



**University Committee on Research Policy
Monday, March 10, 2025**

Meeting Minutes

I. Chair's announcements, approval of minutes

UCORP's meeting minutes from February 10th were approved.

UCORP Chair Susanne Nicholas provided some updates from the last meeting of the Academic Council. Council members were asked to consider potentially two new groups to address the current political and financial situation. One would be a joint faculty-administrative group and the other would be a task force of UCFW. UC Merced achieved R1 status in record time. Administrators provided information about the potential reduction in funding via cuts to federal indirect cost percentages. A decision on implementing a common Academic Calendar will not be made in the short term. There has been a second petition for a special meeting of the Academic Assembly, which will occur on March 25.

Campus transitions to the Oracle financial system continue to cause problems. The UC Davis Senate conducted a survey and can share results. Faculty want someone to take accountability for the disruptions.

II. MRU Review – Interview with UC Observatories Director

Bruce Macintosh, UC Observatories Director

Matthew Shetrone, UC Observatories Deputy Director

Crystal Roberts, UC Observatories Associate Director

The leadership of the UC Observatories joined the meeting to provide background, answer questions, and engage in conversation about the work of the observatories. Lick Observatory was founded almost 150 years ago. It remains competitive on the national scene due in part to funding from the systemwide level. The Keck Observatory is jointly owned with CalTech. UCO represents UC in the international planning for a Thirty Meter Telescope. The MRU also trains new generations of astronomers, engages with K-12 public education, and promotes science through engagement with the public.

The primary location is Santa Cruz, with an associate director at UCLA. Users of the observatories include 650 astronomers at 9 campuses. Nobel prize winners and astronomical discoveries have come from researcher involvement with the observatories (for example, Andrea Ghez at UCLA). The Director talked about the power of shared research facilities in enabling research discoveries and highlighted a few of the top accomplishments and programs: Mapping dark matter, high level instrumentation, and a joint project with UCSC, UCI, UCLA, and the Indian Institute for

Astrophysics. Students from community colleges and Cal States participate in UC Observatory programs, and there is K-12 outreach as well.

Progress on construction of the Thirty Meter Telescope in Hawaii was halted in 2019. Director Macintosh noted the importance of recognizing the negative impact and misbehavior of the past vis a vis the native Hawaiians and their culture. He said that mountain is now managed differently and progress has been made.

UC Observatories provided detailed responses to questions posed by the review group. These can be found in the review folder.

III. Provost Katherine Newman

Systemwide Provost and Executive Vice President joined the meeting via Zoom to discuss academic affairs and research-related topics. Provost Newman began with addressing the pressures on UC coming from the federal government, and noting that UC's legal team was at work on all aspects of the legal issues involved. There have been some successes in halting or slowing the harmful effects, but they may be temporary.

If UCLA becomes a target for cuts, UC will emphasize that the campuses are vigilant, that we don't allow racism, antisemitism, and other harmful speech to go unfettered. Efforts of all kinds are underway, some as a result of last year's protests, some at the campus level, some led by the Office of the President. Consistent application of time place and manner rules has been emphasized. UC leaders and governmental relations personnel maintain positive relationships with leaders in the state and federal government. Provost Newman relatedly noted that the next UC Congress – in June – will be on Academic Freedom.

UCORP members asked about UC's strategy of minimizing effects, and whether it was time to take a stronger stance. UC is currently building and leading coalitions, working with other states and associations such as AAU and APLU on developing responses. The legal piece is taking up a lot of time and energy for UC right now, as it tries to address immediate needs.

Asked about impacts to the research enterprise from Oracle financial system transition at some campuses, Provost Newman did not have answers. She suggested that UCORP talk to those responsible for the transition on their campuses. Several faculty were profoundly impacted financially and should be compensated.

Two APC Workgroup reports

Regarding the Systemwide Academic Calendar Workgroup and its draft report, Provost Newman said that the current systemwide review would be finished in May and the workgroup would then assess the responses. She acknowledged that now is not the time for major upheaval, and that any transition to a common UC-wide calendar is at least a 3-5 year project.

Regarding the Report on the Future of Doctoral Programs at UC, Provost Newman said she would like to see a very deep, campus-level review focused at the department level. As charged, the

Report contains observations and bold recommendations. The recommendations will have different attractions for different departments. These discussions should then percolate up to campus level for further discussion of changes that could be made.

Provost Newman mentioned the importance of letting committees do their work and to release their material when they're ready, even if the community is anxious.

In a brief discussion of indirect costs, UCORP members asked about systemwide guidance and whether UC could do anything to mitigate potential drastic losses. UCOP does not oversee campus indirect cost distribution

IV. Academic Senate Leadership Update

Joint faculty workgroup to examine APM 015 & 016: This joint workgroup was convened to review two sections of the APM to determine whether they are adequate to address sanctions for expressive activities. A second task was to address whether a pause on academic personnel review actions should still be added to the APM. When the Regents decided that the P&T process needed to be reviewed to determine if it was sufficient and expeditious enough for faculty discipline, the workgroup turned its attention to reviewing the P&T process. Three regents are also now involved in the new work. The group is reviewing the timeline from when charges are filed to final decision by Chancellor. It will assess whether changes are needed, and whether a more robust systemwide case monitoring system should be implemented. The group will finish its work by mid-April for presentation at the May Regents' meeting.

Budget: UC is currently slated for a \$270 million reduction from the state, which is 7.9% off of base. State agencies are also taking cuts. UC's budget administrators and state government relations staff are working to try to lessen the cut. President Drake has indicated that there will still be raises. The cap for in-state freshman enrollment may be over-ridden as that state non-resident tuition buyout will be suspended.

Federal cuts: Chair Cheung has proposed a joint faculty-administrative workgroup on "adaptations to disruption" that would address funding gaps and mitigation, instructional capacity, research impact, DEI and community safety. Cuts to Medicaid and Medicare will have serious impacts on UC medical centers. The Provost is currently reviewing the charge for the group. This group could also take a different form, such as a retreat or Senate-centered endeavor with administrators brought in.

Special meeting of the Academic Assembly: A second special meeting of the Assembly of the Academic Senate was originated by the UCD professor who instigated the previous one. In the last special meeting, the group discussed the President's cybersecurity letter, salary adjustment timing, and healthcare cost increases. The Vice President for Human Resources pledged to improve communication and work more closely with the Senate's Health Care Task Force. Meanwhile, a total remuneration study and benefits survey are moving forward with faculty involvement.

Vote of no confidence: UC Davis faculty passed a vote of no confidence against President Drake with approximately 20% of Senate members responding.

New UC president search: The Academic Advisory Council reviewed 250 potential candidates and whittled them down to 30. It turns out that these align with those who the Regents are also interested in.

V. MRU Review – Interview with Bioengineering Institute of California Director

Song Li, Director, Bioengineering Institute of California

Abraham Lee, Director-elect, Bioengineering Institute of California

Bioengineering Institute of California (BIC) Director Song Li and Director-Elect Abraham Lee joined the meeting via Zoom and did not prepare slides. Dr Li has been the director of the Bioengineering Institute of California (BIC) for the past two and a half years. Dr. Lee will become the BIC director in June/July. They briefly described the BIC's history, impact, and programs, including the annual symposium, which is the primary activity of the institute, and the UC reception at the national Biomedical Engineering Society (BMES) Conference. These are funded primarily by contributions of a few thousand dollars from each campus, with the host campus contributing more. The BIC also hosts junior faculty seminars and a webinar series on various topics. Until this year, CIRM (California Institute for Regenerative Medicine) had been a reliable source of additional funding, providing \$25K pre-pandemic and \$50K each year after Covid. BIC is investigating new sources of funding from industry to make up for the loss. Dr. Lee has been running a campus center with industry funding for almost 20 years. He has had success leveraging even small seed funding into additional grant funding and hopes to bring that model to BIC.

Review committee members asked questions about the new model proposal, future funding, the BIC's Industry Liaison Committee, development of a strategic plan, governance, and fostering diversity. Director Li noted that the advisory board, which is composed of the Vice Chancellors of Research from each campus, has not met in several years. UCORP members suggested making use of the Advisory Board in developing future plans and asked about whether there are others who might be able to advise.

More details about the conversation with the BIC directors can be found in the review folder.

Action: After the discussion, members of the BIC review group were asked to submit questions that were not sufficiently covered during the discussion.

VI. Consultation with the Office of the President – Office of Research and Innovation

Deborah Motton, Executive Director, Research Policy Analysis and Coordination

Lourdes DeMattos, Director, Research Policy Analysis and Coordination

Kathleen Erwin, Executive Director, Research Grants Program Office

Anna Ward, Director, UC Research Initiatives

1. Questions or comments about the Proposed Presidential Policy on the Dual Use Research of Concern and Pathogens with Enhanced Pandemic Potential

Even with changes in the federal administration, the policy is still in effect. Because it addresses a bi-partisan issue there's no reason to think it will be rescinded. UCORP members noted that to truly address risks posed by these materials, it will be important to involve the range of institutions that work with them. Researchers are concerned about the cost of implementation, which will be specific to each UC location. UCOP is providing tools for campuses to conduct an inventory, which could part of a cost analysis. It was suggested that basic training materials and suggested reporting structures could be provided at an aggregate level, perhaps involving associations. There is a systemwide workgroup that was convened to work on the policy and that will continue to meet to share information.

2. Federal issues: slow-down in awards, notices of suspensions/stop work orders and terminations, NIH cuts to IDC, and court actions that have stalled some of these actions

Campuses have been receiving notices of cancellation, suspension, and stop-work from various federal agencies. Some involve DEI activities; some orders are from USAID. Some campus activities may have shut down due to these actions.

The back and forth between executive orders, temporary restraining orders, and recissions have caused confusion and funds being blocked despite orders being overturned. A number of agencies have slowed awards and are requesting that campuses certify compliance with executive orders around DEI.

On February 7th, NIH released a notification that indirect cost (known as "IDC" or F&A) expenses would be capped at 15% for all new and existing awards. A flurry of lawsuits resulted in a temporary restraining order, which led to a preliminary injunction. At this point, any existing awards and new proposals have the *existing* negotiated rate. Because the expense categories are defined, it would generally not be possible to move costs from direct to indirect. Direct costs are capped as well. UCOP's Research Policy Analysis and Coordination unit is drafting a high-level, one-page document to explain what is covered by indirect costs.

If there is a government shutdown, UC will provide guidance, as in the past. UC leaders are planning for various potential budget scenarios, including ways to address contraction of research funding. UC's priorities include keeping research moving forward and minimizing job losses.

UCORP members asked whether UCOP can advise campuses to be transparent about how indirect costs are spent. Many faculty feel that there is inequitable distribution of funds and that they should have access to the information. UCOP staff encouraged UCORP members to have the conversations locally with the campus VC-R.

3. *UC Research Initiatives updates were provided via email after the meeting:*

1. Accelerated Lab Fees Research Program (LFRP) funded call ["AI Science at Scale"](#)
 - Pre-proposals were down-selected in the three targeted technical areas
 - Applications are due on March 18th
 - Award notifications expected mid-April
 - Award start date July 1

2. New [LFRP](#) Request for Proposals anticipated late March/early April; will circulate to UCORP when available.
3. [Cancer Research Coordinating Committee](#) (CRCC)
 - Received 84 Letters of Intent; applications are due April 3rd.

VII. Systemwide Items Under Review

UCORP members reviewed summaries of the current policies under review that were included in the agenda. The committee will send feedback on the DURC/PEPP policy, but will not send comments on the other items with March or April deadlines. UCORP will review the items due in May at its next meeting.

VIII. Local Committee Reports

UCSB: Changes to the UCSB faculty research grant program were approved unanimously. The chancellor search is underway, as well a search for a new University Librarian. At recent presentation by the director of the Natural Reserve System, it was noted that a systemwide database that could be shared by reserves statewide would be useful.

UC Davis: UC Davis foresees a cut to faculty grant funding, in which case the Senate may have to prioritize. The Davis Senate held two additional meetings of their representative Assembly.

UC San Diego: UCSD is reviewing the report of the on the Future of Doctoral Programs at UC. Graduate education has seen increases in some programs and decreases in others. UCSD's COR is reviewing its Bylaws and would be interested in seeing the bylaws of other campus CORs.

UCLA: Faculty grants received more applications this year and COR may review the process. Fire response grant applications came in last week. COR continues to work on guidelines for the new research park.

UC San Francisco: The UCSF chief campus chief informatics officer joined a COR meeting to talk about AI. UCSF uses Versa.

UC Riverside: UCR is revising its faculty grant structure as well. There is an understanding that GSR costs have had an impact on grant funding. The impression is that the last round of negotiations happened without sufficient faculty input.

UC Merced: Also reviewing faculty grants. UC Merced became an R1 a few weeks ago and there will be a celebration on Wednesday.

UC Santa Cruz: UCSC's structural deficit continues to have an impact, including an additional administrative restriction on graduate admissions campus-wide. Some of the latest cuts are due to the Federal situation, but some were already on the way.

UC Irvine: The local committee (CORCL) is working with the VCR and discussing changes due to the new federal administration. Faculty grant funding at UCI is allocated to schools. Otherwise, CORCL is focused on IT issues right now.

UC Berkeley: The local committee is discussing problems with research administration. Oversight of natural history museums is also an issue at UC Berkeley right now. The UCB COR does not administer faculty grant awards or select speakers. It is supposed to advise on ORU reviews, but there are 72 ORUs at Berkeley.

IX. Wrap up and Next Steps

Meeting adjourned: 4:00pm

Meeting minutes drafted by: Joanne Miller, UCORP analyst

Attest: Susanne B. Nicholas, UCORP Chair

Meeting participants:

Susanne Nicholas (Chair, UCLA), James Weatherall (Vice Chair, UC Irvine), Abby Dernburg (UC Berkeley), David Rocke (UC Davis), Nicolás Ulibarri (UC Irvine, via Zoom), Dennis Lettenmaier (UCLA), Tao Ye (UC Merced, via Zoom), Padma Rangarajan (UC Riverside alternate), Elina Zuniga (UC San Diego), Bin Liu (UC San Francisco), Stephanie Hom (UC Santa Barbara), Nirvikar Singh (UC Santa Cruz, via Zoom), Steven Cheung (Academic Council Chair), Ahmet Palazoglu (Academic Council Vice Chair, via Zoom), Joanne Miller (Committee Analyst), Deborah Motton (via Zoom, Executive Director, Research Policy Analysis and Coordination), Kathleen Erwin (via Zoom, Executive Director, Research Grants Program Office), Lourdes DeMattos (via Zoom, Director, Research Policy Analysis and Coordination), Agnes Balla (via Zoom, Director, Research Policy Analysis and Coordination)

From the UC Observatories: Bruce Macintosh, Director; Matthew Shetrone, Deputy Director; Crystal Roberts, Associate Director.

From the Bioengineering Institute of California (via Zoom): Song Li, Director; Abraham Lee, Director-elect.