



Chair, Academic Council and Assembly of the Academic Senate
Telephone: (510) 987-9303
Fax: (510) 763-0309
Email: John.Oakley@ucop.edu

Faculty Representative to the Board of Regents
University of California
1111 Franklin Street, 12th Floor
Oakland, California 94607-5200

December 22, 2006

LAWRENCE COLEMAN
VICE PROVOST FOR RESEARCH

Re: Recommendations of the UC Academic Senate – UC Office of Research Multicampus Research Unit (MRU) Joint Workgroup

Dear Larry,

At its December 20, 2006 meeting, the Academic Council discussed the *Recommendations of the UC Academic Senate-UC Office of Research Multicampus Research Unit (MRU) Joint Workgroup* in light of the responses we received from a general Senate review by Standing Committees and Divisions. I am now pleased to be able to report on the outcome of that review.

First, the Senate commends the workgroup's efforts and expresses broad support of the workgroup's overarching recommendation, "that the Office of Research introduce greater flexibility into the provision of multicampus research funding to allow new opportunities to emerge on a competitive basis." The reviewing Senate bodies offered a variety of comments on the rest of the report's recommendations, which are highlighted here.

The recommendation to create an updated taxonomy of MRUs found general support. A fuller account of the categories would be helpful, including a breakdown of the number of MRUs in each, and an explanation of the new category of Multicampus Research Program which, while it is clearly meant to be the largest and most central group, is not actually defined. (See comments of UCPB, Santa Cruz, UCLA, and Irvine.) We suggest also that you consider UCPB's alternate new taxonomy that would further streamline MRUs into three groups: Facilities; Grant Programs; and MultiCampus Research Networks.

Most reviewers saw merit in the recommendation for a 5-year limit on Office of Research funding. This proposed measure met with support from UCPB and others; however, some reviewers stressed the importance of being flexible in implementing the limit, so that larger or more complex programs can have the latitude they need to evolve. Irvine's response notes that the limit may actually work as a disincentive for campus initiatives and asks for better clarification of what the options are after the 5-year review takes place.

Regarding implementation, several other notes of caution were sounded in response to possibly rigid, automatic, or across the board measures that may actually harm well-functioning MRUs. These would include the recommended 2.5% cut to existing MRUs, and the plan to recover 10% annually from the current total MRU budget for seeding new programs or augmenting existing ones. Additionally, there is the matter of fulfilling obligations. Since funding arrangements for existing MRUs are presumably based on the results of a completed full review, these cuts would reduce that funding without an academic justification and, therefore, should be carefully weighed with an eye to finding alternate solutions and honoring commitments as fully as possible.

The recommendations to decrease FTE over 5 years and return the associated funding to the general MRU fund, met with mixed reviews. UCLA expressed opposition to the plan, suggesting arrangements be negotiated between UCOP and the campuses. Others supported the plan, but, again, urged that it be carried out with sensitivity to the health of the affected MRUs. UCPB views a 5-year phase out as generous.

Relating to funding competition, CCGA and UC Davis urged that this process be explicitly defined and manifested as open, fair, and transparent. It was also suggested that those MRUs that are legislatively mandated be evaluated to determine whether their funding may be included in the competitive review process along with other programs.

In closing, I observe the key role the Senate has to play in refining and implementing these plans that will redefine what an MRU is and how it is supported. The recommended advisory board seems to be central to the next steps, but that idea itself needs to be more fleshed out in terms of the board's membership, its main function, and its relationship to the Systemwide Senate and campus Committees on Research. (See related comments from CCGA, UCPB, Santa Barbara, and Santa Cruz.) Also needed is a concrete plan and timeline for the Office of Research and the Senate to work together to revise university policies and guidelines and to draft appropriate review criteria that align with the raft of planned changes.

Please review the enclosed individual committee and divisional responses for more detailed input, and contact me with any questions. As you know, many of the workgroup's goals reflect long-standing positions of the Senate for an invigorated MRU portfolio. We look forward to a fruitful collaboration with the Office of Research to refine and realize these goals.

Sincerely,



John B. Oakley, Chair
Academic Council

Copy: Academic Council
María Bertero-Barceló, Senate Director

Enclosures: 12

10/16



COORDINATING COMMITTEE ON GRADUATE AFFAIRS (CCGA)
Reen Wu, Chair
rwu@ucdavis.edu

The Assembly of the
Academic Senate
1111 Franklin Street, 12th Floor
Oakland, CA 94607-5200
Phone: (510) 587-6138
Fax: (510) 763-0309

December 12, 2006

JOHN OAKLEY, CHAIR
ACADEMIC COUNCIL

RE: Recycling Multi-campus Research Units Funds, Recommendations of the Joint Academic Senate/UCOP Workgroup on

Dear John,

The Coordinating Committee on Graduate Affairs (CCGA) discussed the MRU Joint Working Group recommendations at some length at our December 5, 2006 meeting. In general, we applaud the efforts of the group, whole-heartedly support their effort to devise a structure that provides greater flexibility in the use of MRU funds, and are grateful for a chance to comment on the recommendations. Our comments fall into three general areas.

Senate Consultation

The third recommendation on Page 2 sets what we believe to be the appropriate tone with respect to the engagement of the Senate in reconfiguring the policy for allocating MRU funding. We are concerned, however, that without the explicit mention of the role of the Senate in several following recommendations, there is a danger that critical Senate committees, which may in fact have the most salient perspective on the optimal use of MRU funding, may be side-lined.

In particular, we would like to call your attention to the recommendation on the bottom of Page 3, the first recommendation on Page 4, and the first and second recommendations on Page 5. We ask that you consider the appropriateness of adding language that will ensure the engagement of the full breadth of the Senate committee structure in the reconsideration of the policy for allocating MRU funds.

For example, the recommendations at the bottom of Page 3 and the top of Page 4 proposes that the Vice Provost convene a group to examine the state and distribution of MRU facilities, and to provide annual reviews of the overall MRU portfolio. For the latter of these two recommendations, ensuing language appropriately delineates the participation of the Senate in the group. However, we believe that Senate input into the *selection* of the group, including both Senate faculty and administrators, as well as the balance thereof, is essential. The current language, if taken literally, would leave this critical process entirely in the hands of the Administration. We suggest that these recommendations call explicitly for the participation of Senate committees in constituting these groups.

The first two recommendations on Page 5 provide fairly broad authority to the Administration, without explicit inclusion of Senate participation. We feel that Senate participation is essential in implementation of both of these recommendations, and that this should enter explicitly into the language of these recommendations. Moreover, we suggest that the two recommendations be modified to emphasize the need for an open, transparent, and competitive process in the allocation of MRU funds.

To this end, the wording in these respective recommendations might read: “the Vice Provost implement an open, transparent and competitive process to introduce greater flexibility...” and “the Vice Provost for Research should use the funds made available.... To seed new multicampus efforts through an open, transparent, and competitive process.”

Automatic Sunset of MRU FTE Allocations

In reviewing the May 2004 UCPB report on restructuring the MRU review process, CCGA expressed reservations about the automatic return of FTE funding to the UC Office of Research for MRU-supported FTEs that become vacated. This policy appeared as the 4th recommendation of on Page 4 of the current recommendations, and CCGA remains concerned about the effect that such a rigid policy might have on successful MRUs. While CCGA is not against phasing out the support of FTEs with MRU funds, we are concerned that such a policy is unduly abrupt and capricious, and it might cause unanticipated harm to an otherwise healthy and beneficial MRU. Instead, we wonder if a more measured plan that phases out all MRU-supported positions in a way that embraces the full review process might not be more appropriate.

Legislatively Mandated Research Initiatives

There are a number of MRUs (such as the Pacific Rim Research Program) that were created by acts of the State Legislature, including, as CCGA recalls, ongoing line-items for State funding of the Legislative initiative. To the extent that such funding represents a permanent increment to the University's budget, it would seem inappropriate to CCGA to subject that funding to competitive review. We recommend that the Advisory Board, once constituted, evaluate legislatively-mandated MRUs and determine whether their funding can appropriately be included in the competitive review process.

Respectfully submitted,



Reen Wu
Chair, CCGA

cc: CCGA
Executive Director Bertero-Barcelo



UNIVERSITY COMMITTEE ON RESEARCH POLICY (UCORP)
Wendy Max, Chair
wendy.max@ucsf.edu

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

November 15, 2006

**JOHN OAKLEY, CHAIR
ACADEMIC SENATE**

RE: Recycling Multi-campus Research Units Funds, Recommendations of the Joint Academic Senate/UCOP Workgroup on, out for Senate-wide review

Dear John,

As you know, the Joint Academic Senate and Office of the President Workgroup on Multicampus Research Units (MRUs) submitted its recommendations regarding future administration, management, review and funding and the role of the Office of the President in relation to these activities. The main recommendation was that *"the Office of Research introduce greater flexibility into the provision of multicampus research funding to allow new opportunities to emerge on a competitive basis."* UCORP strongly endorses this general recommendation as its implementation would allow for faculty members on multiple campuses either to continue their efforts or to organize into new units.

Furthermore, subsequent specific recommendations of the Workgroup will stimulate greater clarity and transparency of MRU organization, functioning and possible disestablishment. Clarifications regarding the criteria for formation and continuing existence of MRU are very much needed as current status and organizational arrangements are often opaque.

Several specific recommendations of the Workgroup aim to introduce more flexibility and competition into MRU funding, financial oversight and resource allocation. These recommendations set specific targets for immediate and continuing budgetary cuts of existing MRUs and the progressive transfer of FTE funding from the campuses to the UCOP budget. While these financial and personnel shifts are needed to provide seed funding for new initiatives and are worth implementing, UCORP is concerned that their automatic application across the board could both harm the activities of well-functioning MRUs and affect the welfare of people currently employed by the MRUs targeted for cuts. While UCORP recognizes that these cuts are to be phased in over a period of years, we believe that current MRUs should be allowed some flexibility in the methods they use to achieve the mandated goals. The Advisory Board on Multicampus Research should play a critical role in this area.

Sincerely,

Wendy Max, UCORP Chair

cc: Maria Bertero-Barcelo, Executive Director
UCORP



UNIVERSITY COMMITTEE ON PLANNING AND BUDGET
Christopher Newfield 2006-2007 Chair
cnewf@english.ucsb.edu

Assembly of the Academic Senate
1111 Franklin Street, 12th Floor
Oakland, CA 94607-5200
Phone: (510) 987-0630
Fax: (510) 763-0309

November 20, 2006

JOHN OAKLEY
ACADEMIC COUNCIL CHAIR

Re: Recommendations of the Joint MRU Workgroup

Dear John,

The University Committee on Planning and Budget has reviewed the *Recommendations of the UC Academic Senate – UC Office of Research Multicampus Research Unit (MRU) Joint Workgroup* and is submitting the enclosed formal comments for Council's consideration.

Sincerely,

Christopher Newfield
UCPB Chair

Copy: UCPB
Enclosure

UCPB Comments on the Recommendations of the Senate/Office of Research Multicampus Research Unit (MRU) Joint Workgroup

UCPB, UCORP, and the Academic Council have each commented on the state of the MRU Program in recent years. These bodies have been concerned with two overriding issues with the program: funding, and the support of innovative research. Commentary has noted the great importance of the Office of the President's role in supporting innovative research that pools UC's unique strengths as a research university system. It has regretted that resources for this function have always been limited, and that in addition the program has suffered two rounds of budget cuts in the early 1990s and early 2000s that have totaled 45% and that have never been restored (Academic Council, June 2004). In June 2000, UCORP recommended a small augmentation (\$1-2 million a year on a base of over \$40 million), but this recommendation was never implemented. In the absence of augmentation, later reports have suggested freeing up funds for new programs through the review and termination of some MRUs: this appears finally to have happened in one case (Cal Space).

On the second point, the Senate has recommended mechanisms by which quasi-permanent funding could be recycled into new and innovative initiatives. UCORP suggested that as much as 50% of the MRU program budget be transformed into seed funding (2000). In 2003-04, UCPB developed a taxonomy that would facilitate such recycling, and also advocated a "finite-term funding principle" in which "currently funded programs with three or more years of operation since their last review be required to compete for the renewal of funding in three years." This would have meant a significant change in the status and function of MRUs. It would have moved them closer to the status of limited-term platforms designed to seed and launch new research, but still allowed sufficient time for newer or more dependent programs to build extramural relationships and support before OP funds were withdrawn. The recovered funding would then be directed toward new areas and new opportunities on a competitive basis. It is worth noting that OP operates another program much like this with a budget comparable to that of the MRUs. This is the Industry-University Cooperative Research Program (IUCRP), and it identifies research areas of scientific and social importance, issues requests for proposals, funds limited-term research, and then moves on to new areas. Although a revised MRU program would not replicate IUCRP, the latter's targeted flexibility might serve as a waypoint on the path to an MRU program that is both adaptable and yet focused on infrastructural development and ambitious, long-term research. The goal would be to overcome the MRU program's core quandary: it is too fixed to seed lots of new and creative research, and yet too small to build a spectrum of major research operations on a UC-sized scale.

The Academic Council adopted UCPB's recommendations in June 2004, but they were not implemented. Instead, a "Joint Working Group" was created to study the issue further, and its report is now before us. We note that this report affirms most of the general principles and some of the recommendations of the previous Senate efforts. Our responses are as follows:

I. Program Refocusing

- We certainly agree with the Report's "overarching recommendation" that "the Office of Research introduce greater flexibility into the provision of multicampus research funding to allow new opportunities to emerge on a competitive basis."
- We agree with the Report's 5-year review period for every MRU. For truly innovative and/or interdisciplinary research, ten years may be a more useful life-span, since the MRU program is not simply providing grants. We suggest a one-time renewal review for a second five-year period, with clear provisions for lessened or phased out OP support.
- Since "recompeting" means a momentous change in the structure and function of the MRU program, we recommend that the Provost and Vice-Provost take measures to advocate for and negotiate this change on the campus, including negotiations with the campus interests that view MRU-derived OP funding as a permanent commitment and that have blocked reform efforts in the past.

II. Categorization

- We agree that the taxonomy for MRUs should be revised, and particularly with the separating out of long-term systemwide facilities (Lick and White Mountain) from the other MRUs.
- We believe that the "network" is the main form that MRUs should take: if a unit is not a multi-campus network, it is a campus-based ORU and should be supported by the campus. We suggest two corresponding changes:
 - that all MRU "research programs" be seen as networks, so that this category be eliminated
 - that grants programs be administered by OR, and be described as Multicampus Grants Programs with no status as an MRU. (While much of the activity of an MRU network would take the form of single-PI grants, these MRU-administered grants should be directly relevant to the activities of the multicampus network.

As a result, the current MRU program would have three parts. Facilities (budgeted through OR but distinguishable from any MRU network or grant activity); Grant Programs (administered through OR); and MultiCampus Research Networks.

III. Funding

- We support the Report's unanimous recommendation that MRU's not support FTE. We feel that the five-year unwinding of those FTE

commitments is generous, and support the Office of Research's efforts to transfer all FTE obligations to the campuses within that time.

- We do not support across-the-board cuts, even small ones, in existing MRU budgets. Cuts should come on the basis of scientific, peer-review assessments of various MRU's strengths and weaknesses. UCOP fought the across-the-board research cuts that hurt UC research in the past, and the same stance should be adopted here.
- The Office of Research's overall budget should increase in tandem with the increase in the University's overall research funding. This might consist of OP's full share of Indirect Cost Recovery, with the MRU Facilities taken out of the OP budget for MRUs and placed elsewhere.

IV. Program Governance and Next Steps

- The proposed Advisory Board is fine, but should also function as a Review Panel for generating RFP topics, selecting proposals, and advising on the development of appropriate programs and infrastructure.
- We do not support the expansion of the Office of Research mission to team with External Relations among other things. We feel that OR should focus on hearing from systemwide faculty about cutting-edge research needs, creating collaborative relationships across campuses, shaping research areas, RFPs and subsequent proposals, and selecting and obtaining funding for the most promising work.
- The Multicampus Research Program should invite faculty to build collaborative, cross-campus research operations in areas where they would not be duplicated at other universities or funded by public agencies. This includes domains in the humanities and social sciences where a genuine MRU operation might transform a field and bring real luster to the University.
- The Office of Research should have the authority to undertake these changes in consultation with the Academic Planning Council and appropriate Senate committees.

In general, we believe that the MRU program should aim to be a national model of an operation that combines the best elements of the limited research grant and the stable research facility. UCPB will be happy to do whatever it can to help the Office of Research achieve that goal.

(November 20, 2006)



320 STEPHENS HALL
UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

November 7, 2006

JOHN OAKLEY
Chair, Academic Senate

*Subject: Recommendations from the Joint Academic Senate and UCOP Workgroup on Recycling
Multi-campus Research Unit (MRU) Funds*

On November 6, 2006, the Divisional Council (DIVCO) of the Berkeley Division discussed the report cited above, and the comments of the Committee on Academic Planning and Resource Allocation (CAPRA), Committee on Research (COR), and Graduate Council. DIVCO endorsed the recommendations.

In supporting the recommendations, DIVCO echoed the Committee on Research:

... the committee favors the recommendation to evaluate existing MRUs within the proposed framework. This will ensure that current and future MRUs are placed on an equal footing with regard to both organizational requirements and UC's research investments. The proposal to review an MRU every 5 years should also eliminate the possibility that an MRU continue beyond its mission.

DIVCO also discussed the proposal to phase out MRU support for faculty FTE, and seconded CAPRA in specifically endorsing this recommendation.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'William Drummond', enclosed in a light gray rectangular box.

William Drummond
Chair, Berkeley Division of the Academic Senate

Cc: Calvin Moore, Chair, Committee on Academic Planning and Resource Allocation
Miguel Villas-Boas, Chair, Committee on Research
Ilan Adler, Chair, Graduate Council
Linda Song, Associate Director staffing Graduate Council

Diane Sprouse, Senate Analyst, Committee on Academic Planning and
Resource Allocation and Committee on Research



OFFICE OF THE ACADEMIC SENATE
ONE SHIELDS AVENUE
DAVIS, CALIFORNIA 95616-8502
TELEPHONE: (530) 752-2231

December 6, 2006

John Oakley, Chair

Assembly of the Academic Senate
Academic Council
1111 Franklin Street, 12th Floor
Oakland, CA 94607-5200

**Re: System-wide Review of the Recommendations from the Joint Academic Senate and UCOP
Workgroup on Recycling Multi-Campus Research Units (MRS) Funds**

The referenced recommendations were reviewed by the standing committees of the Davis Division of the Academic Senate. Comments were received from the Committees on Research and Planning and Budget, and Graduate Council. Our Division congratulates the workgroup membership for undertaking this review and for arriving at a set of well thought out and cogent recommendations.

We realize that this is a first step in what we hope to be a continuing process to overhaul the MRS system. Additional and substantial work should be devoted to the lack of detail regarding implementation of the recommendations, and already there is a perception of substantial shortcomings in the system. On page two of the document, the first and foremost recommendation in bold is missing two key concepts: Openness and Fairness. We propose rewording this recommendation to read:

“We recommend that the Office of Research introduce greater flexibility, openness and fairness into the provision of multi-campus research funding to allow new opportunities to emerge on a competitive basis.”

The addition of “openness and fairness” to this recommendation stems from concerns that the procedures employed by the Office of Research to reallocate MRS funds are open and fair. For the upcoming RFP process to be truly open and fair, involvement of Office of Research staff should be limited until there is a RFP announcement; and a general announcement should be made to UC faculty that a RFP is imminent. If the process allows staff to assist teams, then guidelines should be established for how staff will help such teams and staff resources should be evenly and fairly allocated to each team.

Indefinite continuation of existing MRS and establishment of new MRS may divert UC internal resources from established areas of strength within the UC system. Therefore, we concur with the workgroup recommendations that there be no expectation for continued funding beyond the first five years for any of the MRS and oversight by an Advisory Board appropriate.

December 6, 2006

Page two

Further, we recommend assuring the approval or continuation of MRS take into account the contribution of the MRS to Graduate Student and Postdoctoral Scholar training.

Under the excellent recommendations offered by the Joint Workshop report, the MRS program can be greatly improved. It is important for the recommendations to be implemented in a thoughtful, fair and open manner. Thus, we recommend inclusion of a clear description of how the workgroup's recommendations will be implemented.

The Davis Division of the Academic Senate supports the recommendations of the Joint Academic Senate and UCOP Workgroup.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Linda F. Bisson". The signature is written in dark ink and extends across the width of the text block below it.

for:

Linda F. Bisson
Professor of Viticulture & Enology
Chair of the Davis Division of the Academic Senate



Office of the Academic Senate
2300 Berkeley Place South
Irvine, CA 92697-1325
(949) 824-2215 FAX

November 21, 2006

John Oakley, Chair, Academic Council
1111 Franklin Street, 12th Floor
Oakland, CA 94607-5200

**RE: Recommendations of the Joint Academic/UCOP Workgroup on
Recycling Funds for Multi-campus Research Units (MRUs)**

On November 7, 2006, the Irvine Division's Senate Cabinet strongly endorsed in principle the recommendations of the workgroup for introducing greater flexibility into the provision of MRU funding, making the funding process more competitive and allowing new opportunities to be targeted in a timely fashion. The endorsement was based on advice from the Irvine Council on Research, Computing, and Library Resources and the Irvine Council on Planning and Budget. I offer some suggestions that came up in our review that the Academic Council might consider in terms of implementation of increased flexibility in MRU funding.

- The specifics of how to free up funding, to establish the new review process, and to manage the UCORP total MRU funding are often vague and difficult to implement. Irvine is concerned about making specific budget reduction recommendations without the review process in place and strongly encourages that it be articulated.
- The recommendation to create a new taxonomy should be endorsed. However, it would help to know what fraction of the current overall budget goes to units that would become each new category. The recommendations should address how this partitioning of funding should be decided in the future.
- The recommendation that UCORP have a maximum of five years of financial commitment is of mixed value. On the one hand, the expectation that systemwide funding would not continue in perpetuity and that limited MRU funds would continue to rapidly recirculate would allow new opportunities; on the other it reduces the incentive to create a complex, successful long-term MRU. We recommend adding a phrase to the sentence on page four, under MRU Reviews

and Funding, “It is expected that MRUs that continue to do quality scholarship should/could be supported by campus and/or extramural funding” so that it reads “in addition to their funding from the UC Office of Research.” Without the added text, it can be inferred that external or campus funds should replace the UCOR funding after five years. It is also unclear how frequently an MRU will be reviewed during this five-year period or if the supporting matching campus funds can be provided by campuses at funding time or after five years (pp. 4 and 5).

- The recommendation to establish an Advisory Board to assist in MRU management raises several issues that should be reconsidered or clarified.
 - It mixes Senate and administrative review and advisory functions. It may be more effective to conduct Senate-level and administrative reviews separately. Existing Senate-level review mechanisms can be augmented with a comparative review and recommendation process.
 - The recommendations for the annual review of MRU portfolios raise several questions. Is it deciding on new activities only? What is its relationship to five-year MRU reviews? Is it both? How do the two review processes work together? With respect to new MRU proposals, is this new board taking over the currently existing Senate MRU review process?
 - One of the obvious difficulties with the new approach is how to distribute funds to new activities, as well to provide for existing ones up for renewal. For instance, what fraction of the overall budget should be allocated to themes for new SGP funding? It is unclear how such distribution is to be made and what the comparative decision-making process is. This needs to be addressed on a regular schedule, perhaps annually, and the planning process should be made transparent. It may be worthwhile to introduce grant or MRU theme competitions submitted in a proposal-like fashion a year before the funding cycle.
 - Comparative analysis of MRUs, grant programs, and so on is very difficult. The faculty in various disciplines would want to be represented on the Advisory Board. In areas with little or no external funding, entitlements may need to be maintained. It may be advisable to create funding areas/categories and to have competition in each of these.
- Recommendations to provide funding for planning meetings (p. 5) should be elaborated. It may be advisable to have a two-stage process that requires short pre-proposals, of which select projects may be encouraged to submit a full proposal in an effort to obtain planning funds.
- The recommendation to not support FTEs as part of the MRU funding is reasonable, although it is not clear what such FTEs really are. However, it assumes that campuses will take on funding such positions where necessary. Since there is no forthcoming funding for such FTEs for campuses, it needs to be established that this will not adversely affect essential MRU functions.
- The recommendation to create a mechanism to recover 10% of MRU budgets annually over the next five years has an immediacy to it that is not matched by the

creation of the review and planning process for future MRU activities. Unlike the one-time 2.5% cut to seed the new multi-campus efforts, it is very drastic and does not take any nuances into account. For instance, if the UC Micro funding is cut by 50% then the matching industrial funding of the same amount is lost to UC faculty. A review process similar to the one expected of the Advisory Board or similar body in the future can be undertaken first and then the level and duration of funding cuts established. There was some sentiment that a 2.5% cut to existing programs was too small to jump start the process and that a 5% cut could be sustained since it is within range of ongoing funding cuts frequently enacted by federal funding agencies.

- The recommendation for the involvement of three campuses was generally supported. A competitive MRU mechanism should reward uniting the system, and that will be clearer with three campuses. There is a concern that otherwise in-house MRUs could be established, for example a campus creating an MRU with an adjacent National Lab.
- Another concern is the issue of matching campus funding as "evidence of campuses' commitments to the proposed MRU and its involved faculty." The availability of such campus funds is unclear. In addition, it also requires a campus-level comparative evaluation of MRUs it may want to support.

A handwritten signature in dark ink, reading "Martha McCartney". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, sweeping loop at the end of the name.

Martha McCartney, Senate Chair

c: CORCLR
CPB



ACADEMIC SENATE EXECUTIVE OFFICE
LOS ANGELES DIVISION
3125 MURPHY HALL
LOS ANGELES, CA 90095-1408

PHONE: (310) 825-3851
FAX: (310) 206-5273

December 8, 2006

Professor John Oakley
Chair of the Academic Senate
1111 Franklin Street, 12th Floor
Oakland, CA 94607

In RE: Proposal for Recycling Multi-Campus Research Unit Funds

Dear John:

Thank you for the opportunity to opine upon the Proposal for Recycling Multi-Campus Research Unit Funds. I sent the proposal to all standing committees of the Academic Senate with the invitation to opine, and specifically requested that the Executive Board, the Council on Planning and Budget (CPB), and the Council on Research (CPB) respond. I also convened an MRU ad hoc committee with the expressed mandate of evaluating the proposal. I have attached the responses from CPB, COR, and the ad hoc committee for your information; the Executive Board's response is integrated in this letter.

UCLA applauds the efforts of the MRU Joint Workgroup in its efforts to regularize multi-campus research in the University of California. We have, however, serious reservations regarding the current proposal and therefore cannot support it in its current form. The UCLA Divisional Senate would be pleased to lend its support to the proposal, should the following criteria be met:

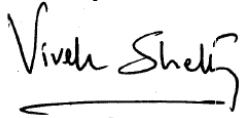
- An arbitrary sunset clause of any duration should not be the policy. Rather, as with departments, a set of disestablishment standards should be designed against which any given MRU can be measured during its regular program review.
- MRU program reviews occurring every five years does not give the larger, more complex MRU's sufficient time to reach maturity. Rather, as with departments, MRU reviews would better serve the university if they occur every eight years.
- We disagree with the proposal's claim that allocating FTE through UCOP (I&R) is an inappropriate use of central funds. This matter will be best managed through negotiations between UCOP and the appropriate campus authorities.
- The proposal should differentiate better between MRUs regarding funding structure. While all MRUs depend on a certain amount of matching funds from the participating campuses and many have been successful in attracting external funding, many MRUs owe their foundational support to UCOP, particularly those in the humanities and high-risk science, engineering, and medical collaborations. While MRUs should be encouraged to seek external funding sources, securing

such funds should not be the criterion for continuation of the MRU or for continued UCOP support.

- The goal of having a greater portion of the budget of continuing MRUs depend on other sources (either from participating campuses or extramural grants) is worthy of support, but must take into account the different institutional formats and purposes expressed through the four-fold taxonomy of MRUs proposed in the report.
- The report defines three of the four categories within this taxonomy (Systemwide Networks, Systemwide Grants Programs, and Systemwide Research Facilities), but it does not define the fourth and presumably largest funding category, Multi-campus Research Programs. An explicit definition of this category should be developed. We note that the taxonomy proposed here differs from that contained in the Academic Council recommendations of June 25, 2004. The Systemwide Conference Programs category proposed in the Academic Council report has been replaced by the Systemwide Networks category in the Joint Workgroup report. We would like clarification of this alternative proposal. Are conference programs to be subsumed under one of the other categories, or eliminated? The Systemwide Networks category seems to be primarily aimed at fostering communication among established campus-based ORUs. It is not clear to us that this type of activity, which probably can be supported by the existing resources of the ORUs, is as fully deserving of support as programs, such as the conference-oriented programs, that would not exist without MRU support.

I am very grateful for the individual and collective efforts of the members of the Academic Senate-UC Office of Research Multi-campus Research Unit Joint Workgroup. I trust that the insights and recommendations presented here will strengthen the proposal. The UCLA Division looks forward to reviewing the proposal upon its revision.

Sincerely,



Vivek Shetty
UCLA Academic Senate Chair

Cc: Maria Bertero-Barcelo, Executive Director of the Systemwide Academic Senate
Jaime R. Balboa, UCLA Academic Senate CAO

MEMORANDUM

Academic Senate Executive Office
Council on Research
Los Angeles Division
3125 Murphy Hall
140801

DATE: December 8, 2006

TO: Vivek Shetty, Chair, Academic Senate

FROM: Council on Research Meeting November 3, 2006

RE: Recommendations of the Joint Academic Senate/UCOP Workgroup on Recycling Multi-campus Research Unit Funds

UCLA's Council on Research engaged in discussion during review of the recommendations on Recycling Multi-campus Research Unit Funds (MRUs) as requested by Jaime Balboa on September 22, 2006.

The recommendations of the MRU Joint Workgroup primarily seek to encourage innovation in cross-campus research initiatives in an era of diminishing resources. It addresses two prevailing problems: the budget cutbacks of recent years that have fallen most heavily on research units, and the absorption of virtually all available funding for MRUs by established groups, which has left little opportunity for funding new ventures. The Workgroup recommendations also seek to develop a systematic taxonomy for the diverse institutional arrangements subsumed under the broad category of MRUs (with the implicit aim, it seems, of devising different funding models for each of the four types of MRU specified by the report), and to provide greater faculty oversight over decisions to continue existing MRUs or fund new ones through creation of an Advisory Board that will oversee.

The main thrust of the Joint Workgroup's report is aimed at reallocating funds from long-established units to new ones. It proposes to replace the current 15-year review cycle for older units with a uniform 5-year review cycle. In addition, it proposes that funding be withdrawn from FTE allocations to MRU units incrementally over a 5-year period, and that no funding be provided for FTE allocations in the future. It also seeks to ensure that 10 percent of the total MRU budget in each year be reserved for funding new proposals. In order to achieve this goal, funding for some existing units may be terminated, and it is expected that continuing MRUs obtain funding from other sources rather than rely solely on UCOP resources.

Response to Proposal to Reinvigorate MRUs Across the UC System

- We are aware that the total amount of funding available for MRUs has remained stagnant in recent years, and actually declined since the inception of the first MRUs in the 1970s. We urge our leadership to aggressively pursue increased funding for MRUs at the state-wide level. If UC is to remain one of the premier places to undertake research in the

sciences, engineering, medicine, arts and humanities in the US, we need a leadership that makes this case effectively and persistently at the highest level.

- We endorse the goals and main recommendations of the Joint Workgroup report. The issue of allocation of I&R FTE via the MRU process is problematic. This issue is best dealt with through negotiation between the Office of the President and the appropriate campus authorities.
- Greater differentiation among MRUs with regard to funding structure is required. While all MRUs depend on a certain measure of matching funds from participating campuses and many have been successful in attracting outside funding, many multi-campus research owe their foundational support to UCOP, particularly those in humanities. We therefore suggest that MRUs should be encouraged to seek outside funding whenever this is appropriate and feasible, but the securing of such funds should not be a criterion for continuation of support from UCOP. Indeed, federal agencies do not as a rule support the development of research collaborations and UCOP support remains fundamental to the creation and strengthening of research bridging UC campuses.
- The goal of having a greater portion of the budget of continuing MRUs depend on other sources (either from participating campuses or extramural grants) is worthy of support, but must take into account the different institutional formats and purposes expressed through the four-fold taxonomy of MRUs proposed in the report.
- The report defines three of the four categories within this taxonomy (Systemwide Networks, Systemwide Grants Programs, and Systemwide Research Facilities), but it does not define the fourth and presumably largest funding category, Multicampus Research Programs. An explicit definition of this category should be developed. We note that the taxonomy proposed here differs from that contained in the Academic Council recommendations of June 25, 2004. The Systemwide Conference Programs category proposed in the Academic Council report has been replaced by the Systemwide Networks category in the Joint Workgroup report. We would like clarification of this alternative proposal. Are conference programs to be subsumed under one of the other categories, or eliminated? The Systemwide Networks category seems to be primarily aimed at fostering communication among established campus-based ORUs. It is not clear to us that this type of activity, which probably can be supported by the existing resources of the ORUs, is as fully deserving of support as programs, such as the conference-oriented programs, that would not exist without MRU support.
- The proposed change from 15 to 5 year reviews would increase administrative load by 300%. We recommend an evaluation cycle of eight years instead of five, commensurate to the evaluation cycle of academic departments, and coming at a convenient half-way point within the 15-year cycle of 'sunset reviews.' For many projects that involve the creation of a larger infrastructure, setting up a laboratory, hiring staff, etc., a five-year cycle would be much too short for a research project to reach maturity and produce demonstrable results. In many instances, MRUs evolve and "re-invent" themselves opening new horizons in research and scholarship. Although the devil is always in the

details, some form of guidance on the ground rules in the report for continuation of an MRU would be appropriate. Indeed, we believe that it would be shortsighted to terminate a MRU that is thriving simply to satisfy a pre-established rule.

- The report's specification of MRU grants program (“...to be considered a Systemwide Grants Program, a significant percentage of the grants should address an annual, focused theme...and lead to an outcome such as a published volume”) is overly proscriptive. Our experience indicates that multiple approaches work best, and that new synergies can produce unexpected results.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "A. K. Mal". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke extending to the left.

Ajit K. Mal, PhD
Professor and Chair, UCLA COR

**Report of the UCLA Council on Planning and Budget
On the Recommendations of the UC Academic Senate—UC Office of Research
Multicampus Research Unit (MRU) Joint Workgroup
Draft Submitted by William I. Newman
November 6, 2006**

Within the University of California, the Compendium defines "MRU (*Multicampus Research Unit*): *This category includes (1) all units with facilities and personnel on two or more campuses or locations associated with them, and (2) all units with facilities at a single location on or near one of the campuses if the participation of faculty or staff from other campuses is so extensive as to give such a unit a Universitywide character.*" Examples of each type of MRU include the Institute of Geophysics and Planetary Physics (IGPP), including faculty involvement from no fewer than 4 campuses including a major effort at UCLA, and Lick Observatory, situated on Mt. Hamilton near UCSC that includes the 3-meter telescope on Mt. Hamilton. In addition to the recommendations of the joint workgroup, documentation includes 4 sets of appendices. Briefly, their recommendations seek to establish new rules and operating principles for MRUs, including irrevocable termination or "sunset" provisions after 15 years. It is our opinion that this document challenges the very essence of what is integral to a university although it does offer some potential benefits. Indeed, the chairs of all UC MRUs met recently and instituted a statement that reads:

"The group is sympathetic to the goal of increasing involvement in MRU's across the University of California and is enthusiastic about participating in ways to increase support for the program. However, as written, the document is too proscriptive of the activities of MRU's and review cycle, fails to differentiate between successful, established institutes and new project level groupings, and overemphasizes the model of achieving sustainability from non-UCOP resources within 5 years. In particular, no strategies are proposed for how to transition successful institutions developed under UCOP support back to campus resources."

MRUs are currently operated using review procedures that are not unlike those of regular academic departments. As such, they continually have to "re-invent" themselves. They offer "added value" to the University inasmuch as they integrate the intellectual resources (as well as, in some cases, facilities) of our 10-campus system. Arbitrary rules relating to termination and funding could drastically alter the landscape of this University. As a case in point, IGPP at UCLA was established by the Legislature 60 years ago (1946) and presently has 9.67 faculty FTE and 2.5 academic-support FTE. (UCSD has 5 FTE that were provided formally through the Scripps Institute of Oceanography.) In 1957-8, UCLA IGPP, together with its sister at UCSD were among the post-Sputnik pioneers in exploring by satellite and other means the Earth, moon, and their environs—were the proposed recommendations in place then, UCLA IGPP would have been working toward its disestablishment instead. A dozen years later, UCLA IGPP and its sister efforts were focused on the exploration of our solar system with heavy-involvement in missions to Mercury, Venus, Mars, Jupiter, Saturn, and beyond. (During these years, the Greenhouse Effect and Nuclear Winter Effects were discovered on Venus and Mars, respectively; now, these established principles are at the heart of the growing

environmental debate.) In the late 1990's, UCLA IGPP through its Center for Astrobiology, helped pioneer a new emergent discipline that integrated *all* of the physical and life sciences in trying to better understand the origin, evolution, and future of life on this planet and, possibly, elsewhere. Now, the focus of IGPP is evolving once again in directions that include environmental and energy-related issues. This unit has undergone repeated 8-year reviews with stellar ratings. Does it make any sense to simply disestablish it—and then require that it re-establish itself under a new name? Other examples of this issue abound. The once-upon-a-time Department of Bacteriology is now a thriving Department of Microbiology and Molecular Genetics; academic departments as well as MRUs evolve with the advances in knowledge. Would we think of disestablishing the Department of English since it is more than 15 years old? Efforts to create a viable MRU dealing with Dickens were stillborn; had it been established, would it have been necessary or even reasonable to eliminate after 5 years owing to its failure to generate external resources? At the same time, we are aware that other grass-roots efforts to create MRUs, for example in Nonlinear Science, Robotics, and Gerontology, supported by large numbers of UC faculty, were ignored by a system within UCOP that was not designed to embrace new potentialities.

We subscribe to the notion that this is a University with 10 campuses, and that our intellectual productivity can be enhanced by the creation and maintenance of multicampus research units. The criterion for their disestablishment should be based on performance as determined during their 8-year reviews. Meanwhile, we believe that the University must strive to provide additional support to MRUs and to identify new arenas of intellectual potential that is the foundation of this University.

**Review of the Recommendations of the UC Academic Senate—UC Office of
Research Multicampus Research Unit (MRU) Joint Workgroup**

UC Los Angeles MRU Ad Hoc Committee

Claudia Rapp; T. Mark Harrison; Ajit Mal; and William I. Newman (Chair);

November 26, 2006

1. Overview of Multicampus Research Activities and Issues

The University of California (UC) system is nationally unique because of its stature and support of system-wide collaboration in research and training. Augmented in this way, we can realize “the power of ten” in which the UC system becomes much greater than the sum of its component parts. Thus multi-campus research activities have a pivotal role in the mission of UC as a whole and we welcome efforts to nurture and maintain MRU activities.

Within the University of California, the Compendium defines “MRU (*Multicampus Research Unit*): *This category includes (1) all units with facilities and personnel on two or more campuses or locations associated with them, and (2) all units with facilities at a single location on or near one of the campuses if the participation of faculty or staff from other campuses is so extensive as to give such a unit a Universitywide character.*” Examples of each type of MRU include the Institute of Geophysics and Planetary Physics (IGPP), including faculty involvement from no fewer than 5 campuses including a major effort at UCLA, and Lick Observatory, situated on Mt. Hamilton near UCSC that includes the 3-meter telescope on Mt. Hamilton. In addition to the recommendations of the joint workgroup, documentation includes 4 sets of appendices.

Briefly, the goals of the MRU Joint Workgroup are to invigorate multicampus research to help UC maintain excellence in interdisciplinary research by increasing responsiveness to emerging opportunities while increasing financial resources for intercampus research. In this regard they recommend establishment of new rules and operating principles for MRUs, including irrevocable termination or “sunset” provisions after 15 years. We are sympathetic to the goal of increasing involvement in MRU’s across UC and enthusiastic about participating in ways to increase state support for the program. However, the Joint Workgroup report is narrowly focused on short-term strategies to redistribute existing resources, unduly proscriptive of MRU activities and the review cycle, fails to differentiate between successful, established institutes and new project-level groupings, and overemphasizes the model of achieving sustainability from non-UCOP resources within 5 years. In particular, no strategies are proposed for transitioning successful institutions developed under UCOP support back to campus resources.

2. Response to Proposal to Reinvigorate MRUs Across the UC System

- We are aware that the total amount of funding available for MRUs has remained stagnant in recent years, and actually declined since the inception of the first MRUs in the 1970s. We urge our leadership to aggressively pursue increased

funding for MRUs at the state-wide level. If UC is to remain one of the premier places to undertake research in the sciences, engineering, medicine, arts and humanities in the US, we need a leadership that makes this case effectively and persistently at the highest level.

- We welcome the initiative to create a unified and cohesive nomenclature for multi-campus collaborations (for the sake of brevity, we use MRU as shorthand for the entire variety of multi-campus research collaborations funded by UCOP). We recognize the need to balance funding for existing MRUs with the impetus to generate new intercampus projects. However, the real limiting resource in creating MRU's is the energy and enthusiasm of UC faculty to actually connect our university. The report provides no guidance how to encourage and sustain institutions that have taken decades to build world leading reputations.
- The issue of allocation of I&R FTE via the MRU process is problematic, not because of disagreement that FTE should be resourced from campuses, but that some UCOP support can be interpreted as historically earmarked campus resources held by the MRU program. This issue is best dealt with through negotiation between the Office of the President and the appropriate campus authorities.
- The proposed change from 15 to 5 year reviews would increase administrative load by 300%. We recommend instead an evaluation cycle of eight years, commensurate to the evaluation cycle of academic departments, and coming at a convenient half-way point within the 15-year cycle of 'sunset reviews.' For many projects that involve the creation of a larger infrastructure, setting up a laboratory, hiring staff, etc., a five-year cycle would be much too short for a research project to reach maturity and produce demonstrable results. In many instances, MRUs evolve and "re-invent" themselves opening new horizons in research and scholarship. Although the devil is always in the details, some form of guidance on the ground rules in the report for continuation of an MRU would be appropriate. Indeed, we believe that it would be shortsighted to terminate a MRU that is thriving simply to satisfy a pre-established rule.
- Greater differentiation among MRUs with regard to funding structure is required. While all MRUs depend on a certain measure of matching funds from participating campuses and many have been successful in attracting outside funding, many multi-campus research owe their foundational support to UCOP, particularly those in humanities and vanguard (i.e., high risk) science, engineering, and medicine collaborations. We therefore suggest that MRUs should be encouraged to seek outside funding whenever this is appropriate and feasible, but the securing of such funds should not be a criterion for continuation of support from UCOP. Indeed, federal agencies do not as a rule support the development of research collaborations and UCOP support remains fundamental to the creation and strengthening of research bridging UC campuses.

- The report's specification of MRU grants program (“...to be considered a Systemwide Grants Program, a significant percentage of the grants should address an annual, focused theme...and lead to an outcome such as a published volume”) is overly proscriptive. Our experience indicates that multiple approaches work best, and that new synergies can produce unexpected results. Furthermore, it is inappropriate to discuss MRU grants without acknowledging the significant participation of the national laboratories that may have different goals and requirements than UC.

3. Concluding Comments

We applaud the efforts by the MRU Joint Workgroup in attempting to regularize multicampus research in the University of California. We subscribe to the notion that this is a University with 10 campuses, and that our intellectual productivity can be enhanced by the creation and maintenance of multicampus research units that build on “the power of ten.” The criterion for their disestablishment should be based on performance standards like those employed for academic departments during their 8-year reviews, and not on an arbitrary sunset provision. Meanwhile, we believe that the University should strive to provide additional support to MRUs and to identify new arenas of intellectual potential that are the foundation of this University.



CHAIR, ACADEMIC SENATE
RIVERSIDE DIVISION
UNIVERSITY COLLEGE BUILDING
ROOM 225
TEL: (951) 827-5530
FAX: (951) 827-5545
SENATE@UCR.EDU

THOMAS COGSWELL
PROFESSOR OF HISTORY
RIVERSIDE, CA 92521-0217
TEL: (951) 827-1997
E-MAIL: THOMAS.COGSWELL@UCR.EDU

December 1, 2006

John Oakley
Professor of Law
Chair, UC Systemwide Academic Senate
1111 Franklin St., 12th Floor
Oakland, CA 94607

Dear John:

**RE: SYSTEM-WIDE REVIEW OF THE RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE JOINT
ACADEMIC SENATE AND UCOP WORKGROUP ON RECYCLING MULTI-
CAMPUS RESEARCH UNITS (MRS) FUNDS**

UCR has completed the review of the recommendations from the Joint academic Senate workgroup on recycling multi-campus research unit funds and while the division supports the move to competitive renewal as very reasonable, it expressed concern about the implementation, noting especially that success will depend entirely on the rigor of reviews and the performance metrics that are adopted. Office of Research should move forward with the plan, but consult with heads of existing MRUs while doing so.

With all best wishes, I remain,

Yours faithfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Thomas Cogswell'.

Thomas Cogswell
Professor of History:
and Chair of the Academic Senate
University of California
Riverside 92521



OFFICE OF THE ACADEMIC SENATE

9500 GILMAN DRIVE
LA JOLLA, CALIFORNIA 92093-0002
TELEPHONE: (858) 534-3640
FAX: (858) 534-4528

December 18, 2006

Professor John Oakley
Chair, Academic Senate
University of California
1111 Franklin Street, 12th Floor
Oakland, California 94607-5200Re: Systemwide Review of the Recommendations from the Joint Academic Senate and UCOP
Workgroup on Recycling Multi-campus Research Units Funds

Dear John:

In response to your request of August 30, the San Diego Divisional Committees on Planning and Budget and on Research reviewed the "Recommendations from the Joint Academic Senate and UCOP Workgroup on Recycling Multi-campus Research Units Funds." The Recommendations were also discussed at the Senate Council meeting on December 4, 2006.

Reviewers appreciated the need to make the MRU process more dynamic. Two main concerns emerged. First, there are clear budgetary implications to implementing the view that supporting FTE positions may not be the most appropriate use of MRU funding. Since FTE positions currently supported by MRU funds are held by tenured, often senior, faculty members, these problematic situations will need to be sorted out between UCOP and the campuses. Second, the suggestion that a mechanism be developed to recover at least 10% annually from the current total MRU budget over the next five years would seem to reduce the resources available to existing MRUs without an academically justifiable rationale. Commitments to existing MRUs were made based on reviewed plans of research, and any changes to these commitments should be considered carefully before implementation.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Henry C. Powell". The signature is written in a cursive style and is followed by a horizontal line.

Henry C. Powell, Chair
Academic Senate, San Diego Division



**Communication from the Task Force Reviewing Recommendations of
the Joint Academic Senate/UCOP Workgroup on Recycling
Multicampus Research Unit Funds
Warren Gold, MD, Chair**

November 6, 2006

Deborah Greenspan, DSc, BDS
Chair, UCSF Academic Senate
Office of the Academic Senate, Box 0764

**RE: Suggestions for Divisional Response to the Recommendations of the Joint Academic
Senate/UCOP Workgroup on Recycling Multicampus Research Unit Funds**

Dear Chair Greenspan,

The Task Force Reviewing and Recommending Comment to the Recommendations of the Joint Academic Senate/UCOP Workgroup on Recycling Multicampus Research Unit Funds, consisting of one Member of the Committee on Academic Planning and Budget (Chair), one Member of the Committee on Research, and one Member of the Graduate Council, met on November 6, 2006 to review these recommendations and to suggest a possible response from the San Francisco Division.

The Task Force specifically recognizes the benefit and necessity of implementing a regular review process for Multicampus Research Units and of creating an advisory body to the UC Office of Research, and the Task Force fully supports both. After thorough review and discussion of the recommendations of the Joint Academic Senate/UCOP Workgroup on Recycling Multicampus Research Unit Funds, this Task Force recommends that the San Francisco Division offer its support to these recommendations.

Additionally, the Task Force offers for discussion the question: Is there room in the current process for competing groups in the same field to apply competitively for MRU status and funding?

Sincerely,

**The Task Force Reviewing and Recommending Comment to the Recommendations of the
Joint Academic Senate/UCOP Workgroup on Recycling Multicampus Research Unit Funds**
Warren Gold, MD, Academic Planning and Budget, Chair of the Task Force
Stefan Habelitz, PhD, Committee on Research
Fred Schaufele, PhD, Graduate Council



ACADEMIC SENATE
1233 Girvetz Hall
Santa Barbara, CA 93106-3050

senate.reception@senate.ucsb.edu
(805) 893-2885
<http://www.senate.ucsb.edu>

Joel Michaelsen, Chair
Claudia Chapman, Executive Director

December 6, 2006

John Oakley, Chair
Academic Council

RE: Recommendations of the Joint UC Academic Senate/UC Office of Research
Workgroup on Recycling Multi-campus Research Units Funds

Dear John:

The UCSB Senate has completed its review of the recommendations of the Joint UC Academic Senate/UC Office of Research Workgroup on Recycling MRU Funds, and endorses the Workgroup's overarching recommendation for greater flexibility of funding to allow new opportunities to emerge on a competitive basis. We acknowledge, with thanks, the hard work of the members of the Workgroup, whose charge was broad and included defining key characteristics of MRUs, expectations for the sustainability of MRUs, aspects regarding the review of MRUs, MRU funding and the allocation of funding to individual MRUs, and the role of UCOP in advocating for new state resources in support of MRUs.

Not all items in the charge appeared to be addressed in the undated report, and some of the recommendations lacked sufficient background information to allow for comment (e.g., the recommendation to examine the status of the facilities.) A cursory examination of MRUs indicated that some units have been very successful in securing non-UC funding (e.g., Cancer Research Coordinating Committee), while other units may have little, if any, non-UC support. Although the charge included examination of differences in disciplinary areas, the Workgroup did not adequately address this. All units appeared to be treated the same.

In the absence of information about the current MRU budget, its allocation, and the possibility of inefficiencies, we are unable to evaluate the recommendation to recover 10% annually from the current total MRU budget in order to fund new programs. It appears that the Workgroup wishes to phase out all or most UCOP funding of existing MRUs in order to fund new opportunities. Some explanation of why the Workgroup determined that there was excess in the existing budget, and where it rests, would be helpful. A move to across-the-board funding reductions may be an easy solution, but such a move is difficult to endorse. Some MRUs may be overfunded while others might be underfunded.

The Workgroup recommends that financial commitment from the UC Office of Research be for up to five years. While recognizing that the proposed fixed term helps ensure a desirable recycling of funds, a rigid application should be approached with caution. Not

all MRUs can be expected to be constructed of the same cloth. Some might require more time to become established and achieve goals. The five-year review system seems to provide a mechanism for an informed recommendation on levels of funding. We agree with the Workgroup's comment that "there should be no guarantee or expectation ...of funding in perpetuity" (page 4).

With regard to the recommendation to appoint an Advisory Board on Multicampus Research, we are not convinced that the examination of the MRU portfolio needs to be done on an annual basis. Often annual examinations become pro-forma after a few years. Perhaps more important is the membership: Who will appoint the faculty at large and will the Vice Provost seek nominations from the Academic Senate? The faculty at large should include non-MRU directors – faculty with no vested interest in MRUs. It should also include faculty from across the disciplines.

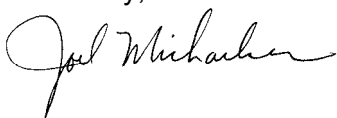
Finally, The recommendations on updating MRU taxonomy and revising taxonomy and nomenclature in the Compendium are good. These revisions should also appear in all documents and websites dealing with MRUs.

While conducting the review of this issue, some suggestions emerged. These include:

1. The Guide to University of California Multicampus Research Units (<http://www.ucop.edu/research/publications/mruguide.html>) was last updated in 2002. It describes 35 MRUs while only 24 are listed. This guide should be periodically, perhaps annually.
2. The list of MRUs on UCOP's Office of Research website (http://www.ucop.edu/research/programs_units/mru/mrulist.html) has links to all but 7 MRUs. These seven appear to be new (are not in the Guide) and the Office of Research and the Directors of these units should make certain that websites and links to these units be established as soon as possible.

While a bit more background information on the specific recommendations would have been helpful for this review, the Workgroup should be commended on accomplishing a tremendous amount of work, sorting through a myriad of MRU issues.

Sincerely,



Joel Michaelsen
Divisional Chair



1156 HIGH STREET
SANTA CRUZ, CALIFORNIA 95064

Office of the Academic Senate
SANTA CRUZ DIVISION
125 CLARK KERR HALL
(831) 459 - 2086

Email: senate@ucsc.edu
FAX: (831) 459 - 5469

December 1, 2006

John Oakley, Chair
Academic Council

RE: *UCSC response on the Recommendations from the Joint Academic Senate and UCOP Workgroup on Recycling Multi-campus Research Units (MRU) Funds, Coleman et al. (2006)*

Dear John,

The recommendations from the Joint Academic Senate and UCOP Workgroup on Recycling Multi-campus Research Units (MRU) Funds were reviewed by the UCSC Senate Committee on Research (COR) and the UCSC Committee on Planning and Budget (CPB). Our recommendations are as follows:

(1) We agree with the overall recommendation of the Workgroup (p. 2 of the Workgroup recommendations), that greater flexibility should be achieved in MRU funding so as to take advantage of new opportunities as they emerge. We also agree that the funding of new MRUs and similar programs/projects should be made on a competitive basis, so that the programs with the best chance to achieve excellence be given the strongest University of California, Office of Research (UCOR) support.

(2) We agree with recommendations associated with MRU Taxonomy and Nomenclature (p. 2) - clarity is needed so as to facilitate fair and comprehensive review of these programs, and so as to provide evidence during review of the "value added" by MRU support from the UCOR.

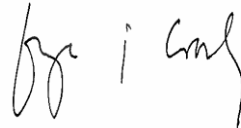
(3) We agree that there should be a review of MRU facilities (p. 3) and related issues so that the costs and obligations associated with operating MRUs will be fully and clearly elucidated and accounted for.

(4) We have mixed feelings about the recommendation regarding MRU management (p. 4). While it makes some sense that a standing Advisory Board be appointed to examine the MRU portfolio, it is not clear that this review should be done annually, nor is it clear

how this group would relate to UCORP and the campus CORs, who have a mandate to participate in MRU review. Having a standing advisory board makes sense in terms of assuring consistency from year to year - perhaps their work could be coordinated through (or in association with) the UCORP. It may make more sense to have this Advisory Board complete its work in association with standard MRU reviews that are proposed to occur at 5-year intervals, overseen by the UCORP.

(5) We agree with some aspects of the recommendations concerning MRU Reviews and Funding (p. 4-5), but have reservations about others. We agree that approval to fund an MRU should not imply that funding will continue in perpetuity, but a one-size-fits-all funding cycle of five years may not be appropriate for all MRUs. Some MRUs will be able to show results and value added to the UC research portfolio on an annual basis, and for these, a five year cycle may work. Other MRUs may require 10+ years before they can show substantive results. Perhaps a better approach would be to set an upper limit on the "standard" MRU life cycle (say, 10-15 years), and then to ask that MRU funding proponents justify requests for specific MRU funding durations. Interim reviews at 5-year periods could then be used to evaluate progress towards research goals, and the ongoing state of documentation concerning MRU effectiveness, with an eye towards the upcoming sunset review. One model might be one like that used by the U.S. National Science Foundation (NSF) and other federal agencies: proponents have to justify the length of a proposed project based on stated, achievable goals and other information.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Faye J. Crosby". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Faye" being the most prominent part.

Faye J. Crosby, Chair
Academic Senate
Santa Cruz Division