

Minutes of Meeting**June 14, 2010****I. Chair's Announcements***Greg Miller, UCORP Chair*

Chair Miller updated the committee on items of interest from recent meetings:

A. ACSCOLI of May 12:

The Los Alamos lab is facing a funding crisis in its retirement programs; some shortfall was expected, but the actual amount exceeds expectations. Nonetheless, the weapons research budget is increasing, and some are concerned that actinide sciences may be crowded out by pit replacement research. At the Lawrence Berkeley lab, six deputy directors are under recruitment; this and a high staff turnover rate are underlining concerns about morale and staff relations. This year's lab fees are expected to exceed the amount pre-spent in last year's lab fee RFP awards; the best use of the overage is under discussion.

B. Academic Council of May 26:

The University Committee on Faculty Welfare (UCFW) has similar concerns as UCORP regarding "compliance creep". Both UCFW and the Affirmative Action and Diversity (UCAAD) committee submitted letters in support of family friendly policies, but divisional leaders balked at compromised local autonomy; a general statement of support for the concept was adopted without specific recommendations. That outcome was similar to that of UCORP's earlier letter on COR funding restoration. Many on the Council share UCORP's view that the Commission on the Future may not yield usable or significant outcomes.

II. Research Funding Issues**A. Lab Fee Usage:**

ISSUE: Approximately \$5M in uncommitted lab fee funds are expected this year. The amount is too low for a new RFP, but many fear that any unspent money will be appropriated by other funds-hungry programs. Current administration thinking is to augment lab-campus visiting scholar programs.

DISCUSSION: Members felt that status quo programs were adequate, and feared that the current proposal might be a means of supporting lab personnel, not enhancing research at UC. Members also felt that graduate student support would be a better use of the funds, even if it would not technically meet the RFP parameters from last year. Other target recipients might include the Discovery Grant program or the California Institutes for Science and Innovation.

ACTION: UCLA Representative Schollhammer will draft a memo indicating that the funds should be spent in accordance with the principles of the previous RFP, even though no new individual projects will be solicited.

B. UCPB Request for Central Research Funding Position

ISSUE: The University Committee on Planning and Budget (UCPB) has asked UCORP to join them in developing a central research funding strategy plan.

ACTION: The 2010-11 committee will pursue this with UCPB.

III. Safety and Risk Services

Grace Crickette, Chief Risk Officer, Office of Financial Management – Risk Services

ISSUE: CRO Crickette provided an overview of her office's new strategic plan and the scope of its responsibilities (see distribution 3). She emphasized that part of Risk Services' new mission is to foster more cooperative relations with faculty to form a proactive partnership, rather than the reactive policing role many seem to have come to expect.

DISCUSSION: Members asked about the cost trade-offs between the proliferating number of compliance measures and the time faculty spend on them versus actual savings to the University. CRO Crickette sought to reframe the question by stating that her goal is to prevent error and harm through careful training, not to punish people for malfeasance. The cost in money not spent is difficult to ascertain, but one example is the new ergonomics training program, which has yielded a 37% decrease in ergonomic-related complaints in its 5 years. Members also asked about local and central coordination, noting that lab managers receive conflicting directives from various campus officials, city, state, and county officials, as well as federal officials, such as the VA, NIH, and NSF. Navigating countermanding orders, and the sheer volume of inspections, prevents many faculty from taking the process seriously. CRO Crickette indicated that she was aware of some of the duplicative efforts, and her team is working to reduce redundancies; additional examples of contradictions and duplications should be submitted so that they can be further investigated. Among other efforts, CRO Crickette noted a soon-to-be-launched online tracking system that is designed to help eliminate precisely these issues. Members suggested a central database that lists each faculty member's trainings and the schedule for them; hopefully, enforcement and training officer site visits can be coordinated to diminish repeat visits and contradictory feedback. Lastly, members sought clarification on the distinctions between "risk" and "compliance". CRO Crickette explained that the compliance office and officers enforce state mandated programs, such as sexual harassment prevention training, while her office seeks to prevent compliance/enforcement from becoming necessary by establishing safe and best practices via a culture of cooperation.

IV. Consultation with the Office of the President – Office of Research and Graduate Studies

Jenny Gautier, Deputy to the ORGS Vice President

A. MRUs/MRPIs/Facilities Funds:

ISSUE: Deputy Gautier noted that the facilities' budgets were not competed last year with the other MRPI funds due to budget stabilization considerations and their unique long-term needs. In one instance, the Natural Reserve System has been asked to investigate subsuming the White Mountain Research Station.

DISCUSSION: Members asked for information on the MRPI RFP outcome from last year, such as the fate of the non-winners. Deputy Gautier indicated that processes were still emerging regarding how to evaluate viable non-winners, such as IGPP. Members wondered whether this was the responsibility of the executive director for research grants and programs, but Deputy Gautier indicated that

position only monitors money usage, not research productivity; it would be inappropriate for a systemwide office to mandate spending on independently financed research units. Members questioned how many research units were independently funded, versus partially funded, and wholly funded, and how those with mixed funding were to be evaluated under the new nomenclature and practices. Deputy Gautier agreed that the review processes need to be clarified. Members voiced their concern over this answer, noting that previous experience suggests the practice of establishing parallel processes in circumvention of agreed upon Senate review methods bodes ill. Deputy Gautier reiterated the ORGS position that funding and establishment were separate questions. Members emphasized their contention that processes and decision makers need to be clarified in advance of further actions or changes to procedures or categories: start-up funding versus continuation funding and systemwide priorities versus local priorities, for example, cannot be determined by an RFP evaluation panel that decides this year's worthiest proposals absent a comprehensive research portfolio evaluation.

B. Lab Fee Usage:

ISSUE: (See IIA above.)

DISCUSSION: Members noted that these UC funds should be used for UC's benefit, not to off-set lab personnel expenses. Deputy Gautier stated that no decisions had been made, and that Vice President Beckwith is open to suggestions from the Academic Council.

C. Research Advocacy:

DISCUSSION: Deputy Gautier agreed that raising the profile of research conducted at UC with the public and the legislature is a priority, and many long term goals are outlined in the work of the Commission on the Future. One strategy already being implemented is to fold in research implications and benefits to as many press releases as possible. Members suggested ORGS compile a list of headline research and researchers for distribution to campus and UCOP media officers to facilitate this goal.

V. Commission on the Future

DISCUSSION: Members could not determine from the round two recommendations whether previously supplied feedback had been considered and incorporated; it is thought that the timing of the feedback submission and the working groups' meeting schedules made it difficult for responses to be evaluated. Members also thought that many of the new recommendations still blamed UC for its predicament, rather than contributing external factors. Members were further concerned that many recommendations seem to be moving forward, despite strong objections or incomplete planning. UCORP delegates to the working groups indicated that other groups' recommendations had not been considered, either.

Members were also uncertain of the viability of the Academic Council resolution that called for building freezes and hiring freezes. Analyst Feer clarified that the intent of the resolution was to encourage Commissioners and respondents to think in terms of the big picture, not one-off items.

The Council of Vice Chancellors also issued recommendations, some of which were received favorably. The calendar alignment recommendations, however, was not supported, nor was the recommendation to use online courses to satisfy transfer requirements; in both cases, concerns of encroachment into local autonomy were cited.

ACTION: Members will continue this discussion via email.

VI. New Business

A. Electronics Communication Security Task Force

ISSUE: UCORP has been solicited for faculty to serve on this task force.

ACTION: Members should send nominees names to Chair Miller.

Adjournment at 4 o'clock.

Minutes prepared by Kenneth Feer, Senior Policy Analyst

Attest: Greg Miller, UCORP Chair