

Committee on Research (CoR)
Minutes of Meeting
February 7, 2022

Pursuant to call, the Committee on Research met at 10:30 am – 12:00 pm on February 7, 2022 via Zoom. Chair Jason Sexton presiding.

I. Chair's Report

A. January 27 Divisional Council meeting

- i. Divisional Council continued to discuss the allocation of funds by the Chancellor to the Academic Senate from the MacKenzie Scott campus gift. The Senate will receive \$250,000 per year over the next three years. This year, the \$250,000 will be used to augment the Senate faculty grants program (the program's base funding is \$175,000) so that all proposals received this semester will be funded. The remaining funding will be allocated to student support initiatives. The general plan for the next three years is to allocate an additional \$100,000 each year to augment the Senate faculty grants program, \$100,00 for instrumentation, and \$50,000 for professional development and student support initiatives. Professional development and student support initiatives has four categories: 1) remuneration for student service on Senate committees, 2) leadership training for the professoriate, 3) undergraduate research support, and 4) graduate student travel grants). Divisional Council members who have led the discussion on the gift allocation plan will meet with the Chancellor and EVC/Provost this Wednesday.

CoR Chair Sexton reminded CoR members that even though they do not have to fully review and rank their assigned grant proposals now that the Senate has been informed it can fund all the proposals, members are still asked to ensure that the proposals assigned to them are requesting funds for expenses that are allowable under the Call for Proposals.

Action: CoR members to review their assigned grant proposals and report any proposals that request funds for unallowable expenses to Chair Sexton.

Interim VCORED Zatz suggested that CoR have a discussion on how to allocate funding for instrumentation to maximize the \$100,000 in funding. Questions to consider are: do we give funding priority to instruments that were identified by faculty in last year's survey? Should the Senate prioritize

instruments that support multiple faculty and departments? Should faculty who were not awarded under last year's instrumentation competition be prioritized for funding this time? Should we require departmental matching funding?

Action: At the February 28 meeting, CoR will discuss how to allocate instrumentation funding.

- ii. Consultation with Interim CFO Kurt Schnier regarding ongoing problems with the Oracle financial system.
- iii. Senate Chair Westerling discussed with Divisional Council the challenges caused by the systemwide cybersecurity policy and the burden it places on faculty researchers. He recommended that CoR consult with the appropriate IT staff (the IT staff are attending today's CoR meeting).
- iv. EVC/Provost Camfield informed Divisional Council that student applications are flat compared to this time last year. However, the situation is evolving and affected by the COVID-19 pandemic.

II. Consultation with IT

Attendees: Professor Lisa Yeo, Research Data Protection Working Group; Deputy CIO Nick Dugan; Director of Cyberinfrastructure & Research Computing, Sarvani Chadalapaka; and Senate Vice Chair Patti LiWang

Senate Chair Westerling previously asked CoR to consult with IT on the campus information security policy. This policy, together with the UCOP Recommendations to Protect UC's Digital Research Data document, was shared with CoR prior to this meeting.

Deputy CIO Dugan explained to CoR that that Office of Information Technology (OIT) underwent an audit of the systemwide cybersecurity policy last year and the campus had to therefore accelerate its adoption of the policy. This meant that OIT had to engage with faculty who do research computing and bring them into compliance with the policy. OIT understands that faculty have an issue with the minimum security standard as outlined in the policy which requires the usage of anti-malware software that has to be installed on machines that are connected to the network. OIT also understands that faculty have pushed back on signing the form that refers to their liability in the case of a security breach.

Senate Vice Chair LiWang pointed out that the Senate was not consulted before the systemwide cybersecurity policy was implemented but she understands that the policy

originated from UCOP. Interim VCORED Zatz stated that in the future, such a policy should be reviewed by the campus Research Data Protection Working Group; each UC campus has this group which is chaired by each campus's VCR. She added that the UC Merced working group was slow to begin meeting; had they been able to convene in time and reviewed the cybersecurity policy, they would have recommended Senate consultation.

Deputy CIO Dugan stated that OIT could create a template for faculty and other users stating what they need to do to meet the minimum security standard in the systemwide policy. Also, OIT could discuss an exception carve-out that allows campus cybersecurity directors to grant exceptions based on need and other reasons. OIT would manage that process and help users achieve compliance. He encouraged CoR members to review "UC's Security Standard for Everyone and All Devices". Professor Yeo reiterated that OIT needs to reach even those users who are not putting machines in the server room. Deputy CIO Dugan added that the intent is to cast a wider net and protect research data wherever it lies, on laptops, on machines in the server room, etc.

Cybersecurity Director Chadalapaka summarized the security policy for CIRT-managed data centers. There is a way to go through an exception process which is to consult with the campus security officer and CIRT teams. Chair Sexton raised the issue brought up by Senate Chair Westerling to Divisional Council recently about the new payment procedure for the UC Merced cluster being published with no lead time so faculty were unable to account for it in their budgets. Those faculty who purchased their own equipment are being retroactively charged for connecting to the campus server. Cybersecurity Director Chadalapaka replied that this issue is on her radar and she is looking into how to accommodate researchers' needs. She will work with Deputy CIO Dugan and the campus Committee on Research Computing. She hopes to have more information by the end of this week.

Deputy CIO Dugan informed CoR that the campus is interviewing for the position of Chief Security Officer this week and the person who eventually assumes that role will be in charge of the work mentioned in today's meeting. He stated that open sessions for the campus will be held for the two final candidates. He suggested that CoR members attend and he will send the committee the relevant information.

III. Consultation with Interim VC/CFO Schnier

A. Updates on campus procurement and grants accounting.

Interim CFO Schnier explained that many enhancements to the Oracle financial system are backlogged in the queue which has necessitated the re-hiring of Deloitte

on a 90-day contract to help. Interim CFO Schnier spoke with Senate Chair Westerling last week and it was decided that Schnier would create a campus financial advisory committee. He will be requesting one representative from each of the School Executive Committees, one representative each from CoR and CAPRA, and two research administrators (one each from ORED and an ORU).

Interim CFO Schnier acknowledged that one of the biggest problems is that the POET does not auto populate in the Oracle system the way that the COA does. Users must cut and paste the POET from the COA. Other issues that have caused delays are spending categories and delivery location which Schnier's staff is working on. Schnier explained that the Oracle system was set up with the general ledger. However, faculty accounts exist on the project sub ledger. When faculty enter purchasing orders, their COA goes to the general ledger and the POET goes to the project sub ledger. Some faculty were not inputting the POET which explains why the orders were delayed.

A CoR member asked how faculty input can be integrated into the solutions that Interim CFO Schnier is working on. Schnier replied that all the system enhancements currently in the queue were informed by faculty input from the procurement task force last semester. That task force went through various scenarios step by step and made suggestions that will eventually enhance the system. IT programmers then have to test the enhancements to ensure they do not break the system. The enhancements currently in the queue have to be cleared out before any new faculty requests can be considered. Interim VCORED Zatz added that she and Interim CFO Schnier consulted with faculty in various department meetings last year to solicit their input on system enhancements.

A CoR member reiterated his previous point that the campus should consider engaging the help of faculty with research expertise in programming. Interim CFO Schnier responded that that is not feasible, as the programmers would be reprogramming every four months because this is how often the Oracle system updates. The CoR member advocated for a centralized strategy for working on these problems and questioned why UC Merced's contract with Oracle does not include Oracle making ongoing adjustments for us. Interim CFO Schnier clarified that Deloitte is UC Merced's consultant partner. He also clarified that OP adopted Oracle, but they use it differently than Merced does; as such, OP has their own contract and system. OP did not make the decision for Merced to adopt Oracle. UC Merced has been in discussions with UC San Diego on their problems with Oracle, but San Diego designed their system differently. Approximately four years ago, UC Merced decided to adopt Oracle after UCLA informed Merced they could no longer support our

campus on their financial system. Merced was supposed to partner with UC San Diego, but that plan fell apart. Interim CFO Schnier acknowledged that the decision for UC Merced to adopt Oracle was not made with any faculty consultation.

A CoR member asked for a precise train-up time frame for users to learn the Oracle financial system. Interim CFO Schnier responded that it should take a few hours. He reiterated that his focus is to minimize and streamline the tasks that the Oracle system asks users to do. The system itself is here to stay.

IV. Consent Calendar

- A. Today's agenda
- B. Draft January 24 draft minutes

Action: the Consent Calendar was approved as presented.

V. Proposal to Establish a B.S. Degree in Electrical Engineering

The lead reviewer stated that the proposal is well-prepared and responsive to prior review. He recommends that CoR endorse the proposal.

Action: the committee analyst will distribute a draft endorsement memo to CoR members for review and approval. The final memo will be transmitted to the Senate Chair by his deadline of Friday, February 18.

VI. Response to Research Impacts Memo

On October 6, 2021, CoR, FWAF, and GC sent a joint memo to the Chancellor and EVC/Provost about the campus obstacles to faculty research. The Chancellor and EVC/Provost responded on November 1. At the last CoR meeting, Chair Sexton asked committee members to share the aforementioned memos with the department colleagues and gather feedback. CoR members were also asked to give feedback on CoR Vice Chair Ye's draft comments to the Chancellor and EVC/Provost and the faculty toolkit that was referenced in the Chancellor and EVC/Provost's memo.

CoR Vice Chair Ye stated that he will revise his draft comments in light of the updates contained in ORED's research newsletter last week in which it was stated that the campus is making certain improvements. A CoR member pointed out that CoR/FWAF/GC's memo articulated the effects on women faculty and faculty from underrepresented groups, but this point was not addressed in the response from the Chancellor and the EVC/Provost. She suggested that faculty who conduct EDI research

should be engaged so that the point to the administration is clear that some faculty members' career progress is being hindered.

A CoR member shared Stanford's "Announcement Sent to Junior Faculty in the Academic Council Professoriate on January 19, 2022".

A CoR member suggested asking the EVC/Provost to empower the faculty to have more decision-making authority over research infrastructure given that faculty were never consulted on the campus adoption of the Oracle financial system.

Action: CoR members to continue editing Vice Chair Ye's draft memo for discussion at the February 28 CoR meeting. Chair Sexton will share CoR's feedback at Divisional Council's February 10 meeting.

VII. Systemwide and Campus Review Items

A. Proposed Policy on the Use of the University of California and UC Merced Names, Network, Electronic and Online Sites and Accounts, and Responses to Media Inquiries

B. Presidential Policy on Supplement to Military Pay

Action: the committee analyst will re-send these review items to CoR members and members will decide, by Friday, February 18, if the committee should comment.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 12:00 pm.

Attest: Jason Sexton, CoR Chair