

Committee on Research (CoR)
Minutes of Meeting
November 15, 2021

Pursuant to call, the Committee on Research met at 2:30 – 4:00 pm on November 15, 2021 via Zoom. Chair Jason Sexton presiding.

- I. Chair's Report – Chair Sexton
 - A. University Committee on Research Policy (UCORP) meeting November 8
 - i. UCOP is discussing re-implementing the Council on Research. The Council of VCRs meets frequently, and UC Provost Brown has suggested combining the Council of VCRs and the Council on Research and to increase Senate faculty representation.
 - ii. UCORP is preparing for the reviews of multi-campus research units (MRUs)
 - iii. The UCORP chair wants UCOP to address the plethora of administrative barriers to faculty's work.
 - B. Per the Senate Chair's request, CAPRA and CoR should formulate ideas on how to spend the \$1 million the Chancellor is allocating to the Academic Senate from the MacKenzie Scott gift. This will be discussed later in the agenda under Other Business.
- II. CoR/SPO Working Group – Chair Sexton, Vice Chair Ye
CoR Chair Sexton and Vice Chair Ye updated CoR members on the November 2 meeting of the CoR/SPO Working Group.

Vice Chair Ye explained that while the submission of standard grants has improved, the submission of complex, non-standard grant proposals (e.g. Center grants) remains problematic because research administrators (RAs) are not yet fully trained. Some of the problems are beyond SPO's control such as the challenges around Oracle. On a positive note, the RAs now have access to financial reports. SPO Director Sun informed Chair Sexton and Vice Chair Ye that hopefully, by January 2022, the RAs will have access to information that PIs need.

Vice Chair Ye pointed out that the post-award management of grants and reporting remains problematic. He suggested that RAs meet with PIs to go over the grants reporting requirements from the various funding agencies. Interim VCORED Zatz stated that errors are still being made around the integrity of the data, but Interim CFO Schnier is addressing these. She reiterated Vice Chair Ye's statement that not all of the problems are under SPO's purview, as Oracle continues to be a challenge. Vice Chair Ye pointed out that the onus is still on the user to enter the accounting strings correctly and that is not tenable. Interim

VCORED Zatz encouraged faculty to attend the campus financial responsibility townhall hosted by Interim CFO Schnier this Wednesday.

A CoR member stated that the administration needs to take CoR's joint memo with FWAF and GC about research obstacles seriously, particularly the idea of a working group of faculty and administrators on a central IT strategy to create a streamlined, user friendly system. The campus has faculty with expertise in this subject and this expertise should be utilized.

CoR members asked if the Chancellor or the EVC/Provost responded to the CoR/FWAF/GC memo. Interim VCORED Zatz shared the administrator's response which was submitted to the Senate office on November 1.

Action: the committee analyst will share the Chancellor and EVC/Provost's response with CoR members and will send the response the analyst for FWAF and GC for distribution to those committees.

- III. Consent Calendar
 - A. Today's agenda
 - B. Draft November 1 meeting minutes

Action: the Consent Calendar was approved as presented.

- IV. Consultation with Interim VCORED Zatz

Interim VCORED Zatz asked CoR members for feedback on research infrastructure issues they are still experiencing.

Vice Chair Ye reiterated his earlier statement about complex, non-standard, Center grants. Those types of grants have a lot of documentation, reporting requirements, and moving pieces and there tends to be confusion on the UC Merced side with RAs not knowing how to help the faculty.

Two CoR members reported that their students are experiencing PPE training problems. Interim VCORED Zatz replied that she will address them.

- V. Consultation with Interim CFO Schnier

Interim CFO Schnier shared Oracle updates with CoR members which were similar to what was recently reported in his campuswide messages. CBS2 is increasing staff hiring, the backlog of tickets is being reduced, and he is working on a data integrity project which involves training with CAOs and RAs.

A CoR member asked why staff cannot correct errors in accounting strings and why they have to reject an incorrect entry and send back to the user. Interim CFO Schnier acknowledged that Oracle does not allow these errors to be fixed and requires the transaction to be rejected. He suggested that users consult with a CBS2 staff member when submitting tickets to ensure it goes into the system correctly. UC Merced and UC San Diego have both asked Oracle to modify the system to allow staff to correct errors after ticket submission, but Oracle has no revisions at this time.

A CoR member suggested that faculty experts could handle the data integrity issues and suggested involving the campus Committee on Research Computing. Interim CFO Schnier responded that he had a meeting with Deloitte, CIO Kovalchick, and others to determine whether Service Now can be built as a wrapper around Oracle. The problem is that each time Oracle does its quarterly update, the campus would have to reinstate Service Now accordingly. Interim CFO Schnier added that the campus would need several programmers to maintain the interface and that is too expensive. However, the campus continues to search for solutions.

VI. Systemwide Review Items

A. Proposed Presidential Policy on Abusive Conduct/Bullying in the Workplace

The proposed Presidential Policy is responsive to a request from the Regents and the Academic Senate for a systemwide policy that addresses the University's responsibilities and procedures related to abusive conduct/bullying.

CoR reviewed the lead reviewer's comments and agreed with them.

Action: the committee analyst will distribute the lead reviewer's comments to the committee members a final time for any additional comments. CoR's memo will be transmitted to the Senate Chair by Friday, November 19.

B. Proposed Revisions to APM 025 - Conflict of Commitment and Outside Activities of Faculty and APM 671 - Conflict of Commitment and Outside Activities of Health Sciences Compensation Plan Participants

The proposed revisions to APM - 025 and APM - 671 are responsive to recommendations from the systemwide Office of Ethics, Compliance and Audit Services (ECAS) described in more detail here.

CoR identified a lead reviewer.

Action: CoR will discuss the lead reviewer's comments via email. CoR's comments are due to the Senate Chair by Tuesday, November 30.

VII. Other Business

Action: at the next CoR meeting, the committee will discuss the Chancellor and EVC/Provost's November 1 memo in response to the CoR/FWAF/GC memo on research infrastructure problems.

CoR Chair Sexton reminded CoR members that the Senate Chair asked CAPRA and CoR to suggest ways to spend the \$1 million allocated by the Chancellor to the Academic Senate from the MacKenzie Scott gift fund. CoR Chair Sexton stated that he created a Google document for CoR members to comment on.

CoR members agreed that the top priorities for spending are: enhancing the Senate faculty grants program (which hasn't kept pace with the growth in faculty numbers) and instrumentation. CoR members also suggested undergraduate research support and graduate fellowships.

Action: CoR members to revise the Google document by the morning of Tuesday, November 16. The committee chair and analyst will finalize a memo to send to CAPRA by 12:00 pm on Tuesday. CoR will request that CAPRA comment on the memo by 5:00 pm on Wednesday, November 17. The committee analyst will send the final memo to the Senate Chair on Wednesday evening for the Thursday Divisional Council meeting.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 4:00 pm.

Attest: Jason Sexton, CoR Chair