

**Committee on Research (CoR)**  
**Minutes of Meeting**  
**December 18, 2024**

Pursuant to call, the Committee on Research met at 1:30 pm on December 18, 2024, in room 344 of the Ruiz-Administration Building, Chair Tao Ye presiding.

I. Chair's Report – *Chair Ye*

A. December 9 University Committee on Research Policy (UCORP) meeting

- The Congress on Research will be held early in 2025 and the agenda is being finalized. Attendees will include faculty, administrators, and representatives from funding agencies.
- The effort to consider converting all UC campuses to the semester system is ongoing.
- UC Vice President for Research & Innovation Theresa Maldonado's office is collaborating on various efforts, such as fusion energy and AI infrastructure for research.
- UC Senior Vice President and Chief Compliance and Audit Officer Alexander Bustamante consulted with UCORP on undue foreign influence over research. The NSF is requiring a security training for every PI. UCORP was asked to provide feedback on the proposed training which potentially could also be used by other institutions.

B. December 16 Divisional Council meeting

- The Chancellor consulted with Divisional Council on various topics:
  - UC Merced's high rankings in outlets such as US News and World Report is a positive development that may help recruit additional students.
  - Enrollment is flat which hinders the campus's ability to meet its financial obligations. Institutions across the country are also facing declining enrollment. However, there are opportunities for faculty to participate in student recruitment activities, such as hosting lab tours during Bobcat Day, delivering mock lectures, and creating videos.
  - The Chancellor is creating a more dynamic environment on campus for students. A survey from Student Affairs revealed that students want more seating and lights, and these efforts are underway.
  - The campus is undergoing a 5% budget reduction exercise given the bleak state budget outlook. Many universities are conducting

similar exercises. UC Merced is in a better position than the other UCs, a few of whom may receive more significant budget cuts.

- UC President Drake is retiring and the search for the new president is underway.
- The Chancellor has been asked about sending a campus message after the election. He prefers not to send too many messages to avoid diluting his messages and reducing their significance. However, he will send an end of year message soon to the campus community.

## II. Consent Calendar

- A. Today's agenda
- B. Draft December 4, 2024 meeting minutes

**Action:** The Consent Calendar was approved as presented.

## III. Systemwide Review Items

- A. Revisions to the Presidential Policy on the Use of Animals in Research, Teaching, and Testing

The proposed revised policy would update and replace UC's current policy "Use of Animals in Research and Teaching". The following documents were hyperlinked on today's agenda:

- Proposed revisions to the policy.
- Summary of the proposed revisions.
- The lead reviewer's comments

CoR discussed the lead reviewer's comments and suggested minor revisions.

**Action:** The lead reviewer's draft memo will be distributed to CoR in early January. CoR will approve the memo via email or at the January 27 CoR meeting. CoR's final memo is due to the Senate Chair by Friday, January 31.

- B. Presidential Policy on Dual Use Research of Concern and Pathogens with Enhanced Pandemic Potential

This policy revises the current UC Dual Use Research of Concern Policy with new and updated provisions, per the White House communication on dual use research issued May 6, 2024. Specifically, the Office of Science and Technology Policy (OSTP) issued the United States Government Policy for Oversight of Dual Use Research of Concern (DURC) and Pathogens with Enhanced Pandemic Potential (PEPP) (USG Policy).

The proposed policy and explanatory cover letter were hyperlinked on today's agenda. A lead reviewer was selected via email prior to this meeting.

**Action:** The lead reviewer's comments will be distributed to CoR in mid-January and discussed over email. CoR will approve a draft memo via email or at the January 27 CoR meeting. CoR's final memo is due to the Senate Chair by Monday, February 3.

IV. Update on AY 24-25 Senate Faculty Grants Program

The Chancellor approved a one-year extension to the Senate's remaining \$100,000 in MacKenzie Scott gift funds. The total pot of money for the AY 24-25 Senate faculty grants program is \$275,000. However, it was made clear that extensions beyond June 30, 2026 will not be allowed, and there will be no exceptions. PIs' funds will be swept after June 30, 2026. The call for proposals will state this clearly, as will the award letters and notification emails. The CoR analyst will also email periodic reminders to PIs and their Schools about abiding by the spending deadline.

The AY 24-25 call for proposals will be issued to Senate faculty before the holiday break.

V. Action Items from Shared Governance Retreat

The notes from the October 30 Shared Governance Retreat, together with a list of campus priorities that were agreed upon by the attendees, were hyperlinked on today's agenda. CoR continued their discussion from the December 4 meeting and identified areas of focus for this academic year based on the campus priorities agreed upon at the shared governance retreat: 1) Post award processes and 2) Institutional support for large, multi-investigator grants.

**Action:** The Senate Executive Director and Senate Chair will be notified of CoR's chosen areas of focus.

VI. Other Business

A CoR member informed the committee about mandatory cybersecurity training for faculty and the mandate to install certain software. (Information was previously issued from UCOP and UC Merced IT has been addressing it.) Such software has previously taken up too much capacity and dramatically reduced faculty research output. However, exceptions are allowed. This is all an effort to protect research data and faculty must be in compliance.

VII. Consultation with VCR Wilson

VCR Wilson expressed her appreciation for the CoR chair's partnership this year. She also provided the following updates:

- As stated in ORED's email newsletter, ORED has hired a Principal Manager for Shared Cores Research Facilities and a Regional Director of the Central California Small Business Development Center. The search for the new position of Assistant Vice Chancellor for the Office of Technology, Innovation and Industry Relations is in progress.
- Also mentioned in the newsletter was the virtual Climate Center Townhall on January 13 to discuss renewable energy. ORED is seeking input on the mission/direction of the center.
- As mentioned by CoR Chair Ye, each unit on campus has been asked to model some plans that reflect a 5% budget cut.
- VCR Wilson reminded CoR about the 2024-2025 UC Merced ORED Proof of Concept Funds competition. A request for proposals has been issued and the deadline for proposals is Friday, January 10. A total of \$180,000 will be awarded and individual awards can be up to \$22,500.

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

Attest: Tao Ye, CoR Chair