

UNIVERSITY COMMITTEE ON RESEARCH POLICY ANNUAL REPORT 2008-09

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 2008-09 academic year, UCORP met eight times, five times in person and three times via teleconference. This report briefly outlines the committee's activities.

UCORP INITIATIVES

1. UCORP Handbook

As a supplement to traditional orientation materials such as annual reports and previous meetings' minutes, Chair Carey suggested the committee develop a more comprehensive members' guide that would also include organization charts from relevant Office of the President units, an acronym glossary, and overviews of shared governance and university administration. A first draft was created and will be used as a template for future years.

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 a 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 can be updated annually and included in the aforementioned committee handbook.

3. Synergy Project/Seminar Network

UCORP also sought methods of unifying institutional research efforts through greater communications between individual researchers at different campuses. The committee decided to investigate and then to propose a seminar network that would allow real-time participation in seminars held at a distant campus or even across campus. Chair Carey led the investigation by contacting members of his campus's information technology unit as well as systemwide officials. He then developed a white paper which the full committee endorsed, and then initiated low-level testing in a few departments at UC Davis; UCORP participated in one demonstration.

Following revisions, the white paper was submitted for systemwide review in order to judge interest and secure Senate-wide support. Respondents encouraged UCORP to proceed with the project, but asked for clarifications on certain issues such as cost and intellectual property. While final answers to questions are being sought, the committee resubmitted its manuscript to the Academic Council to garner endorsement for a comprehensive pilot project. UCORP will continue to develop the proposal over next year.

RESEARCH POLICY ISSUES

1. NAGPRA and Stewardship/Ownership of Research Materials and Data

Events at the San Diego campus brought enforcement of University guidelines for compliance with the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act (NAGPRA) to UCORP's attention. The committee forwarded comments to the Academic Council calling for stricter enforcement of extant guidelines while noting that Office of the President personnel were revising them. UCORP anticipates commenting on the revised guidelines when they become available.

Implicated in the NAGPRA question is the University's policy on the ownership and maintenance of research materials. UCORP again called for stricter application of the guidelines as well as for more explicit ones. These, too, should be available for comment in the next academic year.

2. Compliance

On several occasions, UCORP considered issues arising from proliferating compliance requirements. Aside from keeping abreast of new requirements in effort reporting, the committee commented on proposed sanctions for faculty who are not fully compliant. The committee encouraged more user-friendly compliance software, better and centralized recordkeeping, and greater explication of new, but similar, requirements—especially when their recommendations are contradictory.

3. Researcher Safety

Faculty at several campuses this year were the victims of domestic terror acts due to the inclusion of animal or human subjects in research. The violence perpetrated occurred on both University and personal property. New state and federal legislation is designed to curb the number of incidents by providing additional means of legal redress. Different campuses locate faculty redress in different Senate committees; at some it is the province of academic freedom committees, while at others the locus is unclear as systematic divisional discussions have yet to occur.

UCORP also reviewed accidents as at one campus, an in-lab accident led to a fatality. Again, concerns regarding inconsistent recommendations from compliance monitors were noted as aggravating a difficult situation.

4. Post-Doc Unionization

UCORP received updates and discussed the nascent post-doctoral scholars' union. While post-docs have contracted with the United Auto Workers (UAW) to be their representative body, specific contractual terms are still being negotiated. UCORP noted concerns in trying to balance work-life issues with non-standardized research calendars and wondered whether unionization would impact UC's long-term ability to recruit. The Office of the President's Office of Academic Personnel is adding a collective bargaining specialist position to help address these concerns, among others.

5. Shared Computing Resources Initiative

UCORP received a presentation from the developers of the Shared Computing Resources Initiative, a project designed to save cost and effort by offering meta-level computing capacity more widely. It is thought that individual researchers will no longer need to maintain local clusters. UCORP questioned the timing and development of the proposal, as well as the level of interest systemwide. The president cleared the project to move forward, and UCORP will monitor its implementation and outcomes.

6. Universities Allied for Essential Medicine (UAEM) Proposal

Student representatives from UAEM contacted UCORP members individually, and later the committee as a whole, in order to secure the committee's imprimatur for their efforts, which are designed to make new medical drugs and treatments available at low or no cost in developing countries. UAEM also met with the Technology Transfer Advisory Committee (TTAC), the group charged with evaluating proposals that impact copyright, marketing, and other technology transfer issues. After hearing from both UCORP's representative to TTAC and from UAEM, the committee elected to await TTAC's recommendations before taking a formal position.

LABORATORY ISSUES

1. Fees

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.

2. Pit Production

UCORP debated the merits of increasing plutonium pit production, including whether UC should dissociate itself from the labs should pit production jump substantially. Changes on the national political scene obviated some of these concerns, but UCORP continues to monitor the ancillary benefits of such classified research and work, especially whether they add value to UC's research enterprise.

3. Governance

It was proposed to move administration of the national labs from the DOE to the Department of Defense. This reignited the debate about pit production and UC's relationship with the labs, but again, changes on the national political scene have sidelined this debate. Nonetheless, UCORP will continue to monitor events.

ACADEMIC REVIEWS

1. Division of Agriculture and Natural Resources

UCORP was excited to receive and review 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.

2. QB3

UCORP also commented on the five-year academic review of the California Institute for Quantitative Biosciences (QB3), the second of the California Institutes for Science and Innovation to undergo this process. UCORP is impressed by the quality and types of research being conducted, but the committee again noted the absence of specific quantitative metrics. This continued omission undermines the laudatory nature of each review.

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

1. ORGS Restructuring

This year, ORGS underwent administrative restructuring, along with most other units in the Office of the President. UCORP received frequent updates on the restructuring process, helping to ensure that the administrative efficiencies being sought did not also carry deleterious impacts on research. UCORP will continue to monitor the unit's evolution as the impacts of ORGS' restructuring is not yet fully known.

2. MRU/MRPI

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 – especially at the campus level, and a lack of consideration for 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. In light of these concerns, next year UCORP will request a more comprehensive RFP consultation process that incorporates feedback from divisional, as well as systemwide, stakeholder committees.

3. Consultants from the Office of Research and Graduate Studies regularly updated the committee on policy issues related to research, including:

- Export Control
- California Institute of Climate Studies
- Stem Cell Research/California Institute of Regenerative Medicine
- National Science Foundation Policy Changes
- Suspended Grants
- Publication Restrictions
- Indirect Cost Recovery
- Stimulus Money Usage

CORRESPONDENCE REPORT

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

- Draft Accountability Framework
- Revisions to APM 028
- Proposed Furlough and Salary Cut Options
- Non-Resident Enrollment Principles
- Post Doctorate and Professional Education Task Force Report
- Proposed Amendments to the University Committee on Academic Freedom (UCAAF) By-laws
- Implementation of RE-89

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, Council on Research, Industry-University Cooperative Research Program Steering Committee, and 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.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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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 2008-09:

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