

University Committee on Research Policy

Annual Report 2019-20

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 nine times during the 2019-20 academic year. Due to the Covid-19 pandemic and shutdown, the last four meetings of the year were held via videoconference. This report summarizes the committee's activities during the year.

COVID-19

2019-20 was marked by the Covid-19 pandemic, which caused the university to shut down campuses, including most laboratories, in mid-March. UCORP members gathered and shared communication from the campuses. Beginning in April, UCORP received updates from the newly-appointed Vice President for Research and Innovation, Theresa Maldonado. When she started at UC on March 10, VP Maldonado immediately began hosting regular – at first daily – calls with the Vice Chancellors for Research. The VC-Rs, along with representatives from State and Federal Government Relations offices and UC Health, shared information about campus shutdowns, processes for continuing to operate remotely, and then the longer process and phased approach for opening up. UCORP drafted a letter to Academic Council expressing members' concerns about the long-term impact of the shutdown on research productivity and the careers of young faculty members, postdocs, and graduate students.

MRU REVIEWS – BIOENGINEERING INSTITUTE OF CALIFORNIA (BIC) AND UC OBSERVATORIES (UCO)

In 2019-20 UCORP led two five-year reviews for the Academic Senate. The committee split into two groups and, per the 2014 Compendium's "Guidelines for Five-Year Reviews of Multicampus Research Units," representatives from CCGA and UCPB joined the Review Committees to conduct reviews of the Bioengineering Institute of California (BIC) and the UC Observatories (UCO). In February, leaders from the BIC and UCO joined the UCORP meeting for in-person discussion. The two MRU Review Reports were completed in May and sent to the Academic Council for approval and transmittal to the Vice President for Research and Innovation. At its June 24, 2020, meeting, the Academic Council approved the Five-Year Reviews.

The Review Committee for the Bioengineering Institute of California (BIC) concluded that the MRU was successful in terms of fostering intercampus collaborations among faculty and students and exploiting synergies among the unique strengths and profiles of campus bioengineering departments. Its activities have exposed students to education, training, and mentoring through co-advising and industry networking events that exceed what is possible at some individual campuses. BIC has been successful in promoting active industry participation including securing modest financial support for the annual systemwide Bioengineering Symposium. The intercampus interactions during the annual

symposium play a positive role in fostering collaborative research and joint grants. The Review Committee found that there is untapped potential associated with BIC, and offered recommendations for developing a research agenda that is more systematic and visible to strengthen the MRU and attract sustainable funding.

The Review Committee for the UC Observatories found that UCO is a major asset of the UC system and that its stellar reputation has enabled UC to expand its impact in astronomy and related sciences. UCO provides resources that ensure UC astronomers have preferred access to world-leading facilities into the future. UCO runs a vigorous public outreach program at Lick Observatory, located outside of San Jose, California, and helps to facilitate campus-based and public outreach in astronomy across the state. While UCB, UCSC and UCLA have historically dominated telescope work at the observatory, its resources are available and used systemwide. UCO has done a great deal to support the development of astronomy as a discipline across the UC system, and at the highest level of excellence. The Review Committee offered some recommendations for improvement of UCO's budget presentation, governance structure, and accountability to the University, but overall fully supported the continuation of UCO as an MRU.

CLIMATE CRISIS

In November, UCORP sent a letter¹ to Academic Council Chair Kum-Kum Bhavnani with steps that the Academic Senate could take to get the faculty to assume a leadership role in promoting climate change solutions. The letter was based on a resolution underway at the UC Merced Academic Senate and noted that UC faculty are ideally suited to help: (1) implement ongoing efforts towards carbon neutrality (2) formulate new approaches to mitigate the effects of climate change and (3) devise innovative directions in research, education, and outreach for lasting and sustained impact. UCORP's recommendations were revised by the Academic Council and forwarded to President Napolitano, who responded² with support and suggestions for increased faculty involvement with ongoing UC efforts.

In December, UCSD climate champion Adam Aron (who is also a member of UCPB) joined a UCORP meeting to talk about the latest climate crisis-related activities on the UC San Diego campus. Professor Aron believes that UC, as an academic and research institution, has the ability to make significant changes with serious effort from the administration in de-carbonization, research, and teaching, at the scale and intensity of a Manhattan Project, with associated accountability.

For the third year in a row, UCORP invited UC climate crisis experts to share more about the university's climate change mitigation efforts. In March, UCORP hosted UC Irvine Professor Ken Janda, the co-chair of the UC Global Climate Leadership Council's Applied Research Work Group (ARWG). Janda, a Professor of Chemistry Emeritus and former Dean of Physical Sciences at UCI, described the work of the group and asked UCORP members for input on potential strategies for broadening faculty engagement.

¹ <https://senate.universityofcalifornia.edu/files/reports/kkb-jn-climate-change-principles.pdf>

² <https://senate.universityofcalifornia.edu/files/reports/jn-to-bhavnani-climate-12-13-2019.pdf>

UCORP will continue to explore how campus CORs could allocate resources to climate research and whether systemwide funding used for MRPI/MRUs could be used to encourage more research related to the climate crisis. Ideally, current efforts could be coordinated and leveraged to attract new money for the university.

CANCER RESEARCH COORDINATING COMMITTEE

The Cancer Research Coordinating Committee is a systemwide faculty-led granting agency administered by the Research Grants Program Office at UCOP. A total of \$2 million comes from bequests, donations, and a California voluntary tax form contribution, and is awarded as grants of \$75,000 to individual researchers who are generally early in their careers and represent a broad range of cancer expertise, including technology and basic research. Early in the year, UCORP discussed whether CCRC money could be used to promote more partnering among campuses. UCORP members drafted a proposal and will continue to discuss options next year.

COR SURVEY

At the beginning of the year, members gathered information on their campus committees, including each COR's involvement in the process of faculty research award funding. Members hoped that comparisons would help those campuses with less funding to request increased support locally. Some campus CORs are more policy centered, while others are more focused on research award assessment and funding.

ADMINISTRATIVE BURDENS ON FACULTY

UCORP discussed signing on to a letter from UCWF about the increase in administrative burden being placed on faculty, and especially on medical and research faculty. The letter offered specific suggestions, including ideas for increasing efficiency, reducing reimbursement requirements, and streamlining processes. [Note that this was prior to the Covid-19 crisis.]

OFFICE OF RESEARCH AND GRADUATE STUDIES – UPDATES AND CONSULTATION

As consultants to the committee, members of the Office of Research & Innovation (formerly the Office of Research and Graduate Studies) joined UCORP each month to provide updates and solicit feedback.

Covid-19 – The Research Grants Program Office provided \$2.1 million in emergency seed funding for Covid-19-related research, in grants of \$25,000 each. The funds were redirected from other statewide programs. In addition, block grants of \$50,000 from the Laboratory Fees Research Program were distributed to each of the campuses at the beginning of the shutdown.

Foreign Influence – UCORP was updated on Conflict of Interest/Conflict of Commitment reporting, requirements from the Department of Energy for prior approvals for foreign nationals, and Higher Education Act Section 117 reporting of all funding of over \$250,000 from a single foreign source. The primary takeaway is the need for proper reporting and disclosure. UC is joining with other higher education institutions in responding to RFIs and new legislation in an attempt to maintain the fundamental research exception.

UC Laboratory Fees Research Program – The UC Laboratory Fees Research Program is funded by a portion of the payment that the University receives for its management of the Los Alamos and Lawrence Livermore National Labs. Grants are used for enhancing collaboration, supporting undergraduate research opportunities, and promoting science and research at the labs. In 2019, the Lab Fees Research Program (LFRP) In-Residence Graduate Fellowship program selected six students to receive the awards. There were six awardees of Collaborative Research and Training (CRT) funding in the three targeted topic areas selected last year. Each panel yielded a 20-22% success rate. For the 2020 award cycle, the funding opportunity for In-Residence Graduate Fellowships was announced in April, with letters of intent due in June and full proposals in September. The CRT award is offered every two years.

Multicampus Research and Programs and Initiatives (MRPI) – UCORP was consulted on whether the 2020 Multicampus Research Program Initiative (MRPI) award competition should use a Letter of Intent review panel to help filter proposals. Applications for the program, which provides two-year planning/pilot awards and four-year awards for larger collaborative projects (new or established), have increased in recent years. UCORP received updates on the RPF process, including the extension of the LOI deadline due to the Covid-19 crisis.

CARE Fellowship – UCORP members were informed about the new CARE-UC Innovation Fellowship, a pilot partnership research and training opportunity intended to grow the workforce pipeline and strengthen expertise in alleviating poverty and improving human conditions locally, nationally and internationally. The six-month graduate fellowship includes a summer placement and \$9,000 stipend, plus travel allowance. Applications were received from twenty students.

Policies:

NAGPRA – UCORP reviewed the revised proposed Presidential Policy on Native American Cultural Affiliation and Repatriation and some members sent names of faculty on their campuses who might be interested in providing feedback or participating on one of the requisite committees.

New UC Data Policy – UCORP was asked to contribute to the direction of a new draft data policy, which will be refined and sent out for formal systemwide review in the fall.

Openness in Research Policy – UCORP was informed about a renewed effort to develop an “Openness in Research Policy” for UC. The policy aggregates UC statements about accepting funding that comes with citizenship and publication restrictions, and describes any exceptions (for example, national security). Some researchers are hitting barriers due to these restrictions, while others feel there are no circumstances when UC should accept restrictions.

Proposed Revised Presidential Policy on Protection of Human Subjects in Research – UCORP reviewed the proposed revisions and did not comment.

AGRICULTURE AND NATURAL RESOURCES (ANR)

Associate Vice President for ANR Wendy Powers joined UCORP in January to provide updates on the latest work of the Division of Agriculture and Natural Resources and the new Governing Council that was convened last spring. Chaired by UC Riverside Chancellor Kim Wilcox, the Governing Council was an outcome of a Presidential Advisory Committee formed to assess the governance, funding, and reporting structures of ANR. Charged with advising the UC President on the work of ANR, the Council includes Academic Senate representatives and members from every campus except UCSF.

Eleanor Kaufman, the Chair of the Academic Senate's Task Force on ANR, joined two UCORP meetings to provide updates on the issues discussed by the Task Force, including the thorny issue of Senate status and tenure for Cooperative Extension Specialists. TFANR is gathering information from ANR researchers and trying to determine how to connect the research goals of ANR and the wider university. UCORP's relationship with ANR in recent years has focused on finding ways for increased interactions between ANR and Senate faculty, especially on non-AES campuses.

SYSTEMWIDE ISSUES AND CAMPUS REPORTS

UCORP devoted part of each regular meeting to discussing systemwide issues as reported by Academic Senate leadership and reports from members on campus COR issues.

SYSTEMWIDE REVIEW PARTICIPATION AND CORRESPONDENCE REPORT

- UCORP's recommendations for faculty action and response to the climate crisis. Letter to Academic Council, November 14, 2019.
- UCORP's comments re: UC Washington Center Assessment Report and Proposal for Future State. February 19, 2020.
- UCORP's comments re: Working Group on Comprehensive Access Report. February 19, 2020.
- UCORP comments re: Revised UC Travel Policy. May 20, 2020.
- UCORP sent recommendations to the UCOP administration for software programs and services that UC should consider for systemwide licenses to facilitate remote research for faculty and graduate students. June 3, 2020.
- UCORP's recommendations regarding Covid-19 Impacts on Researchers. Letter to Academic Council, June 17, 2020 (revised July 8, 2020).
- As a follow-up to the Academic Council Memorial to the Board of Regents last year, UCORP Chair Andrew Baird co-signed on a letter from multiple committee chairs to Academic Council Chair Kum-Kum Bhavnani requesting increased transparency from UC on its holdings in companies that have substantial fossil fuel reserves. June 17, 2020.³

³ <https://senate.universityofcalifornia.edu/files/reports/kkb-jn-jb-fossil-fuels-divestment-transparency.pdf>

UCORP REPRESENTATION

As Chair of UCORP, Andrew Baird served on the Assembly of the Academic Senate, Academic Council, Academic Planning Council, and on the search committee for a new VP for Research and Innovation. Chair Baird also represented UCORP on the Academic Council Special Committee on Lab Issues (ACSCOLI), the UCPB Task Force on Agriculture & Natural Resources (TFANR), and the Research Information Management Systems (RIMS) Working Group.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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

- Theresa Maldonado, Vice President for Research & Innovation
- Bart Aoki, Executive Director, Research Grants Program Office
- Kathleen Erwin, Director, UC Research Initiatives
- Janna Tom, Director, Research Policy Analysis and Coordination
- Lourdes DeMattos, Associate Director, Research Grants Program Office
- Emily Rader, Portfolio Manager
- Wendy Powers, ANR Associate Vice President

UCORP also wishes to thank its invited guests and campus alternates 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 2019-20:

Andrew Baird, Chair
Richard Desjardins, Vice Chair
Irina Conboy, UCB
Karen Bales, UCD
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Jeanmarie Gonzales, Graduate Student Representative
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Kum-Kum Bhavnani, Chair, Academic Senate, *Ex Officio*
Mary Gauvain, Vice Chair, Academic Senate, *Ex Officio*
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