

Committee on Research (COR)
Wednesday, November 1, 2017
1:30 – 2:30 PM KL 362

Pursuant to the call, the Committee on Research met at 1:30 PM on November 1, 2017 in Room 362 of the Kolligian Library, Chair David Noelle presiding.

I. Chair's Report

- a.** Chair Noelle updated COR members on the October 23 Division Council meeting:
 - i.** Campus units are facing a possible 7% cut in their budgets, but this amount may be modified in the future.
 - ii.** There is concern that the resources being used to quell the fires in California may divert funds away from the UC system.
 - iii.** The systemwide Senate continues to discuss the recent decision to allow Graduate Student Researchers (GSRs) to unionize. Talking points have been circulated to UC faculty, advising them concerning what they are legally allowed to say to students on this topic. There will also be some education of graduate students coming from UCOP on the implications of joining a union. Thus far, no union organization is known to have come forward to unionize GSRs.
 - iv.** The 10 UC campuses are trying to locate funding for the approximately 500 additional graduate students that will be accepted across the system.
 - v.** Division Council endorsed UCM's contribution of \$1,000 per year to the Scholars at Risk Network. This project benefits academics who cannot carry out their research either due to threats on their lives, or because they work in countries that thwart their research. The funds would assist with these researchers' travel costs, so they can visit other universities to conduct their work. The Provost/EVC will be informed of Division Council's endorsement.
 - vi.** UC Path is scheduled to be implemented in January 2018. Among the concerns raised about this new system is that certain payroll transactions will be much more difficult to accomplish on a retroactive basis when needed.
 - vii.** The WSCUC site visit in support of the campus reaccreditation effort will occur at the end of February/early March 2018. The external review team reviewed the information provided by the campus for the reaccreditation process, and they have provided some guidance concerning what topics they will be addressing during their site visit. The administration is working to prepare.
- b.** Chair Noelle updated COR members on his October 23 meeting with the CAPRA Chair:
 - i.** Chair Noelle spoke with CAPRA Chair Mukesh Singhal concerning COR's ongoing conversations about the lack of bridge funding for faculty members. Both chairs agreed that COR Chair Noelle will attend the November 16 CAPRA meeting to discuss with that Committee the possibility of generating a joint memo to the Provost/EVC. In order to strengthen such a memo, Chair Noelle asked COR members to email him with anecdotes on how bridge funding would benefit their research programs.

Dr. Motton stated that she spoke with VCORED Sam Traina and to IRDS director Jenna Allen about data on indirect cost return. She related to COR that VCORED Traina suggested that the Senate should work with the administration to create a revenue model that would deposit indirect cost returns on grants into various “buckets” that could be used by the PIs and held as discretionary funds at the level of schools and/or departments. VCORED Traina has algorithms that will be used to determine how much will be allocated to each “bucket”. Dr. Motton added that IRDS director Allen stated that IRDS can assist with modeling, but her office does not have sufficient data to make a large enough impact in advocating for additional bridge funding.

- ii. **Action:** COR members to email their anecdotes regarding bridge funding to Chair Noelle by Wednesday, November 15 in preparation for his attendance at the November 16 CAPRA meeting.
- c. Chair Noelle updated COR members on his November 1 meeting with VCORED Traina:
 - i. VCORED Traina informed Chair Noelle that the indirect cost conversion is currently 30% from grants that pay the full indirect cost rate. Indirect costs go to UCOP, who then sends the campus 30% to support ongoing or new research activities. However, according to VCORED Traina, that 30% has not entirely been allocated to research activities, and he expressed his desire to advocate for this. He is suggesting a proposal in which 5% of indirect costs from grants go back to the PI, and the remaining funds would be allocated to the schools and/or departments/units. VCORED Traina also proposed a collective fund for bridge funding to which faculty members would contribute. Chair Noelle informed COR that he suggested to VCORED Traina the idea of reducing the number of future faculty hires from 100 to 97 or 98, using the residual funds for discretionary purposes. In response, VCORED Traina stated that the Provost/EVC is already considering this option. The VCORED also agreed with the plan for COR and CAPRA to collaborate on a bridge funding request to the Provost/EVC, and he recommended that COR continue to hear updates from the Committee’s representative on the Budget Working Group.
 - ii. Chair Noelle informed COR that he spoke with VCORED Traina about the process for the external review of the Center for the Humanities. The VCORED has indicated that he will not initiate this effort, as he only handles ORUs and not centers. VCORED Traina suggested that the SSHA Dean is the most appropriate individual to lead the review. The Dean should address the resource component of the review (since administrative oversight of such a center is performed by the Dean), while the Senate handles the assessment of academic contributions and viability of the center. Finally, the VCORED suggested to Chair Noelle that COR should revise the Senate’s 2014 policy on the establishment and review of research units to reflect the role of the Deans in handling reviews of centers, while the VCORED oversees reviews of ORUs.
 - iii. **Action:** Discussion of the external review of the Center for the Humanities was tabled until the November 15 COR meeting.

ii. **Action:** This review item was tabled for the November 15 COR meeting.

V. Revisions to the Evaluation Criteria for the Annual Senate Faculty Grants Program

- a. COR members discussed whether they should modify the criteria for the evaluation of proposals, or follow the criteria outlined in last year’s Call for Proposals. The Committee acknowledged the challenges it faces each year, including the lack of adequate expertise to review the proposals and the varying quality of review provided by the School Executive Committees. COR members also discussed methods to increase the amount of funding for the Senate faculty grants program, such as asking school deans for matching funds or encouraging the Office of Development to solicit donors who would be willing to earmark funds for Senate faculty grants.

COR members also discussed the need for equity between Schools in awarding proposals, i.e., a certain percentage of awarded proposals across the three Schools. In the interest of time, and as a reminder of Chair Noelle’s statement earlier in the meeting on the need to issue the Call for Proposals earlier than usual, volunteers from among the Committee membership were sought to take the lead on developing options for the proposal evaluation criteria to be described in the Call for Proposals. Two members volunteered.

- i. **Action:** Chair Noelle to draft a memo for COR’s review and approval to be transmitted to the Office of Development, encouraging the solicitation of donors who could contribute towards the Senate faculty research grants.
- ii. **Action:** The two Committee volunteers will draft, for discussion at the November 15 meeting, options for the evaluation of criteria for the Senate faculty grant proposals.

VI. Consultation with Director of Procurement

- a. Prior to this meeting, Director of Procurement Josh Dubroff was provided a list of questions and concerns about purchasing and procurement. The questions and concerns reflect input from COR members and from their colleagues, whose feedback they solicited for this consultation.
- b. Director Dubroff stated that he and his unit have already begun to work on some improvements in the procurement and purchasing process, and these positive changes may be noticeable by Spring semester. In general, his goal is to think holistically about the entire supply chain rather than continue the “siloe” approach that has suffered from several drawbacks. He referred to the Chancellor’s request to empanel a Supply Chain Design Subcommittee and stated that that subcommittee will be tasked with developing strategies for rectifying several of the concerns provided by COR members and their colleagues.

Director Dubroff announced that he has met with several groups of faculty and has noted recurrent themes in their complaints about campus purchasing. He acknowledged that the CatBuy system is outdated and inefficient, having no tie-in to catalog content. There is also little alignment between the various components/units of the supply chain,

and there is a lack of standardized processes. While the current purchasing system cannot be fixed immediately, he has requested that the campus begin to explore options for replacing it. He expressed specific interest in obtaining a catalog-content ordering system. His short-term goal is to create a standardized workflow among all department buyers and others in the supply chain, and to streamline the purchasing process for faculty members' high-dollar amount orders in order to reduce the response time in fulfilling such orders. Director Dubroff has also reorganized the Procurement unit into teams to maximize efficiency and expertise.

Having addressed general questions and concerns, Director Dubroff then turned to the specific complaints from faculty members that were included in COR's list. The problem of graduate students on fellowships not being able to access the CatBuy system is one that cannot be wholly fixed at the moment because the system is tied to another system through UCLA; however, an intermediate solution would allow for graduate students on fellowships to access the system, select items, and create a "cart" that another employee can submit. Director Dubroff stated that he will do more research on the remaining questions related to Praxair orders and using an FAU at the campus store rather than recharges. Dubroff requested to return to COR in the Spring semester so he could share updates on his ongoing efforts. In addition, he asked for COR's assistance in communicating to the faculty the various ways in which the procurement process has already improved.

- i. **Action:** Director Dubroff will be invited to a COR meeting in early Spring semester.

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

Attest:

David Noelle, COR Chair