

Committee on Research (CoR)
Minutes of Meeting
September 13, 2023

Pursuant to call, the Committee on Research met at 9:00 am on September 13, 2023, in the Biomedical Sciences & Physics Building Room 350. Chair Tao Ye presiding.

- I. Chair's Report – *Chair Ye*
 - A. Welcome and introductions
 - i. CoR AY 23-24 roster
Per the Senate bylaws, CoR's membership also includes a graduate student representative. CoC is working on this appointment.
 - ii. CoR bylaws
 - B. Guides to Committee Membership and Executive Session
 - C. September 7 Divisional Council meeting
 - Divisional Council consulted with EVC/Provost Zatz on issues including enrollment and the campus financial systems.
 - Divisional Council also discussed a memo from SSHA detailing their significant loss of faculty and lack of replacements.
 - Shared Governance Retreat will be held the end of September.
 - D. CoR AY 23-24 priorities
 - i. Revisions to the campus Centers policy.
Background: CoR submitted a revised policy to Divisional Council in a previous academic year. Senate committees and School Executive Committees reviewed the policy and provided comments in fall 2022. CoR needs to review the feedback and revise the policy accordingly. The revised policy then needs to be submitted to Divisional Council for another campus review.
 - ii. Allocation of COVID mitigation funds from former EVC/Provost Camfield.
Background: in AY 22-23, former EVC/Provost Camfield agreed to provide \$50,000 to the Academic Senate for CoR and FWAF to allocate to faculty to mitigate the negative impacts of the COVID pandemic. FWAF drafted a call but due to various other pressing issues, FWAF and CoR did not finalize the call or allocate the funds. At the end of the spring 2023 semester, VPAP Hansford confirmed that EVC/Provost Camfield was willing to allow the funds to roll over to AY 23-24, but with two strong recommendations: 1) these funds need to be allocated in fall 2023 and 2) CoR should allocate the funds in a manner similar to the annual Senate faculty grants competition.

CoR Chair Ye recommended inviting Interim EVC/Provost Zatz to a meeting to discuss an alternative model.

- E. Campus and systemwide review items. Reviewers will be assigned alphabetically by last name. Exceptions: if a CoR member has a conflict of interest with a certain review item, they will not review it; also, if a CoR member has a particular interest in a review item, they are welcome to review it even if it is not their turn.

II. Consent Calendar

- A. Today's agenda
- B. Draft May 10 meeting minutes
- C. CoR's Conflict of Interest Policy

Action: The Consent Calendar was approved as presented.

III. Research Infrastructure Issues (Oracle, grants accounting)

- A. CoR's memo addressed to the administration on research infrastructure was submitted to Divisional Council on July 21, 2023. If Divisional Council endorses the memo, the memo will be transmitted to the administration.
- B. University Committee on Academic Computing and Communications (UCACC) letter to Academic Council dated April 27, 2023 about the Oracle financial system.

CoR Chair Ye briefly summarized CoR's memo which was hyperlinked on today's agenda. VCR Wilson stated that procurement and grants accounting issues are the most critical problems for the campus right now. While Oracle is often identified as the main problem, the problem is bigger than just Oracle. The Senate and the administration should arrive at a solution together. CoR Chair Ye stated that CoR's memo was discussed recently by Divisional Council who is currently preparing a separate memo to underscore the seriousness of the issues. Their memo will highlight accountability.

CoR Chair Ye asked committee members if they would like to suggest additional goals for CoR to address this year. VCR Wilson brought up facilities and issues surrounding the BSP building. It will take awhile to improve all these problems, but she asked CoR to also consider the research areas the campus could spearhead to help faculty colleagues explore these new opportunities.

IV. CoR Policy Subcommittee

This subcommittee will take the lead on drafting policies and suggesting revisions to existing policies such as the aforementioned Centers policy.

Action: Due to time constraints, CoR will review this item over email. The committee is asked to identify three members to serve on the policy subcommittee for AY 23-24.

V. CoR Representation on Campus Committees

A. Periodic Review Oversight Committee (PROC)

A representative from CoR is requested to serve on PROC in AY 23-24

Action: Due to time constraints, CoR will handle this item over email. CoR is asked to identify a representative to serve on PROC for AY 23-24. The role of the representative is to attend PROC meetings and keep CoR updated on PROC business.

VI. Consultation with VCR Gillian Wilson

A. Climate seed funds. Last year, UC Merced received funding from the state for climate action research. Most of that funding was assigned to ORED to administer. ORED conducted two solicitations last year for seed fund competitions and allocated \$4 million in the spring semester. ORED issued another solicitation this semester and the deadline for submissions was September 1. VCR Wilson received 24 proposals and she will allocate \$5 million. She asked the chairs of three Senate committees – including the CoR chair – to join the review panel which includes the three School deans, the deans of undergraduate and graduate education, and representatives from the three campus ORUs. There will be a second, smaller level of review by VCR Wilson in which she will review the funding recommendations from the first panel. She anticipates announcing the awardees by mid-November and funds should be available to PIs by the beginning of January.

B. VCR Wilson has appointed Professor Josh Viers (SoE) as the Associate Vice Chancellor for Interdisciplinary Research & Strategic Initiatives. He will focus on developing UC Merced as a newly-designated Agricultural Experiment Station. A campus-wide announcement will be issued soon.

VII. Consultation on Senate Governance for IT

Guests: Professor Emily Jane McTavish and VC & CIO Nick Dugan

Professor McTavish is UC Merced's representative to the University Committee on Academic Computing and Communications (UCACC).

VCR Wilson suggested that the Senate and Administration (including IT, ORED, DFA, and others) establish a working group to address IT governance issues. DFA and ORED (including SPO) are holding a meeting in early November to work on various processes they can improve. But commitment is needed from the Senate side and the administration across campus due to the complexity of the problems.

Professor McTavish informed CoR that in 2019, former VC & CIO Kovalchick transmitted a memo to former Senate Chair Hansford with a request for the Senate to review her draft charter for a proposed Faculty Advisory Committee for Information Technology. That committee was never created. Professor McTavish stated that she and current VC & CIO Dugan are interested in pursuing the establishment of the advisory committee. VC & CIO Dugan added that the Chancellor has tasked him with creating a new governance model that includes the Academic Senate.

CoR Chair Ye inquired whether the model should involve creating a subcommittee within CoR rather than proposing a new standing committee in the Academic Senate which may be difficult to populate. He also acknowledged CoR's heavy workload. However, a subcommittee that includes one or two CoR members who initially meet once a semester would be a good start. CoR Vice Chair Cobian suggested inviting an external member to serve on the subcommittee. Professor McTavish volunteered to be that external member and mentioned that additional representatives may be found from the Schools. CoR Chair Ye recommended that the subcommittee members could provide periodic updates to the wider CoR membership.

VC & CIO Dugan offered to attend a CoR meeting next month to discuss a new charge for this subcommittee. CoR Chair Ye agreed and stated that the subcommittee members need to be identified (in addition to Professor McTavish who already volunteered to serve).

Action: VC & CIO Dugan will be invited to a future CoR meeting to continue this discussion. The committee analyst will work with the committee chair on the next steps.

VIII. Consultation on Procurement

Guests: Interim VC & CFO Kurt Schnier and Chief Procurement Officer Meagan Torres

Interim VC & CFO Schnier and Chief Procurement Officer Torres gave a slide presentation on the utilization of LabViva to improve the purchasing process used by researchers on campus.

Shortly before the consultation began, Interim VC & CFO Schnier emailed the committee analyst the slide deck which she forwarded to the CoR members.

The idea being proposed is for a new digital marketplace layered on top of Oracle. The Oracle shopping experience would be completely bypassed. Labviva is an Amazon-like shopping experience, built by researchers for researchers. Labviva is a certified small and diverse business and enriches raw Oracle data with: 1) Product reviews / white papers / videos, 2) detailed product data (chemical composition, etc.), 3) Supplier certifications and status, and 4) Automated price comparison (Labviva is adding certification comparison to its product roadmap based on feedback). Labviva also simplifies onboarding new Life Science and MRO suppliers. Per today's presentation, Labviva offers: one-stop shopping for all types of orders,

custom, curated product listing pages for shopping ease, robust search feature allows search-within-search options, enhanced product data allows for informed decision-making, directed buying which allows users to contribute directly to UC's sustainability and diversity goals, and 24/7 access to on-demand training resources. Labviva is currently being used at UC San Diego.

Prior to going live with Labviva, Chief Procurement Officer Torres would like to collaborate with faculty and graduate students to fine tune the system. Interim VC & CFO Schnier suggested that CoR Chair Ye be one of the testers. The goal is to go live with Labviva by early spring. Interim VC & CFO Schnier is working with IT on integration. He also wants to hold robust trainings with faculty and graduate students.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 10:30 am.

Attest: Tao Ye, CoR Chair