



**University Committee on Research Policy
Monday, June 8, 2026**

Meeting Minutes

I. Academic Senate Leadership Updates

Academic Council Vice Chair Susannah Scott joined the meeting to provide an overview of current activities of the Senate. Academic Council Chair Ahmet Palazoglu was unable to join.

- Digital accessibility compliance has been extended by a year, to April 2027, due to deadline extensions at the federal level.
- The US DOJ has filed an antisemitism lawsuit against UCLA that is focused on discrimination against students. If the federal government prevails, there may be grant cancellations and other financial penalties.
- The UCAD Plus workgroups are wrapping up their work. A report with findings and recommendations is expected to be circulated for systemwide review in early fall.
- A new Presidential AI Steering Committee has been formed to look at various aspects of artificial intelligence, including ethical, pedagogical, and more.
- Over a thousand UC faculty have signed an open letter to University leaders asking for reinstatement of the SAT. Many see reinstating the standardized test as a way to combat lack of math preparedness in students, which is especially problematic for success in STEM majors.
- Meanwhile, the Academic Senate's Board of Admissions and Relations with Schools (BOARS) has been charged with undertaking a study of standardized testing and of the A-G admissions requirement framework. BOARS is working on developing a roadmap. In setting standards for admissions, the Senate operates under delegated authority from the Regents, with the process for proposing change specified by Senate protocols (BOARS → Council → Assembly → Regents).
- The union representing UC lecturers (AFT) continues contract negotiations with the administration. Initial issues include academic freedom and job security within the AI landscape. Provost Newman recently sent out a communication about the final details that were worked out in the UAW agreement for graduate student employees. The TA and GSR pay scales will merge eventually, and impacts will vary greatly from campus to campus. Those campuses using lower tiers will see greater cost increases. Conversations are happening at the campus level regarding what changes might be made in graduate education, including shrinking the size of doctoral cohorts, shortening the time to degree, and other strategies.
- A workgroup on discipline and expressive activities that was convened by UC Academic Personnel is developing guidelines on extramural speech and Section II.A.1(b) of the Faculty Code of Conduct (APM 015). Its report should be available soon.
- The President is convening a new joint Senate-Administration task force on health sciences clinical and adjunct faculty and how they can participate in UC governance. The task force, which is co-chaired by UC Irvine Chancellor Howard Gillman and UCLA Professor of Medicine Michael Ong, is charged with producing recommendations in 90 days.

- The UC budget received a 10% overall increase in the governor's May revise proposal. California Senate Bill 895, which would establish the California Foundation for Science and Health Research, has passed the full Senate and is currently in the Assembly, although it has been reduced from \$23 billion to \$12 billion.

II. Chair's Announcements and Updates

UCORP Chair James Weatherall provided a couple of additional updates from the last Academic Council meeting:

- Conversations continue at the legislative level and among higher education leaders around California's "Master Plan" for higher education and potential changes to degree-granting status in the other sectors (Cal States and community colleges).
- The proposal for a Systemwide Climate Change and Sustainability Committee was not endorsed by the Academic Council for various reasons, including the existence of an active systemwide joint council and uncertainty about how a new committee would interact with it and lack of resources at the divisions.

The charge for a Research Funding Transparency Workgroup that will report back to UCORP was approved by Academic Council Chair Ahmet Palazoglu. It will be chaired by UCORP chair Weatherall.

Committee members discussed the implications to the university of graduate student pay increases, and how strategies could be shared between campuses and among systemwide committees. Addressing the situation piecemeal is one of the problems. Committees on research, graduate studies, and budget may want to arrange to share information.

Action taken: UCORP Meeting Minutes from 05/11/2026 were approved.

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

• Animal Research

Research Policy Manager Dragana Alexander joined the meeting to provide information and discuss the changing landscape of animal research in the United States. She highlighted a broader federal shift from debating whether animal research should occur to determining when it remains scientifically necessary. There are changes going on at several federal agencies – not just the NIH – that could present an opportunity for UC to lead the nation in demonstrating responsible conduct in its research efforts. There are several bills in congress that seek to phase out animal research, require non-animal alternatives when available, and increase accountability and reporting requirements for animal research. In the future, researchers should expect to provide stronger rationales for why animals are needed, rather than an alternative, and to explain how the research advances human health outcomes. UC has an opportunity to continue to support animal research that is scientifically necessary while at the same time investing in and developing networks or centers focused on alternatives.

An animal research transparency group that was convened a few years ago will likely be revived, with more conversations going forward.

- **Uniform Guidance from OMB**

The proposed changes to Uniform Guidance (UG) released from the Office of Management and Budget at the end of May were much broader than anticipated. UC's office of Research & Innovation has begun collecting input from constituencies and will work with UC Federal Government Relations and UC Legal on crafting a response on behalf of the University. While the UG did not include a cap on indirect costs, there are several significant new proposed changes that are of concern to research institutions, including politicization of the merit review process for proposals, prohibitions on some international collaboration, expanded use of eVerify to validate research teams, and barring usage of grant funds for publication charges and open access fees. The rule also expands the agencies' ability to terminate projects for "convenience." Under the Administrative Procedures Act, the number of responses matters in the review process. Therefore, individuals, campus groups, the Academic Senate, etc., are encouraged to submit responses. UCOP will provide templates that can be used. UCORP members discussed strategies for spreading awareness among faculty about the potential impacts of the proposed changes, with contracts & grants or research offices identified as the primary point of contact for faculty communication.

The group briefly discussed "Other Transaction Authority" (OTA) funding and restricted research funding. Public institutions have constraints and are often not able to apply for some of these opportunities, which are becoming more common.

IV. Local Committee Reports (Round-Robin)

Committee members briefly reported on new issues facing their local Committee on Research and other research-related campus news.

UCSD: The UC San Diego COR is working on a document that defines responsibility and escalation protocols for cost overruns. Some PIs have felt harmed by the errors of others and would like to see a process for accountability.

UCSC: UC Santa Cruz rep Nirvikar Singh said that he will send some documents that will be of interest to the committee. He will not be returning as the UCSC UCORP rep next year.

UCM: UC Merced's COR, the Office of Research and Economic Development, and deans of three schools have been charged by the UC Merced Chancellor to find meaningful ways to spend funds donated by Mackenzie Scott. The group is developing a merit-based, multi-tiered (small, medium, and large) grant funding process that will be offered in the fall.

UCD: The UC Davis chancellor has convened a joint committee to focus on rethinking revenue streams to support mission-focused research. The work will begin over the summer, with UCD UCORP rep Eliza Bliss-Moreau serving on the group along with other campus leaders. Bliss-Moreau was appointed Associate Director of the National Biomedical Research Institute (NBRI) at UC Davis (formerly known as the California National Primate Research Center).

V. Consultation with UC Office of Federal Government Relations

UC Federal Government Relations (FGR) Research Director Phillip Harman joined the meeting to discuss the recently released proposed rule from the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) that

would revise the Guidance for Federal Financial Assistance (“Uniform Guidance”). The Uniform Guidance sets the standard administrative requirements, cost principles, and audit requirements for all grants from federal agencies. As discussed with the UCOP Research & Innovation staff earlier in the meeting, the proposed changes could have serious and adverse implications not only for UC researchers, but for the national research enterprise.

FGR is developing non-political talking points for engaging with delegations, legislative staff, higher education and research associations, and potentially industry associations, to share information and spread the word about the major impacts that the changes could bring. UC’s official comments on the proposed changes will be sent from UCOP, with FGR and other UC units offering support.

In other federal news, the 2027 fiscal year appropriations process is underway, with the Senate Appropriations Committee holding initial budget hearings and markups. If the House of Representatives flips this year, the budget will be re-written.

UCORP members asked about changes at the NSF and closing of the SBE (Social, Behavioral and Economic Sciences) and other directorates. FGR is trying to make headway on what is happening and what is allowed under law, and trying to think creatively about how UC could take advantage of newer opportunities like the NSF X-Labs initiative.

While FGR joined higher education institutions in advocating for the “FAIR model” for changes to indirect cost rates, the prospects for a cap at this point seem to be fading as any changes for 2026-27 are likely to be blocked.

Meeting adjourned: 12:30pm

Meeting minutes drafted by: Joanne Miller, UCORP Analyst

Attest: James Weatherall, UCORP Chair

Meeting participants:

James Weatherall (Chair, UCI), Elina Zuniga (Vice Chair), Eliza Bliss-Moreau (Davis), Michael Fortun (Irvine), Dimitri Shlyahtenko (Los Angeles), Ramendra "Ramen" Saha (Merced), Ramesh Rao (San Diego), Kartika Palar (San Francisco), Dave Valentine (Santa Barbara), Nirvikar Singh (Santa Cruz), Manar Ahmed (Undergraduate Student, UC Merced), Susannah Scott (Ex Officio, Academic Council Vice Chair), Joanne Miller (Committee Analyst), Deborah Motton (Executive Director, Research Policy Analysis and Coordination), Agnes Balla (Director, Research Policy Analysis and Coordination), Lourdes DeMattos (Director, Research Policy Analysis and Coordination), Dragana Alexander (Research Policy Manager, UCOP), Phillip Harmon (Research Director, UC Federal Government Relations)