

Committee on Research (CoR)
Minutes of Meeting
December 4, 2024

Pursuant to call, the Committee on Research met at 1:30 pm on December 4, 2024, in room 344 of the Ruiz-Administration Building, Chair Tao Ye presiding.

I. Chair's Report – *Chair Ye*

A. November 18 and December 2 Divisional Council meetings

- The campus will be conducting a budget reduction exercise in anticipation of a likely 5% cut in the state budget.
- The proposal to allocate the remaining \$100,000 of the MacKenzie Scott gift funds into an endowment is feasible. The funds could then be used for research, or other Senate faculty needs. However, the Senate Chair will still explore the possibility of an extension to the MacKenzie Scott funds spending deadline beyond June 30, 2025. He should have an update after his meeting with campus leadership on December 10.
- Consultation with VPAP Hansford on the implementation of SB 791 and AB 810. The new laws were passed with the goal of preventing institutions of higher education in California from hiring individuals who have misconduct findings in their current or previous institutions the past seven years. Higher education institutions are required to obtain this information for searches initiated January 1, 2025 and onwards. HR is implementing this requirement for staff hires and APO is implementing it for all academic hires, both Senate and non-Senate.

A CoR member asked whether this information is already addressed when international graduate students apply for visas.

Action: The CoR staff member will confer with VPAP Hansford on this question and will report back to CoR.

- Divisional Council endorsed the SSHA restructuring proposal.

B. November 18 University Committee on Research Policy (UCORP) meeting

- UC Congress on Research will be held in March 2025. A few of the discussion topics will include communicating complex ideas to funders, funding and philanthropy, and consultations with funding agencies and foundations.
- California was selected as the headquarters for the National Semiconductor Technology Center. The Center is expected to create more than \$1 billion in research funding and create direct jobs over the next 10 years. It will serve as the center for advanced semiconductor research in chip design,

electronic design automation, chip and system architecture, and hardware security.

- Systemwide review is underway of the proposed revisions to the Presidential Policy Use of Animals in Research, Teaching, and Testing.
- A few other UC campuses are also experiencing challenges with financial management and reporting as well as implementing mandated systemwide cybersecurity measures.

CoR Member Cerpa stated that he currently serves on the campus Faculty Advisory Committee for Informational Technology (FACIT) as the representative from the School of Engineering. He offered to also serve as the CoR representative so he can debrief CoR on relevant updates.

Action: The CoR staff member will confer with the Senate Executive Director on whether the Committee on Committees needs to endorse Professor Cerpa's role as CoR representative on FACIT.

II. PROC Update – *Vice Chair Saha*

CoR Vice Chair Saha attended a meeting of Senate representatives and members of the Extended Cabinet to discuss potential administrative process that could be submitted for PROC review: post-award administration, advising (specifically the switch from first year advising to the advising that is conducted within the Schools), transfer course articulation, and lab renovations for faculty. Only one of these areas will be selected as a pilot for PROC review. CoR Vice Chair Saha stated that the meeting attendees agreed to focus on areas whose challenges are relatively simple to fix but impact a large number of campus constituents. The next step is for the recommendations from this meeting to be transmitted to, and discussed by, the PROC membership. VCR Wilson inquired why financial management and reporting was not prioritized given the work of last year's Financial Management and Reporting Task Force. CoR Chair Ye pointed out that there is overlap with post-award processes which was prioritized for administrative review.

Action: CoR's feedback on the need to prioritize financial management and reporting will be shared with the PROC co-chair.

III. Consent Calendar

- A. Today's agenda
- B. Draft November 13, 2024 meeting minutes

Action: The Consent Calendar was approved as presented.

IV. Systemwide Review Item

- 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 proposed revisions were hyperlinked on today's agenda.

Action: CoR selected a lead reviewer. The lead reviewer's comments will be discussed at the December 18 CoR meeting and continued over email if necessary. CoR's comments are due to the Senate Chair by Friday, January 31.

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

The draft, revised call was hyperlinked on today's agenda and reflects revisions made by CoR members since the last meeting. CoR Chair Ye reiterated what he stated earlier in today's meeting, that the Senate Chair is meeting with campus leadership on December 10 and will explore the possibility of extending the spending deadline of the MacKenzie Scott gift funds beyond June 30, 2025. If an extension is granted, CoR will have \$275,000 available for the AY 24-25 Senate faculty grants program. If an extension is not granted, then the remaining gift funds will likely be placed in an endowment, and CoR will have \$175,000 available for this year's grants program. The call for proposals cannot be issued until the amount of funding is confirmed by campus leadership.

VI. Consultation with VCR

- A. ORED Staff (Principal Manager for Shared Cores Research Facilities, Regional Director of the Central California Small Business Development Center, and Assistant Vice Chancellor OTIIR)

Per the November 25 edition of the ORED email newsletter, ORED has hired a Principal Manager for Shared Cores Research Facilities (appointment effective January 2, 2025) and a Regional Director of the Central California Small Business Development Center (appointment effective December 3, 2024). The search for the new position of Assistant Vice Chancellor for the Office of Technology, Innovation and Industry Relations (OTIIR) is underway. A CoR member reiterated CoR's previous suggestion that ORED form a committee to help onboard and acclimate the future AVC. VCR Wilson agreed with this suggestion and added that she will create this committee in January. She also stated that she has asked her staff gather all relevant financial information to aid the new AVC in assessing the budgetary landscape. A CoR member suggested adding a faculty member with expertise in entrepreneurship to serve on the search committee.

B. ORED Strategic Visioning Exercise

ORED held a kick off workshop last month and the next step is to engage with stakeholders, including CoR. VCR Wilson will issue a message to faculty to update them on this exercise. She clarified that this strategic vision is being developed for ORED; it is not intended to be a campus strategic vision, as that document already exists. ORED's strategic vision will tie into the campus's strategic vision.

C. Proof of Concept Funds

VCR Wilson is working on a solicitation. The proposals can cover any topic, and the maximum award will be \$22,500. She anticipates issuing the call next week with a proposal deadline of January 10. The funds were provided by UCOP.

D. FY23 NSF HERD report

UC Merced's numbers went up by 30%. The numbers for all institutions in the US are published in this report which is available on the NSF website.

VII. 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 linked on today's agenda. CoR members are asked to identify 1-2 areas of focus for this academic year based on the campus priorities agreed upon at the shared governance retreat.

VCR Wilson stated that she is working on some post-award issues. She is considering inviting an external firm to examine issues such as high staff turnover in relevant areas on campus.

VIII. Consultation with Office of External Relations

- Guests:
 - Ed Klotzbier, Vice Chancellor, External Relations & President, UC Merced Foundation, External Relations
 - Lisa Pollard, Associate Vice Chancellor & Vice President, UC Merced Foundation, Philanthropy & Strategic Partnerships
 - Terisa Roesler, Executive Director, Major Giving, Philanthropy & Strategic Partnerships
 - Marci Gordon, Executive Director of Institutional Giving, Philanthropy & Strategic Partnerships

The following topics from CoR were submitted to the External Relations staff a week prior to today's meeting:

- UC Merced could become a Carnegie R1 institution as early as next year. What are the potential new opportunities in raising philanthropic support for

research that come with the designation? How can we make good use of these opportunities?

- What are the ongoing campus initiatives to raise funds for research from private foundations, industry, and individual donors and where can faculty play a role?

A CoR member encouraged External Relations staff to work with filmmaker and philanthropist George Lucas and his corporation. A San Joaquin Valley native, Mr. Lucas has committed funding to other institutions for research and student success. VC Klotzbier replied that his team has already been in contact with Mr. Lucas's family and members of the Lucas Corporation on funding opportunities.

The External Relations team informed CoR members of the Boldly Forward campaign and announced that over \$105 million has been raised towards the \$200 million goal. They also explained their structural model which includes Directors of Development in the three Schools and other areas including Athletics. In the area of corporate and foundation relations, they focus on private support, not government entities. VCR Wilson's team works with faculty on government agency funding. However, when faculty's grant proposals include private funders, the External Relations team works closely with SPO on proposal development. They also collaborate with their systemwide counterparts.

With regard to CoR's question about R1, VC Klotzbier reported that the campus has spoken with various foundations who are open to providing funds but prefer to fully engage with UC Merced only after it reaches R1 status. VC Klotzbier encouraged faculty to work with their deans on funding opportunities, as he and his team meet with the deans monthly. The Board of Trustees also use their network to match up faculty researchers with relevant donors.

The External Relations team emphasized the need for a coordinated fundraising effort on campus in order to maximize conversations with donors. In addition to meeting with the deans on a monthly basis, the External Relations team also shares RFPs with deans and encourage them to distribute to faculty. External Relations maintains a database of fundraising contacts which is to the benefit of the campus community, and faculty are encouraged to contact External Relations if they would like to engage with potential donors. If faculty identify a new potential donor, they are encouraged to inform External Relations who will then conduct research on the donor and what types of projects that donor tends to support. External Relations can also work with faculty to bring that potential donor to campus to show them what research our faculty are engaging in and to build a relationship.

As an example of what External Relations is working on, they are partnering with the School of Engineering to launch a summer bridge program to support local students who

desire careers in engineering. A CoR member asked if External Relations could arrange for a “research matchmaking” event where potential donors are invited to campus to meet faculty. The External Relations team responded that they are working on something similar to this and would welcome faculty and deans’ collaborations.

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

Attest: Tao Ye, CoR Chair