

Committee on Research (CoR)
Minutes of Meeting
December 14, 2022

Pursuant to call, the Committee on Research met at 9:30 am on December 14 via Zoom. Chair Jason Sexton presiding.

I. Consultation with VCR Wilson

A. UC Climate Action Innovation & Entrepreneurship (I&E) Awards

I&E proposals will be solicited through a limited submission process from each of the eligible UC locations. Awards will be for a maximum amount of up to \$1 million to accelerate climate resilience-related innovations and entrepreneurial activities. Eligible locations include the ten UC campuses, systemwide Agriculture and Natural Resources (ANR), systemwide UC Health, the UC Natural Reserve System, and UC-managed National Laboratories. Individual PIs are not eligible to apply, but may contact their eligible home institution Office of Research for information on how to participate in those opportunities.

VCR Wilson informed CoR members that the award money will be disbursed in March 2023. She has applied for proof of concept funds, funds for a wet lab incubator on campus, and funds for a staff member to help faculty translate their ideas into translatable devices or interventions for climate research.

B. UC Merced Climate Seed Funds and Climate Institute

VCR Wilson stated that she will release the funds in three tranches separated by six months. The request for proposals may be issued in January. The submission deadline for proposals in the first tranche will be in February. She is currently working towards the establishment of the climate institute and centers. Per a recent campus communication, the Packard Foundation has given \$1 million which the Chancellor has matched with another \$1 million. The proposed Green Energy Center is not covered under the Packard funds, but the campus will still move forward with its establishment. VCR Wilson expressed her appreciation to the Senate for offering to create a working group to assist her in these efforts. She will send a draft request for proposals to that working group for review.

A CoR member mentioned SynBioBeta. He asked VCR Wilson that given there might be potential partner interest with industry, will potential industrial lab space be explored regionally around Merced? VCR Wilson replied that the space for the potential wet lab incubator is not set in stone and she is still looking at options.

With regard to the instrumentation grants competition that CoR and ORED are managing this year with the funds from the MacKenzie Scott campus gift, VCR Wilson emphasized the importance of ensuring that the campus delivers. If faculty apply for instrumentation that will be placed into an existing core facility, she would like that faculty to speak with her as soon as possible to begin planning. She does not want faculty to be in the difficult position of obtaining instrumentation that either does not fit into a core facility or did not take into account staffing costs and extended warranty costs. She wants a business plan to be created for each core facility.

A CoR member suggested that deans need to coordinate with ORED when they draft start-up letters for new faculty hires to either improve or add value to start-up expenditures. He also suggested that CoR invite core facility directors to committee meetings for consultations. VCR Wilson responded that the EVC/Provost is already thinking of consulting with ORED early in the process when the deans draft start-up letters.

VCR Wilson reminded CoR about the newly-released NSF-MRI solicitation. Previously, the requirement for 30% cost share was prohibitive for UC Merced. This year, the NSF removed the cost share requirement. UC Merced can now submit proposals for up to \$4 million. The deadline for submissions is in February.

- C. UC Merced's designation as an Agricultural Experiment Station
<https://news.ucmerced.edu/news/2022/uc-merced-gains-prestigious-uc-agricultural-experiment-station-designation>

VCR Wilson plans to contact other UC campuses with AESE designation to learn how their processes work and then she will draft a plan for UC Merced. She also plans to hold a campus town hall on AES.

- D. BSP including the Biosafety Level 3 (BSL3) facility
VCR Wilson informed CoR members that she took a tour of BSP with the relevant Vice Chancellor and she is advocating for pending work to be completed. She is asking for a dollar amount that is required to finish the work so she can take that to the EVC/Provost. Other capital projects on campus are being delayed due to BSP's delays.

A CoR member mentioned the lack of sinks in some of the rooms. VCR Wilson asked the CoR member to send her a summary of the issue and she will put him in touch with the building manager.

II. Chair's Report – *Chair Sexton*

A. Divisional Council meeting December 6

- VP Spitzmueller and Assistant EVC/Provost Martin gave a broad overview of Strategic Planning. Divisional Council requested Senate representation in strategic planning efforts.
- The campus policy on the establishment of new schools was never ratified by the Senate when it was drafted in a previous academic year. Divisional Council members discussed the administration's proposal of forming Senate-Administration working groups to address the future of Gallo and the future of SSHA. Some Divisional Council members recommended that the Gallo School pre-proposal process be separate from the discussion of revisions to the policy on the establishment of new schools.

B. Meeting of the Division December 13

- EVC/Provost gave general updates on the strike. He cannot divulge much information due to confidentiality.
- Chairs of FWAF and EDI gave a joint presentation on impediments to faculty success.
- Chairs of CoR and CAPRA gave a brief update on their interactions with VCR Wilson on the proposed climate institute and centers.
- Chair of GC gave an update on challenges faced by graduate students.

III. Vice Chair's Report – *Vice Chair Ye*

A. UCORP meeting December 12

- UC Vice President for Research & Innovation Theresa Maldonado and UC Senate Chair Cochran attended the UCORP meeting and discussed concerns about how the UC will financially support graduate students. Vice President Maldonado is in communication with all UC VCRs.
- UCORP discussed the review of Multi-Campus Research Units (MRUs). Some MRUs receive support from OP but many do not. The last new MRU was created by the UC about 30 years ago. UCORP members discussed whether some MRUs should be sunsetted or evolved into other entities. For example, perhaps some MRUs that help the state set policies could be turned into state agencies that are run by OP.

CoR Chair Sexton asked CoR members to think about which guests they want to invite to CoR meetings for consultations in the spring semester.

A CoR member brought up the various challenges faced by junior faculty with the campus research infrastructure. CoR Chair Sexton suggested that CoR could develop and distribute a research impediment survey to faculty in the spring semester. Another CoR member pointed out that when CoR and ORED held an instrumentation grants competition in a previous academic year, the social sciences proposals were not awarded because they did not have a core facility. He emphasized that social sciences faculty should be encouraged to propose new core facilities. CoR Chair Sexton agreed and suggested that CoR could partner with ORED to issue a new survey to faculty on instrumentation needs.

- IV. Consent Calendar
 - A. Today's agenda
 - B. November 30 draft meeting minutes

Action: The Consent Calendar was approved as presented.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 11:00 am.

Attest: Jason Sexton, CoR Chair