congress on Research will be held in February 2025.
- CoR chairs provided updates from their campuses and it is evident that some campuses are experiencing challenges with research administration, delayed Biological Use Authorization (BUA) applications, and delayed lab renovations.

II. Prepare for Consultation with EVC/Provost on November 6

CoR members discussed various questions to ask the EVC/Provost, including what she sees as her role in advancing the campus research mission. There are various issues that impact research, such as enrollment and faculty hiring (specially replacement hires). CoR members would also like to ask the EVC/Provost how the committee can help her to sustain research.

Action: CoR will finalize the list of questions via email. The final list will be submitted to the EVC/Provost prior to the November 6 CoR meeting.

III. Consultation with SPO

Guests: Jue Sun, Executive Director; Fernando Alvarez, Associate Director

Topics: post-award issues

Executive Director Sun stated that she understands that invoicing and timely financial reporting are the main problems. The COA process time is improving but she has heard from some faculty that the process still takes too long. Another issue she has recently heard about is the extension of post doc appointments. Executive Director Sun emphasized that SPO's work is dependent upon the work of many units across campus. Several of those units have their own systems and interfacing with all of these units and systems is a lengthy and challenging process. Executive Director Sun also pointed out that with faculty's older grants, there is a problem with the legacy system when data was converted to Oracle. It takes SPO time to search the legacy system for discrepancies. (Newer grants are all on Oracle which is somewhat easier.) Finally, Executive Director Sun shared that SPO is in contact with Payroll and the campus Controller about instances of incorrect payroll data.

CoR members suggested an improved communication pattern between SPO and the other relevant campus units such as holding periodic meetings. Associate Director Alvarez agreed and stated that when SPO and several other unit representatives met about the summer salary issues, that meeting was very helpful in fixing the problems. They have already gotten a start on next year's process for summer salaries.

IV. Consent Calendar

- A. Today's agenda
- B. Draft October 2, 2024 meeting minutes

Action: The Consent Calendar was approved as presented.

V. AY 24-25 Senate Faculty Grants Annual Call for Proposals

The Senate Office is currently confirming with the EVC/Provost's office the total amount of funds available for this year's program. This information will be shared with CoR as soon as it is available.

Prior to this meeting, CoR members were asked to review last year's call for proposals and consider what revisions should be implemented for this year. The draft call and last year's rubric for evaluating proposals were linked on today's agenda together with a list of potential revisions that last year's CoR suggested.

CoR Chair Ye announced that the committee needs to first consider a larger, key question on which he is communicating with Senate leadership: how to allocate the final pot of \$100,000 from the Senate's portion of the MacKenzie Scott gift. (In previous years, CoR used the Scott funds to enhance the annual Senate faculty grants program.) The challenge is that the MacKenzie Scott funds have an expenditure deadline of June 30, 2025 and this cannot be extended. This timeline is misaligned with the normal timeline for Senate faculty grants in which faculty have a full year to use the funds. (The annual baseline funding for the grants program of \$175,000 from the EVC/Provost's office is unchanged.)

At the request of the Senate Chair, CoR Chair Ye asked CoR members for ideas on how to allocate the \$100,000 MacKenzie Scott funds prior to June 30, 2025.

A few CoR members advocated for allocating the money to graduate students in some manner such as fellowships or summer salary. It was mentioned that this may be under the purview of Graduate Council and the Graduate Division, but other CoR members pointed out that supporting graduate students is the same as supporting faculty research and graduate students should have incentives to apply for fellowships. CoR members also discussed ideas on how to craft the call for proposals. One suggestion was to hold two separate competitions with two separate calls – one just for the urgent MacKenzie Scott funds allocation and the other for the "normal" Senate faculty grants. Another suggestion was to have one call partitioned into two parts. A CoR member had a different suggestion which is to allocate the MacKenzie Scott funds for instrumentation only.

Action: CoR Chair Ye will share this feedback at the October 21 Divisional Council meeting.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 3:00 pm.

Attest: Tao Ye, CoR Chair