UC Academic Senate
University Committee on Research Policy (UCORP)
Annual Report 2023-24

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; formulating, coordinating, and revising general research policies and procedures; and advising the President on research. UCORP met once in person and eight times via videoconference during the 2023-24 academic year. This report summarizes the committee's activities over the course of the year.

MRU Review: UC Humanities Research Institute

In 2023-24, UCORP led the five-year review of the UC Humanities Research Institute (UCHRI) on behalf of the Academic Senate. Per the 2014 Compendium's "Guidelines for Five-Year Reviews of Multicampus Research Units," representatives from CCGA and UCPB participated in the review. The UCHRI interim director joined the UCORP meeting in March to answer questions and engage in discussion. The UCHRI review report was completed in May and presented to the Academic Council by the UCORP chair and vice chair and subsequently approved by the Academic Council. The report was then transmitted to the UC Vice President for Research and Innovation.

The UCHRI review, led by UCORP Vice Chair, Susanne B Nicholas, found that the MRU's long-term planning in the last few years had been hampered by temporary leadership and funding uncertainty, but that an innovative solution to the funding impasse would yield positive results and lead to financial and leadership security. During the reporting period, UCHRI underwent significant changes, including the disruptive impact of COVID-19 and a leadership transition. Overall, UCHRI benefits the university by engaging with the UC community to support collaborative and interdisciplinary research, providing grants to facilitate exploratory and impactful multicampus research projects, fostering new research directions in the humanities, and promoting innovative intercampus collaborations. The review report concluded that continuation of UCHRI for another five years was warranted given its significant contributions that would be challenging to replicate without its existence.

Future of Doctoral Education at UC

As a member of the Academic Planning Council's (APC) Workgroup on the Future of UC Doctoral Programs, UCORP Chair Cyndi Schumann provided updates on the work of that group at each meeting. The APC workgroup was formed to examine the model of graduate student funding more broadly. Its interim report was initially presented at the Congress on the Future of Graduate Student Education, held at UCLA on October 9th, and then released widely in the first week of December. The final report was scheduled to be released in the spring, after UCORP's final meeting of the academic year. Chair Schumann led a subcommittee that focused on distinguishing employment labor from academic work in the education and training of graduate

students. UCORP members were asked regularly for feedback, both on the interim report and the topics. Much discussion centered on the differences in graduate education between disciplines.

On the labor relations side, UCORP was able to hear directly from UCOP's Office of Academic Personnel and Programs. Vice Provost Douglas Haynes and Associate Vice Provost (AVP) Amy Lee joined UCORP for discussions on the new post-unionization landscape of managing student employees. Vice Provost Haynes and AVP Lee have been providing regular updates to the Academic Council and will continue to do so. Academic Personnel directors will continue to provide guidance at the campus level.

PROVOST KATHERINE NEWMAN AND ACADEMIC CONGRESS ON RESEARCH

Provost Katherine Newman joined (virtually) the in-person UCORP meeting in December to discuss graduate education, research priorities, and other relevant topics. On the future of graduate education, Provost Newman acknowledged the differences between and among fields and said that she was interested in finding overriding principles that apply to all. She noted that the size of graduate cohorts in some fields was often dictated by teaching demands or research funding rather than future demand for graduates or mentorship resources. On promoting the importance of the UC research enterprise, Provost Newman said that each Regents' meeting will feature a presentation on some aspect of UC research, including the UC observatories, hydrogen hub funding, and artificial intelligence. Later in the academic year, Chair Schumann approached Provost Newman about holding an academic congress on research to add to the schedule of congresses on graduate education, artificial intelligence, online education, and more. In later meetings, UCORP spent time discussing potential themes, topics, speakers, and target audience for the research congress.

RESEARCH TOPICS

Updates from the Office of Research & Innovation – As consultants to the committee, members of the Office of Research & Innovation (R&I) joined UCORP each month to provide updates and solicit feedback. At the first meeting in October, Vice President for Research & Innovation Theresa Maldonado and her staff joined the meeting to introduce their work to new UCORP members and update the committee on recent activities. VP Maldonado gave a short presentation on the work of R&I, demonstrating how the unit works not only with the ten campuses, but also with the Division of Agriculture and Natural Resources (ANR), UC Health, and the 3 national labs (Lawrence Livermore, Los Alamos and Lawrence Berkeley). In addition to policy development and management, part of the R&I mission is to help campuses take fundamental research and scale it to demonstration, publication, and public use. R&I manages $150M in royalty income and $120M in grant funding (not including the recent climate funding from the state). The unit also oversees the university's multi-campus research entities and seven multicampus research units (MRUs). The R&I staff provided regular updates to UCORP throughout the academic year on research-related topics. In October, UCORP learned about a new R&I initiative for "Inclusive Innovation Equitable Entrepreneurship" (I^2E^2), which will focus on long-standing structural impediments to the participation of ethnic and racially minoritized groups, women, and persons with disabilities in STEM. A key element will be developing a database to help uncover those involved in innovation and entrepreneurship activities.

Research Security – UCORP was regularly updated on proposed federal regulatory changes related to research that is associated with "malign foreign talent recruitment programs" and the like. UCOP staff are working with campus Contracts and Grants offices on how to indicate, communicate, and define what might be considered a "malign" program. Increased disclosure from PIs who are working with foreign entities is a primary goal. The Office of Research and Innovation has been tasked by the Regents with looking into UC's conflict of interest and conflict of commitment (COI and COC) policies and processes to identify and fill gaps. Relatedly, UCOP is also investigating how to strengthen and fund additional research IT security, which is increasingly required by federal funding agencies.

Climate action funding – UCORP briefly heard about the 38 awardees of $185m in seed and matching grants that was provided to UC from the state for climate research funding. A portion of the funds - $1m each - went to the ten campuses and two California national labs.

DOE Hydrogen Hub funding – UCORP was updated about the CA ARCHES initiative, a coalition of partners within the state and led by UC, that was selected to receive $1.2B in Department of Energy (DOE) hydrogen hub funding. The California projects will focus on ports, trucks, and buses, and will be augmented by state, local, and corporate funding. Two power plants will be converted to hydrogen, and the projects will include environmental justice and workforce development components. UC was initially informed that 10% of the funding would be allocated for research, and while in the end there was none, UC stayed involved because of adjacent research opportunities in related science fields, as well as in sociology, policy, and other disciplines.

Financial accounting system issues – The Oracle Financial System changeover continued to be a topic of discussion. UC Merced and UC San Diego faculty wanted to make sure that other campuses were aware of the issues faced when the financial system was implemented at those campuses. More than a year after the rollout, researchers at UCM continued to experience staffing problems, errors, and lost funding due to the new system. UCM faculty have now been told that the full implementation timeline is estimated at around five years. In fall/winter 2023-24, UCM established a joint Administrative-Senate Task Force on Financial Management and Reporting. Since this is not a systemwide issue, it has been challenging to address as a system.

Research Data Backup System Steering Committee – UCSF representative Bin Liu regularly updated UCORP on the latest news from Research Data Backup Steering Committee. The steering committee issued an initial RFP, which asked potential vendors for a good faith cost estimate. Suppliers were given the opportunity to bid on three backup levels: endpoint, mid-range, and large scale. The responses were narrowed down to one for the endpoint supplier and three for the mid/large scale. The initial proposed pricing estimates were significantly higher than anticipated and so the second round RFP was postponed. For endpoint backup, UC determined that CrashPlan, a product currently used by UCI and UCSF, is the optimal solution and will obtain a systemwide license. For larger scale needs, UC will likely implement a tiered pricing structure to contain cost.

Patent Policy – At the beginning of the year, UCORP provided comments on the final draft of the new Policy on Inventions, Patents, and Innovation Transfer. The revision to the 25-year-old UC patent policy narrows its focus to UC's legal responsibilities while giving more autonomy to

the campuses. Based on input from UCORP and faculty expert Professor Tony Reese (UCI), the policy wording was clarified, and FAQs updated.

UC Research Initiatives – UCORP was updated on the multicampus research programs and initiatives (MRPI) opportunity, which distributes two- and four-year awards every other year, and the lab fees research program (LFRP), which disburses income from UC's management of the Los Alamos and Lawrence Livermore national labs. A high rate of proposal submission for the MRPI funding means that the success rate this year may be below 20%. Many of the LOIs were related to climate, possibly due to the big state climate action funding initiative from last year. This year, the LFRP In-Residence Graduate Fellowship increased its award amount to $75K/year (from $68K). The LFRP Collaborative Research and Training (CRT) award is putting more resources toward the development of the group proposals, including hosting collaborative workshops that occur before the RFP deadlines. The CRT themes for this year are Research Advancing Microelectronics and Community-Engaged Research for Clean Energy Solutions. A third theme will either be Research Advancing Fusion Energy or Scientific Application of Artificial Intelligence (AI) at Scale, which was proposed by the directors at Los Alamos and Livermore Labs. Looking at the larger picture of research funding at UC, UCORP members asked about how to improve the dissemination of information about UC-wide funding opportunities.

Alianza MX – Proposed Change to Leadership Structure – UC Riverside Vice Chancellor for Research and Economic Development, Rodolfo Torres joined UCORP's May meeting to describe a proposal for new leadership for Alianza MX, the umbrella organization that comprises the UC MEXUS MRU, the UC Mexico Initiative, and Casa de California. UC MEXUS was reviewed by UCORP in 2021. Due to the scope of the Alianza programs, the administration is proposing to divide the leadership of the unit into two parts with an operational director and a faculty director. The operational director would be an administrative position requiring an advanced degree in a relevant field, but not necessarily a tenured faculty appointment at UC (as required by standard MRU policy). The operational director would report to VC Torres, who, as a tenured faculty member, would serve in the capacity of *faculty director* and provide academic oversight of the program. UCORP members were supportive of the proposal, noting that it seems to be in the best interest of UC and Alianza, but also noting that changes like this can make reviews of MRUs more challenging when the Senate is asked to evaluate them based on established criteria. Asked about whether the MRU designation was the best mechanism to support the program, VP Torres said that it can be beneficial in securing external funding.

SYSTEMWIDE SENATE ISSUES, CAMPUS REPORTS, LIAISON REPORTS

UCORP devoted part of each regular meeting to updates from Academic Senate leadership and reports from members on campus COR issues. UCORP members (and their divisional committee analysts) updated a shared spreadsheet with information about each campus COR, including committee composition and faculty grant processes, which may be useful to compare. With this information and encouragement from UCORP, the UCLA COR chair was able to secure a seat on the UCLA Senate's executive council going forward. Most if not all divisional COR chairs are members of their divisional Senate's Executive Council. UCORP's graduate student and liaisons to other committees and working groups also provided updates at each meeting.

SYSTEMWIDE REVIEW PARTICIPATION AND CORRESPONDENCE

- Comments on Revised Presidential Policy BFB-BUS-50: Controlled Substances Use In Research and Teaching (March 20, 2024)

UCORP REPRESENTATION

As Chair of UCORP, Cynthia Schumann served on the Assembly of the Academic Senate, Academic Council, and the Academic Planning Council. Chair Schumann also served on the APC Workgroup on the Future of UC Doctoral Programs. UCSF member Bin Liu served on the Research Data Backup Plan Steering Committee.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

UCORP is grateful to its regular consultants who have provided invaluable information and perspective to the committee:
- Agnes Balla, Director, Research Policy Analysis and Coordination
- Lourdes DeMattos, Director, Research Policy Analysis and Coordination
- Kathleen Erwin, Executive Director, Research Grants Program Office
- Theresa Maldonado, Vice President for Research & Innovation
- Deborah Motton Executive Director, Research Policy Analysis and Coordination
- Anna Ward, Program Officer, Research Grants Program Office

UCORP also wishes to thank its invited guests for their participation and support throughout the year, as well as colleagues across the system who brought to the attention of the committee research-related issues of concern.

Respectfully submitted, UCORP 2023-24:
    Cynthia Schumann, UCD, **Chair**
    Susanne B. Nicholas, UCLA, **Vice Chair**
    Larry Karp, UCB
    Paul Hastings (fall, winter) and David Rocke (spring), UCD
    James Weatherall, UCI
    Alapakkam (Sam) Sampath, UCLA
    Tao Ye, UCM
    Weixin Yao, UCR
    Elina Zuniga, UCSD
    Bin Liu, UCSF
    Alan Murray, UCSB
    Michael Hance, UCSC
    Hanna Butler-Struben, Graduate Student Representative, UCD
    James Steintrager, Academic Senate Chair, *Ex Officio*
    Steven Cheung, Academic Senate Vice Chair, *Ex Officio*
    Joanne Miller, Committee Analyst