

UNIVERSITY COMMITTEE ON RESEARCH POLICY ANNUAL REPORT 2009-10

TO THE ASSEMBLY OF THE ACADEMIC SENATE:

The University Committee on Research Policy (UCORP), as specified in Senate Bylaw 200, is responsible for fostering research, for formulating, coordinating, and revising general research policies and procedures, and for advising the President on research. During the 2009-10 academic year, UCORP met eight times, six times in person and twice via teleconference. This report briefly outlines the committee's activities.

UCORP INITIATIVES

1. UCORP Handbook

Continuing the effort began last year, Chair Miller refined the members' guide that includes organization charts from relevant Office of the President units, an acronym glossary, and overviews of shared governance and university administration.

2. COR Networking

Campus committees on research (CORs) have historically operated in isolation from one another. It was proposed that part of UCORP's work should be greater integration of the campus counterpart committees so that best practices could be more easily established and greater understanding between the divisions could be fostered. Including topics such as administration participants in meetings, internal grant procedures and budgets, and charge and scope, a spreadsheet was created to help illustrate the convergences and divergences between the campus CORs. This table received its annual update and was included in the aforementioned committee handbook.

RESEARCH POLICY ISSUES

1. Compliance

UCORP continued its analysis of University compliance requirements. Consultation with the systemwide Office of Risk Services was promising, as several new efforts are projected. Also important clearly defining the different realms of "compliance" from "safety." The University's compliance programs monitor participation in state-mandated programs such as the sexual harassment prevention program, while safety efforts are designed to prevent injury.

2. Researcher Safety

UCORP began work to streamline safety programs that often generate inconsistent feedback. Researchers are often subject to more than one inspection, depending on their funding source and work, but they feedback received does not always align. Establishing guidelines and reducing redundant inspections is a high priority for both faculty and administrators.

3. Indirect Cost Recovery

UCORP collaborated with the University Committee on Planning and Budget (UCPB) on an investigation into indirect cost recovery. The joint working group met via teleconference, with UCPB taking the lead in this effort. Both parent committees endorsed the final report, and submitted it to the Academic Council. The main recommendations include securing a

higher reimbursement rate from cognizant agencies and taking a more thoughtful approach to the use of waivers. These are echoed in the recommendations issued by the Commission on the Future (see below).

4. Furlough and Budget Cut Impacts

2009-10 saw Universitywide furloughs. UCORP sought to ensure that the research arm of the University's tri-fold mission was not shortchanged, but feels it was unsuccessful, given administration dicta to protect instruction days preferentially. Further, UCORP felt that locally administered budget cutting options targeted research: local Committee on Research budgets were slashed or taxed at higher rates. As a result, fewer travel grants and summer research grants were available on many campuses. Nonetheless, the attention brought by UCORP to these events is thought to have had some positive impact as some campuses COR funding was restored.

LABORATORY ISSUES

1. Fees

Last year, following the transfer of management of the Department of Energy (DOE) national labs to a limited liability corporation (LLC), UC faced the question of how to allocate the management fees generated by partnering in the LLC. In conjunction with the Office of Lab Management and the Office of Research and Graduate Studies, an RFP was developed, a competition held, and winners announced. The winning projects were to contain at least one principal investigator from UC and demonstrate unique input by the labs.

In 2009-10, the lab fees collected by UC exceeded the scheduled allocations from the previous RFP. At the same time, however, the funding excess was not sufficient to issue a new RFP. It was determined that these funds could not be "banked" in the current fiscal and political environment, so alternate methods of expenditure were explored. UCORP recommended summer research grants or graduate student stipends, although the final outcome has yet to be determined.

2. Governance and Morale

Transition to the LLC administrative model has been difficult for Lawrence Livermore and Los Alamos National Laboratories. Reports indicate a collapse of morale that is more systemic than can be simply attributed to differences in management styles. For example, lab employees have filed litigation regarding changes to their pension plan, and employee turnover remains high. ACSCOLI will continue to monitor events and will keep UCORP apprised.

3. LLNL Open Campus

The Lawrence Livermore National Lab floated plans to construct an industrial park near the Lab. The proposed site currently houses a UC Davis field office, but the plans do not retain this collaborative front. UCORP was concerned that UC would lose its proximate toe-hold at the labs if the plan went ahead as is. The issue remains unresolved.

ACADEMIC REVIEWS

1. Division of Agriculture and Natural Resources

Last year, UCORP excitedly received and reviewed the long-awaited academic review of the Division of Agriculture and Natural Resources (DANR), and the accompanying review of the University's Cooperative Extension program. Unfortunately, the committee identified several shortcomings in the review, which were communicated to the Academic Council along with suggested next steps. Still, the committee welcomed the new strategic vision and leadership under the division's new vice president, and UCORP looks forward to developing a better relationship with DANR.

This year, UCORP followed up on its recommendations by generating, in collaboration with UCPB, specific metrics by DANR could measure and report statistical findings. This list was conveyed to DANR via the Academic Council, and UCORP awaits a benchmarking exercise.

2. CITRIS

UCORP reviewed the review protocol for the California Institute for Science and Innovation, Center for Information Technology Research in the Interest of Society (CITRIS). UCORP echoed its previous Cal ISI review protocol suggestions calling for more statistical data and critical analysis.

3. Commission on the Future

This year, the President and the chair of the Regents established a group charged to explore and recommend goals, and methods of achieving those goals, to enable UC to maintain its excellence and access during an era of diminishing state support. The Commission established several working groups, and UCORP focused its attention on the Research Strategies Working Group (RSW), of which Irvine Representative Crawford and San Diego Representative Schoeninger were members. The RSW was led by former Academic Council Chair and current ORGS Executive Director Mary Croughan. The committee consulted monthly with RSW Chair Croughan, and opined both informally and formally on its recommendations. While UCORP supported many of the recommendations, such as increasing indirect cost recovery efforts and the promulgation of a UC research vision statement, many members were concerned that the scope of the recommendations was less grand than the groups' charge. The committee also felt that even the final recommendations were too limited, generally, and continued to neglect graduate students, particularly. Final action on the recommendations has not yet been taken.

4. UCPB's "Choices" Report

UCPB continued its tradition of issuing analyses of the systemwide budget situation. This year's report, the "Choices" Report, outlined the many trade-offs the University currently faces due to a stagnant and declining budget. UCORP could not endorse the Report in its entirety, and chose not to undertake a point-by-point rejoinder. Instead, UCORP recognized the value of the Report in catalyzing discussion and framing issues. Considered jointly with the Commission on the Future work, the "Choices" Report helped foster lively and in-depth debates.

5. The Compendium

The Compendium governs universitywide review processes for academic programs, academic units, and research units, and is undergoing decadal review. The task force charged with this undertaking revised all sections except that governing MRUs (see below), which was held aside due to its complicated and delicate nature. The Academic Council

subsequently charged UCORP 2010-11 with revising this last section. UCORP withheld endorsement of the completed changes.

CONSULTATION WITH THE OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT – OFFICE OF RESEARCH AND GRADUATE STUDIES

1. ORGS Restructuring

This year, ORGS largely finished its organizational changes. Some programs and departments were merged, while others were disbanded. The major differences from before include the creation of transactional units, one designed to shepherd RFPs and another designed to administer the grants awarded. ORGS-run research efforts, such as TRDRP, operate as before, but with new reporting guidelines. New offices will oversee, among others, enhanced efforts to raise the research profile of UC.

2. MRU/MRPI

2009: Completing a process initiated in 2006, ORGS finalized and issued an RFP for open competition for the University's multi-campus research unit (MRU) funds; the new process operates under the name "Multi-campus Research Programs and Initiatives" (MRPIs). UCORP noted several concerns with the new process, highlighting insufficient Senate consultation regarding established procedures for the dis/establishment of formal MRUs. UCORP will evaluate closely how well the anticipated roll-out time-frame impacts Senate procedures. It remains unclear what will happen to any new awardees (and their funding) who are not designated as official MRUs.

2010: Many of the substantive concerns regarding this process remain. Non-funded and non-disestablished MRUs were given 12-18 months to find alternate funding or close; Compendium processes remain circumvented. Funded but still-not-yet-established MRPIs operate outside of the governance of the Compendium. Talks on aligning Senate expectations and administration capacities were tabled pending revision of the Compendium (see above). UCORP will return to this topic next year.

CORRESPONDENCE REPORT

In addition to communications relating to the aforementioned topics, UCORP opined on the following items of systemwide import:

- Proposed changes to the APM
- Online and Remote Instructions Proposals
- Differential Fees Proposals

UCORP REPRESENTATION

The Chair, Vice Chair, or another committee member or liaison represented UCORP on the following systemwide bodies during the year: Academic Assembly, Academic Council, Academic Council Special Committee on Lab Issues, Academic Planning Council, Commission on the Future, Council on Research, the Technology Transfer Advisory Committee, and the Compendium Review Task Force. Throughout the year, UCORP's representatives provided updates on the activities of these groups.

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UCORP also wishes to thank its invited guests, campus alternates, and student representatives for their participation and support.

Respectfully submitted, UCORP 2009-10:

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