



## ACADEMIC COUNCIL SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON LAB ISSUES ANNUAL REPORT 2024-25

The Academic Council Special Committee on Lab Issues (ACSCOLI) was established by the Academic Council to provide broad-based Senate oversight of UC's relationship with the National Laboratories – Los Alamos National Laboratory (LANL), Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory (LLNL), and Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory (LBNL, also called the Berkeley Lab). ACSCOLI advises the President and Regents on general policies relating to the National Laboratories, which includes the dispersal of UC's share of net fee monies, policies that affect the lab science management, and the quality of science being performed at the labs. ACSCOLI is also concerned with evaluating the benefits of UC's continued participation in the management of the labs and has been charged by the Academic Council with stimulating closer connections between the lab staff, faculty, and students.

ACSCOLI met three times during 2024-2025 academic year. Two meetings were held via videoconference, and one was held at UCOP in Oakland. A summary of the committee's discussions is below.

### OFFICE OF THE UC NATIONAL LABORATORIES

UC is the prime contractor for the management and operation of Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory (LBNL). The University is a partner in the Lawrence Livermore National Security (LLNS), LLC, that manages Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory (LLNL) and in Triad National Security, LLC, the partnership that manages Los Alamos National Laboratory (LANL). LLNS and Triad are overseen by the National Nuclear Security Administration (NNSA), an agency within the U.S. Department of Energy. The office of the UC National Laboratories (UCNL) coordinates this work for the University.

At each ACSCOLI meeting, Vice President for UC National Laboratories June Yu provided updates on lab activities and the status of management, operations, safety and security, scientific strength, UC/lab collaborative programs, and the operating contract. In the spring, ACSCOLI learned about new federal budget priorities that emphasize high-performance computing, artificial intelligence, and nuclear modernization over renewable energy and energy efficiency programs. The labs are using this period to look for areas for increased efficiency and effectiveness. Some personnel actions were required for research security compliance.

Executive Director for National Laboratory Programs Alan Wan joined each meeting to update the committee on research opportunities, including the UC/LLNL Early Career Faculty award and a new Michael R. Anastasio LANL/UC Early Career Faculty Program named in honor of the former lab director. In addition to sponsoring meaningful research, the early career initiatives are designed to promote connections between UC and lab researchers and technical staff, enable the hiring of UC postdocs and students, and provide lab researchers with opportunities to collaborate and connect with the UC community. Executive Director Wan also provided updates on the Artificial Intelligence (AI) Science at Scale initiative that, in partnership with the labs, awarded \$18 million to three multicampus projects.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.universityofcalifornia.edu/news/uc-awards-18-million-scale-ambition-and-impact-ai-science>

### **MEETING WITH CHAIR OF THE REGENTS' NATIONAL LABS COMMITTEE**

In November, ACSCOLI was joined in Oakland by Regent Jose Hernandez, Chair of the Board of Regents' National Labs Committee. Regent Hernandez expressed his interest in strengthening the relationship between the labs and UC via summer and cooperative programs for both undergraduate and graduate students. He has encouraged UC Merced administrators to take advantage of the proximity of Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory for more involvement. Regarding UC's bid to manage the Frederick National Laboratory for Cancer Research, Regent Hernandez noted the opportunities for collaborations with UC's medical schools and said that UC is proceeding with the understanding that strategic investments will yield results.

### **EXPANSION OF UC'S LAB MANAGEMENT PORTFOLIO**

Results of UC's bid to take over the management of the Frederick National Laboratory for Cancer Research were delayed until spring (from December). Although the UC-led partnership was initially awarded the contract, the current operator has protested the decision.

### **MASTER AGREEMENTS FOR JOINT APPOINTMENTS**

ACSCOLI members agreed that a department or school level adaptable agreement was needed to facilitate joint appointments at the local level. Joint appointment agreements are needed to cover issues such as liability and intellectual property. One sticking point is position title; "adjunct professor" is the most flexible, but the title has limitations. Generally, adjuncts cannot serve as full advisors of graduate students or be principal investigators and are required to teach one course each year. Of course, there are workarounds and exceptions. Agreements become more complicated when money is involved. There are also questions about competing for grants, how positions are handled by UCPath, and issues of equity if lab scientists are getting positions rather than local faculty members.

### **UC LAB FEES RESEARCH PROGRAM**

ACSCOLI was briefed by the VP for Research & Innovation and UC Research Initiatives staff on the status of the UC Lab Fees Research Program (LFRP) and other UC/lab opportunities. LFRP held workshops that focused on the themes of "Community-Engaged Research for Clean Energy Solutions" and Fusion Energy (specifically, addressing research questions and engineering and design challenges necessary for fusion energy to transition from the laboratory to a commercially viable power plant). In addition to engaging participants in the topics, the workshops serve to facilitate partnerships between UC faculty, research scientists, postdoctoral scholars, and graduate students and UC-affiliated national lab researchers.

For the LFRP Collaborative Research and Training award, two proposals in the targeted area of microelectronics were selected to receive a total of almost \$8 million over three years. In-Residence Graduate Fellowships were awarded to seven graduate students from four campuses.

To increase the focus and nimbleness of the Lab Fees program, at least some of the research funds will be administered by UCNL moving forward. These will be initiatives that are closer in format to the recent AI Science at Scale pilot. ACSCOLI will continue to be involved and provide input.

### **SoCAL HUB**

UCI Vice Chancellor for Research Pramod Khargonekar joined ACSCOLI's November meeting to talk about the UC Southern California Hub. The Hub was envisioned as bringing together the southern UC campuses and UC-managed national laboratories for collaborative research in the national interest, education of the next generation scientists and engineers, and societal benefits. It supports workshops that are conducted on campuses and virtually and provides funding for

jointly authored publications and for visits and exchanges between uc campuses and labs. A Leadership Council is composed of LLNL and LANL leaders and vice chancellors of research from UCI, UCLA, UCR, and UCSD.

#### **SENATE LEADERSHIP UPDATES**

ACSCOLI members do not report back to a corresponding campus committee, but the committee was regularly joined by the Academic Senate chair and/or vice chair who provided updates about the work of the Senate. These regular updates to standing and special committees help all faculty members have a broader view of the university.

#### **REPRESENTATION AND REPORTING**

- ACSCOLI Chair Lorenzo Valdevit participated in meetings of national laboratory boards and committees throughout the year:
  - LLNS Board of Governors S&T Committee Meeting – LLNL (Observer) – Sep 2024
  - LBNL Advisory Board Meeting (ex officio Board member) – Sep 2024
  - Triad STE Committee Meeting – LANL (Observer) – Nov 2024 (virtual)
  - Triad STE Committee Meeting – LANL (Observer) – Mar 2025
  - LBNL Advisory Board Meeting (ex officio Board member) – Apr 2025
  - LANL Materials Capability Review – Jun 2025
- On June 25, ACSCOLI Chair Lorenzo Valdevit joined the Academic Council meeting to give a presentation of ACSCOLI's discussions over the past year to Council members.

#### **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

ACSCOLI wishes to acknowledge the contributions of its consultants and guests:

- Kathleen Erwin, Executive Director, Research Grants Program Office
- Jose Hernandez, Chair of the Board of Regents' National Labs Committee
- Theresa Maldonado, Vice President for Research & Innovation
- Alan Wan, Executive Director for Laboratory Programs
- Anna Ward, Director, UC Research Initiatives
- June Yu, Vice President for the National Laboratories

*Respectfully submitted,*

Lorenzo Valdevit, UCI, **Chair**

Barry Barish, UCR

Q. Jason Cheng, UCR

Timothy Fisher, UCLA

Darrell Long, UCSC

Youngho Seo, UCSF

Stephen Wilson, UCSB

Robert Powell, UCD, Chair of the Triad LLC Science, Technology, and Engineering Committee

Stephanie Malia Hom, UCORP Representative, Ex-Officio

Rafael Kudela, UCPB Representative, Ex-Officio

Steven Cheung, Academic Council Chair, Ex-Officio

Ahmet Palazoglu, Academic Council Vice Chair, Ex-Officio

Joanne Miller, Academic Senate Committee Analyst