

Committee on Research (CoR)
Minutes of Meeting
September 27, 2023

Pursuant to call, the Committee on Research met at 9:00 am on September 27, 2023, in the Administration Building Room 344. Chair Tao Ye presiding.

I. Chair's Report – *Chair Ye*

A. Divisional Council meeting September 14

- Graduate Council has proposed a policy for hybrid programs and it is now under Senate review. (CoR is one of the lead reviewers as stated later in the agenda.)
- The annual shared governance retreat is on September 29. There will be four major topics each co-led by a Senate representative and an administrative representative. The topics are: faculty morale, Oracle and financial systems, enrollment growth and faculty hiring, and graduate student funding.

II. Consultation with School of Natural Sciences Faculty

Guests: Professors Stefanie Woo and Stefan Materna

Discussion: Zebrafish facility operations issues at UCM. Prior to this meeting, CoR reviewed the memo dated July 18, 2023 from Professors Woo and Materna. This memo was also linked on today's agenda.

In addition to the July 18, 2023 memo, Professor Woo summarized for CoR members her June 2022 memo about the same problem. She made several recommendations in that 2022 memo; some of them have been implemented by the campus poorly and others were not implemented at all. Professor Materna also informed CoR about the persisting issues in the vivarium and stated that VCR Wilson is aware of the situation. The space is owned by ORED and requires negotiations between them and the relevant faculty.

CoR Chair Ye asked whether there are any short-term solutions that CoR could help advocate for. Professors Woo and Materna will discuss some ideas with vivarium staff and then contact CoR again at a later time.

III. Consultation with VCR Gillian Wilson

A. EH&S

VCR Wilson informed CoR that all but one campus has EH&S reporting to a vice chancellor in the administration and that is because much of EH&S responsibilities are not related to research. However, EH&S does collaborate and integrate with ORED. EH&S cannot be broken up as that would cause duplication of effort and

inefficiencies which is why other campuses do not break up EH&S. VCR Wilson went on to explain that AVC and Interim Chief of Staff Leslie Teixeira-Porto is working closely with the campus biosafety officer, the chemical hygiene officer, and the associate chemical hygiene officer on lab safety and escalation procedures. She is also working with the Schools on non-compliance issues associated with lab safety and learning where the pain points are for faculty to see how ORED can support them.

A CoR member said they were surprised to learn that the former core facilities director left UC Merced. VCR Wilson responded that his departure was mentioned in one of the regular ORED email newsletters and she encouraged faculty to let her know if they have any questions. CoR members then informed VCR Wilson of specific examples of where EH&S were too cautious and have put too much burden on the faculty. Faculty understand compliance but the issue is the high workload.

B. Core facilities.

VCR Wilson informed CoR that AVC for Research John Jackson is serving in the temporary role of core facilities director and overseeing the Department of Animal Research Services (DARS). The search for the permanent core facilities director is underway, as is the search for a DARS manager. AVC Jackson is working with lab managers in all core facilities to understand and prioritize their pain points, and developing a list of concerns such as instrumentation and maintenance and service agreements that are expiring. CoR Chair Ye stated that faculty would like to see graduate students working in core facilities. AVC Jackson agreed and stated that he has already spoken with lab managers who have identified graduate students to serve in these roles.

VCR Wilson informed CoR that ORED is partnering with UC Berkeley on a systemwide core network. Leading this initiative would be one of the duties of the future core facilities director in addition to other duties such as prioritizing new instrumentation, new core facilities, and the development of core facilities staff.

VCR Wilson acknowledged the difficulty in getting institutional funding for instrumentation. Lab managers and faculty collaborate to apply for instrumentation and last year the Academic Senate allocated some funding for instrumentation from the MacKenzie Scott campus gift but more funding is needed. ORED subsidizes some of the cost of core facilities but they are still quite expensive as they involve not only instrumentation but the training and developing staff.

VCR Wilson stated that she will provide updates to CoR on climate funds at a future meeting. She is unable to attend the next CoR meeting but Associate VCR Josh Viers will attend.

- IV. Consent Calendar
 - A. Today's agenda
 - B. Draft September 13 minutes

Action: The Consent Calendar was approved as presented.

- V. CoR Policy Subcommittee

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

CoR members requested that the draft Centers policy and the Senate committee comments from the last round of campus review be added to the next CoR agenda so the committee can then decide whether a policy subcommittee will be required to revise the policy.

Action: The draft Centers policy and the most recent set of Senate committee comments will be added to the next agenda.

- VI. 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: CoR Member Merg volunteered to represent CoR on PROC. The committee analyst will notify the Senate Executive Director.

- VII. From Graduate Council: Proposed Policy for Hybrid Programs
- The proposed policy was linked on today's agenda.

A CoR member was identified to be the lead reviewer.

Action: The lead reviewer's comments will be added to the October 11 CoR meeting. CoR's comments are due to the Senate Chair by Friday, October 13.

- VIII. Presidential Policy on Affiliations with Certain Health Care Organizations (Implementing Regents Policy 4405)

The following documents were linked on today's agenda:

- Revised, tracked changes policy and explanatory cover letter from UCOP
- UC campus comments – including CoR’s – on the AY 21-22 interim policy

A CoR member was identified to be the lead reviewer.

Action: The lead reviewer’s comments will be sent to the committee analyst by October 4 or 5 and then will be distributed to the CoR members for an email discussion. CoR’s comments are due to the Senate Chair by Monday, October 9.

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

Attest: Tao Ye, CoR Chair