



University Committee on Research Policy (UCORP) Annual Report 2024-25

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 seven times via videoconference during the 2024-25 academic year. This report summarizes the committee's activities over the course of the year.

MRU REVIEWS: UC OBSERVATORIES AND BIOENGINEERING INSTITUTE OF CALIFORNIA

In 2024-25, UCORP led two five-year MRU reviews 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 reviews. Both reviews were completed in May and presented by UCORP Chair Susanne Nicholas to members of the Academic Council at the May 28th Academic Council meeting. The Academic Council approved the reviews, which were then forwarded to the Vice President for Research and Innovation.

The UC Observatories (UCO) review found that it is a vital systemwide asset that makes major contributions to research, graduate training, and public service. It supports cutting-edge instrumentation, fosters innovation and international partnerships, and engages in public engagement and community outreach, helping to bridge science and society. The review committee praised the work of the UCO director and staff and emphasized the importance of continued UC financial support.

The Bioengineering Institute of California (BIC) review recognized the MRU's role in promoting cross-campus collaboration and visibility in bioengineering through programs such as its annual systemwide symposium. However, the review committee had serious concerns regarding BIC's governance, strategic planning, and preparedness to maintain its mission in the face of major challenges. The review committee recommended that BIC be renewed on a two-year probationary basis, with the expectation that during that time it will develop bylaws and clarify the roles and expectations of its steering committee and advisory board, secure replacement funding for expiring support from the California Institute for Regenerative Medicine (CIRM), and engage in strategic planning to review its mission and both short- and long-term goals.

APC WORKGROUP ON SYSTEMWIDE ACADEMIC CALENDAR

UCSC rep Nirvikar Singh represented UCORP on the APC Workgroup that was formed to examine the issue of a UC Systemwide Academic Calendar. The workgroup, co-chaired by Academic Council Vice Chair Ahmet Palazoglu and UC Irvine Professor Richard Arum, was tasked with assessing the feasibility of coordinating academic calendars across all campuses. UCORP's focus

was to ensure that research-related concerns would be incorporated into the workgroup's report. UCORP provided input for the APC Workgroup on Systemwide Academic Calendar's deliberations prior to the issuance of a draft report in February and sent comments about the workgroup's draft report during the Senate review period in May.

ACADEMIC CONGRESS ON RESEARCH

In the beginning of the year, UCORP discussed the planning for the UC Academic Congress on Research with Vice President Theresa Maldonado and former UCORP Chair Cynthia Schumann. With the inauguration of President Trump in January, preparation for the panels and topics took on new urgency. The Congress took place on March 11-12th at UCLA and was attended by Chair Nicholas and a few UCORP members. The Congress featured a keynote by Dr. Sudip Parikh, CEO of the American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS), and included panels on the future of research funding, the outlook from UC's Federal Government Relations, research opportunities within the State of California, and landmark research in the humanities.

OTHER TOPICS

Updates from the Office of Research & Innovation – As consultants to the committee, directors within 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 gave a short presentation on the purview and organization of R&I and described priorities such as securing funding for systemwide entities including the statewide Natural Reserves System and the UC Observatories and convening a “committee of inventors” to serve as an advisory group for UC's patent efforts.

The R&I staff provided regular updates to UCORP throughout the academic year on research-related topics at UC, including research security, “restricted research,” systemwide research initiatives, and new and updated policies. With the start of the new federal administration in January, the updates became primarily about cuts and potential cuts to federal funding.

Federal cuts to research funding – After January 2025, UCORP heard from the Research Policy administrators at each meeting about suspensions and stop work orders from federal agencies. While the situation constantly shifted, UCORP members were asked to help spread the word that faculty who receive a notification from a federal agency, or who need assistance with current or upcoming grants, should reach out to their vice chancellor of research or local contracts and grants office (or equivalent). In the spring, UCORP representatives discussed campus efforts to provide bridge funding for faculty whose grants were adversely impacted.

Financial accounting system issues – The Oracle financial system changeover continued to be a topic of discussion for those campuses making the transition. UC Davis experienced disruptions to research administration upon transitioning to the Oracle system earlier in the year. UC Merced and UC San Diego are still dealing with problems more than two years after their rollouts. There have been small improvements made to the system at UCM. UCSD faculty are advocating for compensation for faculty adversely affected. Because this is not a systemwide issue, it has been challenging to address as a system.

NSF Research Security Training Opportunity – In December, UCORP learned from Chief Compliance and Audit Officer Alexander Bustamante about an opportunity to collaborate with the

National Science Foundation (NSF) on a Faculty Research Security Training Initiative to develop in-person training modules. This effort was subsequently put on hold after cuts by the administration.

Consultation with Provost Newman – Systemwide Provost and Executive Vice President Katherine Newman joined UCORP’s March meeting to discuss academic affairs and research-related topics. She addressed the pressures on UC coming from the federal government and informed UCORP that UC’s legal team was at work on all aspects of the issues involved. She emphasized that UC was building coalitions with other states and associations to develop responses to the challenges.

Academic Senate Task Force on UC Adaptation to Disruptions (UCAD)

In April, the Academic Council formed a systemwide Academic Senate Task Force on UC Adaptation to Disruptions (UCAD) to consider strategies for the university to pursue to uphold its teaching, research, and public service missions in the face of potentially severe and unpredictable external disruptions from the current federal administration. UCAD membership includes the chairs of systemwide committees, including UCORP, and chairs of Senate Divisions. UCAD produced an interim report in June and will continue its work into the fall and potentially beyond, as needed.

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, including faculty grant programs. Liaisons to various other workgroups and committees provided regular updates as well.

SYSTEMWIDE REVIEW PARTICIPATION AND CORRESPONDENCE

- Comments on Proposed Presidential Policy on the Use of Animals in Research, Teaching, and Testing (2/14/2025)
- Input for the APC Workgroup on Systemwide Academic Calendar’s deliberations (2/18/2025)
- Comments on Proposed Presidential Policy on the Dual Use Research of Concern and Pathogens with Enhanced Pandemic Potential (3/24/2025)
- Comments on the APC Workgroup on Systemwide Academic Calendar draft report (5/21/2025)
- Comments on Proposed New Presidential Policy on High-Containment Research (5/21/2025)
- Five-Year Reviews of two multicampus research units: UC Observatories and Bioengineering Institute of California (completed 5/21/2025, presented at Academic Council 5/28/2025).

UCORP REPRESENTATION

- As Chair of UCORP, Susanne Nicholas served on the Assembly of the Academic Senate, Academic Council, Academic Planning Council, Systemwide Academic Senate Task Force on UC Adaptation to Disruptions (UCAD), and as a guest at meetings of the Council of Vice Chancellors of Research (COVCR).
- Vice Chair James Weatherall served on the Faculty Advisory Committee on Graduate Education and Employment, Faculty AI Workgroup, and joined meetings of the Academic Council, UCAD, and COVCR as the chair’s alternate.

- Nirvikar Singh (UC Santa Cruz) served on the APC Workgroup on Systemwide Academic Calendar.
- Stephanie Malia Hom (UC Santa Barbara) served on Academic Council Special Committee on Laboratory Issues (ACSCOLI).
- Elina Zuniga (UC San Diego) served on the Faculty Advisory Committee on Graduate Education and Employment.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

UCORP is grateful to its regular consultants who have provided invaluable information and perspective to the committee:

- Ellen Auriti, Senior Principal Counsel, UC Legal
- Agnes Balla, Director, Research Policy Analysis and Coordination
- Lourdes DeMattos, Director, Research Policy Analysis and Coordination
- Kathleen Erwin, Executive Director, Research Grants Program Office
- Coreen Harada, Executive Director for Research & Innovation and Special Assistant to the Vice President for Research & Innovation
- 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 2024-25:

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