

UNIVERSITY COMMITTEE ON RESEARCH POLICY  
Monday, November 6, 2023

## Meeting Minutes

### I. Chair's Announcements and Updates

Chair Cynthia Schumann asked about representation of COR on the campus executive council. It turns out that UCLA is the only division that does not have a COR member of the top-level Senate committee. Although recently the VC-R and COR chair have discussed how to increase interaction, and current UCLA divisional chair has been inviting COR leadership to more meetings and encouraging more engagement, UCORP encourages the UCLA COR chair to seek representation on the executive council.

Committee members discussed topics to bring up with Provost Katherine Newman and the UCOP Academic Personnel administrators who will join the December meeting. One of the primary and ongoing concerns is labor relations.

Provost Newman's Systemwide Academic Congress on the future of graduate education at the University of California on October 9<sup>th</sup> featured a keynote from Princeton Professor David Bell. Bell has creative – possibly provocative – ideas for thinking about the diverse paths taken by graduate students. In holding the congress, the Provost was seeking input and exploring creative and bold ideas. One of the sessions was the presentation of the initial report of the Academic Planning Council's Workgroup on the Future of UC Doctoral Programs by co-chairs Gillian Hayes, UCI Vice Provost for Graduate Education, and Susannah Scott, UCSB divisional Senate chair. Chair Schumann, who sits on the workgroup, described the three initial topics as: 1. The size of doctoral programs, 2. Budgeting and cost management, and 3. Distinguishing between paid work and academic work. Next steps will address mentorship and implementation.

In terms of dealing with organized graduate students, faculty are concerned about the preparation of the administration to deal with the many small and large issues that always pop up in contract negotiations and the aftermath.

UCORP's graduate student mentioned that the UC Graduate and Professional Council recently held its grad summit.

Another topic for Provost Newman is how to promote UC research to the CA legislature. She is already planning to bring more research-related items to the Board of Regents, and BOR chair Leib has noted the importance of UC research endeavors.

**ACTION:** Meeting minutes from October 2, 2023, were approved by the committee.

### II. Consultation with the Office of the President – Office of Research and Innovation

- *Vice President for Research & Innovation*

AVP Scott Brandt reported on the Hydrogen Hub funding from the federal government. The CA ARCHES initiative was selected to receive \$1.2b and is now awaiting the terms and actual funds. The California collaboration is setting up an LLC, similar to the governance of the National Labs, with UC as a primary partner. A CEO is being hired. The California projects will focus on ports, trucks, and buses, and will be augmented by state, local, and corporate funding. Two power plants will be converted to hydrogen. UC was

initially informed that 10% of the funding would be allocated for research, and while in the end there was none, UC stayed involved because there will be adjacent research. UC anticipates opportunities in related sciences, and in fields such as sociology, policy, and others.

AVP Brandt briefly mentioned potential UC involvement in the CHIPS Act funding, which will include research opportunities related to the National Semiconductor Technology Center. The center is a national collaboration focused on advancing computer chip manufacturing in the US.

- *Office of Research Policy Analysis and Coordination (RPAC)*

Research Policy staff met to discuss the Patent Policy revision with UCORP member Jim Weatherall and UCI intellectual property expert Professor Tony Reese. Based on their conversation, policy manager Felice Lu is adding to and adjusting the FAQs and clarifying the policy wording. A final version and policy issuance is expected in January.

RPAC managers briefly mentioned the President's August 28<sup>th</sup> letter regarding international agreements. Guidance is expected within the next few weeks.

The RPAC website has guidance in the case of a federal government shutdown. The information was prepared for a potential October 1st shutdown, but would apply in November as well.

- *UC Research Initiatives*

Executive Director Kathleen Erwin and Program Manager Anna Ward introduced the committee to the upcoming MRU review, of the UC Humanities Research Institute (UCHRI). The UCHRI director will join UCORP's March meeting. UCHRI was established under UC President Gardner in 1987. Designed as a Presidential program in the beginning, in recent years the institute has had to compete for MRPI (multicampus research program initiatives) funding each year. The reduction in MRPI funding has impacted the program's budget, and the work of constantly competing for funds was seen as hindering new projects. The recently retired director had been in the position for close to 25 years. Before leaving, he arranged an endowment gift from Mellon Foundation that requires a 2:1 match of new endowment grant funding. This has not been met, but an extension was provided.

Recently, a systemwide effort led by former UC Davis Provost and EVC Ralph Hexter was tasked with determining whether UCHRI could be put on more sound financial footing and re-establish true relationships with all campuses. An MOU with UC Irvine was established to provide core support for 5 years. UCORP's MRU review will follow the established format and process and will try to assess whether the institute is continuing to serve the UC system in the humanities. There are three more years of funding from UCI and potentially up to four years to make the Mellon match.

The committee briefly discussed the different funding and governance models for multi-campus research entities. In the face of decreasing core funding from UC in the early 2000s, MRU funding was transitioned to the competitive MRPI. There are a large number of non-MRU multi-campus entities: centers, institutes, etc. There are also NRS (natural reserve system) sites, dive stations, telescopes, and more, some of which are managed by campuses, some by UCOP. The Research and Innovation staff have been compiling information on the array of UC multi-campus entities and thinking about what should be done.

2022-23 annual reports are now available for committee review. These are not formally approved, just "accepted."

The Lab Fees Research Program's (LFRP) In-Residence Graduate Fellowship, which is competed every year, has increased the award amount to \$75k/year (from \$68k). The program requires the awardees to spend

six months at LLNL or LANL. This year, 26 applications were received; up to eight will be awarded, depending on the review and funding.

The LFRP Collaborative Research and Training (CRT) Award is competed every two years. It requires multiple campuses and national lab involvement. Earlier in 2023, the thematic areas for the competition were determined by the national labs in consultation with Senate committees and UCOP research leaders. After hearing positive feedback on workshops held for each theme in the past, this year there will be a more in-depth, comprehensive workshop process, starting with the theme of microelectronics. Participants appreciated the workshops for helping to foster partnerships and deepen connections.

UC has received new funding of \$7m for cancer research in conjunction with state and local firefighter entities and will be working with state agency – FireScope – to develop a Firefighter Cancer Prevention Research Program. An RFP will be issued later in the year. This is one-time funding, but the hope is to have some sustained funding going forward.

### **III. Research Topics Committee Discussion**

Prior to the meeting, committee members entered their campus updates into a Google form and the results were shared before the meeting. During discussion, members talked about issues in common, including the looming Oracle Financial System changeover at some of the campuses. The Oracle transition caused big problems at UC Merced and UC San Diego, and the representatives from those campuses suggested that it be implemented in parallel with the existing system, at least in the beginning. Reconciliation proved impossible in some cases. UC Merced was told that the implementation timeline is estimated at around five years. The UCM representative forwarded memos between the division’s Academic Senate and the campus administration that conveyed information about staffing problems, errors, and lost funding.

The UC Davis Senate division has had briefings about the transition to the Oracle system, and the administration has acknowledged that the January rollout may not be smooth. Faculty were notified that they should submit any procurement requests to carry them through the winter quarter. The campus is trying to prepare by using dummy accounts for tracking and clearing out unneeded accounts. UCLA is also preparing for the transition, but the timing is not clear. UCLA’s COR will stay involved and advocate for testing and accountability.

In addition to the concerns about Oracle, the biggest questions from faculty are about graduate students, including funding and assessment vs. academic expectations. Chair Schumann asked member to review her notes from the Oct. 9<sup>th</sup> Congress, view the slides (to be made available after the meeting), read the interim report, and provide feedback.

### **IV. Academic Senate Leadership Update**

Academic Council Chair James Steintrager and vice chair Steven Cheung joined the meeting to provide an overview of current activities of the Senate.

The Academic Planning Council (APC) Workgroup on the Future of Doctoral Education released its interim report. The next step will be sharing the information and implementing recommendations. The interim report will be released to relevant Senate committees which can provide feedback. It will then be sent out more broadly to the campus communities.

Chair Steintrager noted that Princeton Professor David Bell’s alternative model for doctoral education calls for shorter time to PhDs in some fields. In some areas, a doctoral degree might look more like a professional program degree. In addition to the graduate student educational model, UC is interested in

exploring more efficient means of undergraduate education. In thinking about the percentage of doctoral students who eventually get jobs in industry rather than academia, there are discipline-based considerations, questions of diversity, and issues around funding. Committee members pointed out that academic culture is not just about percentages or large numbers but providing students with options. Some do go into the professorate, but even when they go into industry there is a financial return for the state.

Moving on to other topics, Chair Steintrager noted that there was increasing pressure on the Senate to make a statement about the situation in Gaza. He said that he will talk about it in the context of academic freedom and free speech during his remarks at the Board of Regents meeting on November 15.

UCFW will be working on more clarity around increases in health care insurance costs, specifically on better communication about the drastic changes. There has been some pressure to increase employee contributions to the retirement plan, but that probably won't happen right now due to the steep increase in some healthcare plans and inflation. UCOP will propose a salary increase at the next Regents' meeting to be approved for the upcoming year. There may be a "total remuneration" study that will show faculty compensation in more holistic way.

Chair Steintrager thanked UCORP for monitoring the changes to the revised patent policy.

#### **V. Wrap up and Next Steps – Graduate Education**

UCI representative Jim Weatherall mentioned that the UC philosophy departments have gotten together to develop ideas for how the departments might best support graduate students in seeking non-academic careers. Led by a professor at UC Merced, the group convened last summer – funded by a UCHRI grant – to create guidance for philosophy graduate student advising that incorporates other-than academic careers, including creating a basic shared database of alumni in such careers. This could potentially be a model for other disciplines.

Other members noted that the mere existence of a community of graduate students, especially strong ones, in a discipline helps to make the culture of the department and contributes to the undergraduate experience. Graduate students/programs might be assessed on more than just "outcomes."

**ACTION item for next meeting:** Members are asked to review Chair Schumann's notes from the Oct. 9<sup>th</sup> Congress, view the slides from the APC Workgroup presentation (to be made available after the meeting), read the Workgroup's interim report, and provide feedback. Specifically, Chair Schumann would like to know if there are more questions that the Workgroup should be considering, including around preparing students for diverse career paths.

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Meeting adjourned: 12:25

Meeting minutes drafted by: Joanne Miller, Committee Analyst

Attest: Cynthia Schumann, UCORP Chair

#### **Meeting participants:**

Cynthia Schumann (Chair), Susanne Nicholas (Vice Chair), Larry Karp (Berkeley), Paul Hastings (Davis), James Weatherall (Irvine), Alapakam (Sam) Sampath (Los Angeles), Tao Ye (Merced), Weixin Yao (Riverside), Bin Liu Elina Zuniga (San Diego), (San Francisco), Alan Murray (Santa Barbara), Michael Hance (Santa Cruz), Hanna Butler-Struben (Graduate Student, UC Davis), James Steintrager (Academic Council Chair), Steven Cheung (Academic Council Vice Chair), Joanne Miller (Committee Analyst), Scott Brandt

(Associate Vice President for Research and Innovation), Kathleen Erwin, (Executive Director, Research Grants Program Office), Anna Ward (Program Officer, UC Research Initiatives), Deborah Motton (Executive Director, Research Policy Analysis and Coordination), Lourdes DeMattos (Director, Research Policy Analysis and Coordination), Agnes Balla ((Director, Research Policy Analysis and Coordination), Felice Lu (Research Policy Manager), Kimberly Jones-Ross (Interim Executive Director, Innovation Transfer & Entrepreneurship).