



*Robert L. Powell*  
Telephone: (510) 987-0711  
Fax: (510) 763-0309  
Email: [Robert.powell@ucop.edu](mailto:Robert.powell@ucop.edu)

*Chair of the Assembly of the Academic Senate  
Faculty Representative to the Regents  
University of California  
1111 Franklin Street, 12th Floor  
Oakland, California 94607-5200*

August 16, 2013

**AIMÉE DORR, PROVOST**

**Re: Review Process for the California Institutes for Science and Innovation**

Dear Aimée,

At the request of the University Committee on Research Policy (UCORP), the Academic Council considered the external review process for the California Institutes for Science and Innovation (the Cal ISIs, AKA, the Gray Davis Institutes). The Council agrees with UCORP's conclusion that the manner in which the current review process functions is unwieldy, protracted unnecessarily, and unlikely to yield strategic improvements in the Institutes. In order to improve the review process, the Council unanimously endorsed UCORP's suggestions, which I have enclosed.

One suggestion is to create a centralized document repository for review materials and to maximize the use of new technologies in the review process to improve work flow and lessen total time. The repository could also house supplemental review materials, in addition to tracking assignments and deadlines. The suggested 50-page limit and standardized format for the director's response seek to focus the reports and responses to them on the review protocol questions. Supporting information need only be available.

It is further hoped that this streamlined approach will allow reviewers to be more critical in their findings. Too often, voluminous written submissions in conjunction with time-limited site visits do not allow reviewers to parse carefully the information presented. As a result, the review findings have typically suggested, rather generically, improved management and greater funding, without a critical analysis of the Institutes' projects, their campus integration, or their future plans.

Council members also noted that UCORP's recommendations do not include any enforcement mechanisms, should participants fail to be fully cooperative or fail to respond in a timely fashion. We encourage you to work closely with the Senate in determining proper consequences to be included in the guidelines for the next review.

Finally, we remind you of the standard Senate protocol for soliciting Senate members for this and other review bodies, as well as joint work groups and task forces: After receiving a solicitation from the administration, we will work through the University Committee on Committees to identify a slate of qualified candidates which we will forward to you, and from which you will select the specified number of Senate participants.

We look forward to working with you to improve this process.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "R. L. Powell". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, prominent "P" and "L".

Robert L. Powell

Encl.

Cc: Academic Council  
Steven Beckwith, Vice President, Office of Research and Graduate Studies  
Executive Director Winnacker



UNIVERSITY COMMITTEE ON RESEARCH POLICY (UCORP)  
Mike Kleeman, Chair  
[mjkleeman@ucdavis.edu](mailto:mjkleeman@ucdavis.edu)

Assembly of the Academic Senate  
1111 Franklin Street, 12<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Oakland, CA 94607-5200  
Phone: (510) 987-9466  
Fax: (510) 763-0309

July 18, 2013

**ROBERT POWELL, CHAIR  
ACADEMIC COUNCIL**

**RE: Cal ISI Review Process**

Dear Bob,

The University Committee on Research Policy (UCORP) has worked with the UC administration to develop quantitative, timely, and meaningful review protocols and guidelines for each aspect of the University's research portfolio, including the California Institutes for Science and Innovation (Cal ISIs, AKA, the Grey Davis Institutes). The Institutes have matured and are now into their second series of 5-year reviews. UCORP feels that it is time to revisit the review process and protocols and build into them lessons learned over the past decade. To that end, we suggest the changes below to the Cal ISI review protocol; for your reference, we have enclosed the overall review process guidelines as well as the current protocols for participants.

Suggested revisions to the Cal ISI review process:

- The Provost or VP ORGS should designate a lead review coordinator to facilitate the exchange of information among staff and ensure that stakeholders and participants are aware of expectations and deadlines. The coordinator's contact information should be noted on all correspondence.
- A central website or other repository should be created to house review materials, instructions, guidelines, templates, and samples. A calendar showing deadlines and progress should be included. Directions to the repository should be noted on all correspondence.
- Review instructions should explicitly state that each segment of the review should take only three (3) months.
- Guidelines to Directors should be revised to designate a maximum page length for submissions. UCORP suggests an upper limit of 50 pages, but would be willing to consider other reasonable page limits proposed by stakeholders. UCORP believes the current practice of sharing all available information (+300 pages in some cases) overwhelms reviewers and slows the process. A better practice would be for each Director to present a thorough summary of the most compelling data and accomplishments. Additional, optional resources can be shared via the central repository should data cross-checking be desired.
- Standardized reporting forms and formats should be developed or adapted from current models such as those developed by the Portfolio Review Group (PRG). We feel this change would save the

Directors time and effort as well as encourage timely completion of the subsequent internal stakeholder review steps.

- Reviewers should be encouraged to submit both positive comments and constructive criticism / suggestions for improvement as appropriate.

As discussion of the Cal ISIs continues, other areas worthy of consideration include: the funding model for the Cal ISIs, differential local administration of the Cal ISIs, and integration and consistency with other UC research efforts. UCORP is willing to research these topics and report to the Academic Senate if you feel that our analysis would be useful.

Thank you for your consideration. Please feel free to contact us if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Mike Kleeman". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Mike Kleeman, Chair  
UCORP

cc: UCORP  
Steve Beckwith, VP ORGS  
Aimée Dorr, Provost  
Martha Winnacker, Executive Director, Systemwide Academic Senate