

Committee on Research (CoR)
Minutes of Meeting
May 13, 2021

Pursuant to call, the Committee on Research met at 1:00 – 2:30 pm on May 13, 2021, via Zoom.
Chair Kara McCloskey presiding.

- I. Chair's Report – *Kara McCloskey*
 - A. April 30 Divisional Council meeting
The main topics of discussion were:
 - i. Fall reopening of campus
 - ii. The anti-racism work group has two ideas on how to spend the \$100,000 allocated by the Chancellor: 1) mini grant program in support of faculty initiatives to combat structural racism and create a more inclusive university; 2) contract with a consultant who will conduct an assessment of anti-racism work
 - iii. Proposed MAPP 500. Divisional Council agreed with committees' concerns and wrote a response to APO. CoR Chair McCloskey, GC Chair Hratchian, and Senate leadership will meet with APO next week.
 - B. May 4 Spring Meeting of the Division
 - i. The annual Senate awards were announced.
- II. Consent Calendar
 - A. Today's agenda
 - B. Draft April 29 meeting minutes

Action: the Consent Calendar was approved as presented.

III. Interim VCORED Updates

Interim VCORED Zatz shared with CoR members that faculty comments and surveys indicate that SPO is improving. She, VC McLeod, and Interim CFO Schnier issued a joint weekly update on research infrastructure to faculty on Friday. The update informed faculty that the BSP building passed the system test Monday, May 10, 2021 and the campus is exploring options to better manage chemical storage on campus. Karen Smith of EH&S is leaving UC Merced. Faculty are asked to contact EH&S Director Mal Donohue with questions about chemical purchase/storage.

IV. Systemwide Review Items

- A. Proposed Presidential Policy SARS-CoV-2 (COVID-19) Vaccination Program
This policy would require students, faculty, academic appointees, and staff who are accessing campus facilities at a UC location beginning this Fall to be immunized against SARS-CoV-2, the virus that causes COVID-19.

Interim VCORED Zatz reminded CoR members that Mobile Med is assisting UC Merced with our occupational health safety issues.

CoR selected a lead reviewer.

Action: The lead reviewer's comments will be discussed via email. CoR's comments are due to the Senate Chair by 5:00 pm on Monday, May 17.

- B. Proposed Presidential Policy – Fee Policy for Graduate Student *In Absentia* Registration
The revisions of the policy would permit Deans to establish “a local campus region within which in absentia registration will not be considered” instead of limiting eligibility to students studying outside of California.

CoR selected a lead reviewer.

Action: The lead reviewer's comments will be discussed by the committee via email. CoR's comments are due to the Senate Chair by 5:00 pm on Monday, May 24.

V. ORU Proposal – *Interim VCORED Zatz and Interim CFO Schnier*

Background: Divisional Council evaluated the ORU proposal from the Community and Labor Center and reviewed the comments received from Senate committees, including CoR. In order to fully evaluate the proposal, Divisional Council asked the administration to clarify the current status of the budget, existing funding for ORUs, and expectations for ORUs going forward. Divisional Council still has not been provided with this information.

The relevant correspondence was made available to CoR members prior to this meeting.

On May 3, Divisional Council issued a memo to EVC/Provost Camfield, Interim VCORED Zatz, and Interim CFO Schnier in which they requested that CoR, Interim VCORED Zatz, and the administration work together to prepare answers to these questions:

- Should every ORU receive the same amount of core funding or is there a formula for each proposed ORU that factors in funding prospects and number of faculty?
- What is the campus paying for the existing ORUs and what amount are they generating themselves?
- If an ORU or Center has been in existence for a given amount of time without generating resources, what is the strategy for disestablishing it?

A CoR member emphasized the importance of indirect cost return and the need to get more students funded through GSRs as part of the goal to reach R1 status. Not all departments have a pool of indirect cost funds to support graduate students.

Interim VCORED Zatz informed CoR members that she is working with the existing campus ORUs (SNRI and HSRI) to determine their mission, their cross-School activities, and their value added. A CoR member pointed out that ORUs can play a role in research infrastructure development and fostering collaborations so that faculty can apply for collaborative grants. Interim VCORED Zatz agreed and stated that she wants to determine what the ORUs need the funds for so the campus can determine if the funds need to come from the campus or external sources.

A CoR member asked Interim CFO Schnier if he has examples of the budget models of the self-sustaining ORUs from other campuses that could serve as a guide for UC Merced. Interim CFO Schnier replied that he does not have the comparison data at this time but added that UC Santa Cruz and UC Riverside would be appropriate comparator institutions as they rely on core funding like UC Merced.

A CoR member asked how ORUs become self-sustaining with indirect cost return. Interim VCORED Zatz answered that they would need large grants from foundations or other sources.

CoR members then formulated answers to the aforementioned list of questions posed by Divisional Council:

Would every ORU receive the same amount of core funding or is there a formula for each proposed ORU that factors in funding prospects and number of faculty?

No. CoR is proposing that the financial support of ORUs will align with the size of the center. The Community and Labor Center is asking for \$750,000, but \$350,000 is a typical amount to start. However, this would take money out of the current ORU pool of funds, so it can lower dollars available for the other ORUs.

What is the campus paying for the existing ORUs and what amount are they generating themselves?

Existing ORUs were awarded \$350,000 to start and then ~ \$400,000 per year (in 2014/15) and increased to over \$700,000 per year (2021/21). Current ORUs are now generating between \$100,000 and \$250,000 on top of those dollars, only 15%-25%.

If an ORU or Center has been in existence for a given amount of time without generating resources, what is the strategy for disestablishing it?

[Current policy](#) (page 14) on disestablishment/closure of ORUs does exist.

VI. Other Business

Interim VCORED Zatz shared a memo she sent to CAPRA in response to CAPRA's memo on the draft academic planning targets. (All Senate committees were invited by the EVC/Provost to opine on the draft academic planning targets.) In that memo, Interim VCORED Zatz stated that UC Merced's proposal submissions, awards, and research expenditures are growing well. The estimated research expenditures for FY20 reached \$45,966,000, compared to \$29,370,000 in FY2016 when the campus achieved R2.

Comparing proposal and award activity from April 1, 2019-March 31, 2020 to April 1, 2020-March 31, 2021, we see:

- # of proposals submitted increased 24% to 482,
- total proposal dollars increased 74% to \$357M,
- # proposals submitted with budgets over \$1M increased 47% to 72,
- total dollar amount in proposals with budgets over > \$1M increased 112%,
- # of awards decreased 6% but award \$ increased overall 125% to \$80M.
- Excluding CARE Act financial aid, the increase was 88% to \$67M; excluding all CARE Act funds, we still increased 31.7% to \$47M.
- Note growth in large complex proposals

Action: Interim VCORED Zatz will send a copy of her memo to the committee analyst.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 2:30 pm.

Attest: Kara McCloskey, CoR chair