

Committee on Research (CoR)
Minutes of Meeting
December 6, 2021

Pursuant to call, the Committee on Research met at 2:30 – 4:00 pm on December 6, 2021 via Zoom. Chair Jason Sexton presiding.

I. Chair's Report – *Chair Sexton*

A. Divisional Council November 18 meeting

- i. The Senate Chair reported that in some departments, faculty members' incidental funds are being held by the department chair.
- ii. CoR and CAPRA submitted their joint memo to the Senate Chair with priorities for spending the \$1 million in funding to the Academic Senate allocated by the Chancellor from the MacKenzie Scott gift. The GC chair suggested additional ideas, including the remuneration of student service on Senate committees and leadership development for the professoriate. A subcommittee of Divisional Council will draft a proposal for how to spend the \$1 million.
- iii. A small percentage of students living in on-campus housing is still unvaccinated and not being tested regularly. However, the majority of students on campus are compliant with the vaccination mandate and regular testing.
- iv. The LASC Chair updated Divisional Council on both UCOLASC and LASC business. The Library continues to be understaffed and is no longer open on Saturdays.

II. Consent Calendar

- A. Today's agenda
- B. Draft November 15 meeting minutes

Action: the Consent Calendar was approved as presented.

III. Consultation with Interim VCORED Zatz

- A. Update on effort to become an Ag Extension Station campus
Interim VCORED Zatz delivered a presentation to UCOP leaders last week on ANR and UC Merced and UC Santa Cruz both becoming Ag Extension Station campuses. The decision will be made by the Regents.
- B. Biosafety level 3 (BSL-3) certification and faculty & staff training

The training is occurring next week. If all goes smoothly, biosafety level 3 (BSL-3) will open in January. Nobody will be allowed to enter the BSL-3 room until they have completed the training. The main concern is to ensure that the doors are air tight so air cannot escape the chamber and go into the building.

C. Update on Faculty Strategic Initiative (grant writing workshops)

Recently, ORED held a Center grant writing workshop and will conduct another grant writing workshop with untenured faculty in January.

D. Update on staffing (research administration and animal care)

Interim VCORED Zatz received approval to hire a Director of Animal Care, two post-award staff, and two pre-award staff. Staff will receive more specialized training. Bi-monthly grant financials will be sent to PIs starting in January.

IV. Faculty-Graduate Student Conflict Resolution Infrastructure Work Group Proposed Process

At the request of Divisional Council, the Senate-Administration joint workgroup has created a conflict resolution infrastructure to help students, faculty, and administrators successfully navigate and resolve conflicts between graduate students and their advisors. It does not apply to cases involving allegations of sexual harassment or misconduct, which follow a separate and established policy and process.

CoR was asked to review the proposed process and consider the following questions:

- Part of this infrastructure includes advice on how to maintain healthy professional relationships between faculty and grad students. Do you have any suggested edits or additions to this advice?
- Another part of the infrastructure is a recommended process designed to provide resources for working through conflicts without escalation if possible. It is necessarily broad to capture different possible practices in different situations. The recommendations are flexible by nature but remain consistent with campus-wide policies and rights of students and faculty. Are there specific concerns from your committees' perspectives?
- Any other observations/comments/concerns?

CoR members agreed that the proposed process is a good starting point, but more emphasis should be placed on preventative measures, such as training for faculty on lab management and navigating disputes. One CoR member suggested that the campus could hold office hours for faculty to utilize on a drop-in basis to receive assistance on conflict resolution.

Another CoR member noted that there seems to be a general mismatch in students' expectations for what constitutes a full-time PhD workload and how work and life is balanced during the admittedly intense and stressful period when pursuing an advanced degree. The workload and expectations must be made explicit.

A CoR member stated that the proposed process does not explicitly state what the university will do if an investigation occurs and the finding is that there was bullying or misconduct. It also does not address the problem of students feeling too anxious (e.g., about retribution) to even begin the process of seeking help or talking to someone, which is common, especially among students from underrepresented backgrounds.

Action: the committee analyst will distribute a draft memo of CoR's comments to the committee today for review and approval by noon on Monday, December 13. The final memo will be transmitted to the Interim VPDGE and GC chair.

V. Discussion of Comments on Centers Policy

On October 28, 2021, CoR's proposed, revised Centers policy was transmitted to the administration for review. Comments were received from Chancellor Muñoz and EVC/Provost Camfield and Interim CFO Schnier.

CoR members briefly discussed the administrative leadership's comments. Interim VCORED Zatz asked if SPO is supposed to decline proposals for Center grants without proof of institutional support to establish the Center. A CoR member replied that if PIs do not have documentation for the support for the establishment of the Center, they cannot circumvent the establishment process even if they have external grant funding.

Action: CoR members will continue reviewing the administrative leadership's comments and editing the policy accordingly. The deadline for CoR's additional edits is noon on Monday, December 13.

VI. Discussion of Comments on the Proposed Campus Research Safety Committee Charge

One comment was received from a Divisional Council member and no comments were received from the administrative leadership.

Action: CoR members will review the Divisional Council member's comment and edit the draft charge accordingly. The deadline for CoR's additional edits is noon on Monday, December 13.

VII. Discussion of Chancellor and EVC/Provost's Response to CoR/FWAF/GC Memo on Research Obstacles

CoR members discussed ongoing problems with Oracle's user interface. Interim VCORED Zatz pointed out that the campus is working on providing an on-site chemical stockroom for faculty's use which will reduce the amount of orders that have to be placed. A CoR member advocated for tasking department staff with entering POET strings while another CoR member asserted that resources may be better spent by tasking programmers with high level computing knowledge to modify the system.

CoR members agreed that the committee should submit a response to the Chancellor and EVC/Provost's memo.

Action: CoR members will review the Chancellor and EVC/Provost's response and send comments to the CoR chair and analyst by noon on Monday, December 13.

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

Attest: Jason Sexton, CoR Chair