

UNIVERSITY COMMITTEE ON RESEARCH POLICY

**Notice of Meeting
Monday, June 10, 2024****Meeting Minutes****I. Chair's Announcements and Committee Discussion**

Cynthia Schumann, UCORP Chair

Susanne Nicholas, UCORP Vice Chair

- ***Future of UC Doctoral Programs Workgroup – update***

The final report of the Future of UC Doctoral Programs Workgroup will be out by fall and disseminated widely. UCORP's feedback on the interim report has been appreciated. Chair Schumann said that distinguishing academic from paid work, adjusting to the new economic reality post-unionization, and a close look at graduate student enrollment were all part of the initial process. The workgroup is now considering longer-term solutions. Recommendations will propose changes that could be made systemwide and at the campus or department level. The report will cover ideas for preparing graduate students for career paths that may or may not include academia, such as offering transferable skill development. UC might be asked to assess programs and make difficult decisions for closures. One potential recommendation is to bolster humanities by increasing collaborations among departments.

Chair Schumann has drafted some informal thoughts to share about the UC research enterprise, including descriptions that UC might use in the next round of union negotiations to convey information about the work of GSRs. Both UC administrators and the general public should understand that graduate students are not just "doing work for the university." The workgroup has highlighted the many differences between GSRs, TAs and the work of graduate students across fields. With union representatives claiming broad strokes of graduate student "employee," using a singular definition and set of rules, some faculty want to emphasize the differences in graduate student work by discipline. Many faculty are feeling the strain of the current situation and are concerned about the future. The differences in graduate students enrolled in professional programs versus doctoral programs also came up.

- ***Academic Congress on Research***

Chair Schumann continues to work with Vice President Theresa Maldonado to plan the proposed Congress on Research. The event will include social interaction time to help foster community among participants. Partnerships with foundations, state and federal funders, and industry is a potential theme. Schumann asked for input on what would draw UC faculty to such an event and what would be satisfying outcomes.

The discussion about sources of research funding brought up the perpetual issue of indirect costs and the amount of funding that gets diverted to the administration. Some would like to see a fundamental change in indirect cost recovery to allow more money to remain with the researcher and at the departmental level.

- **Update from Research Data Backup Steering Committee**

UCSF representative Bin Liu said that the recent meetings of the Research Data Backup Steering Committee were cancelled. The group evaluated vendors for potential systemwide research data back-up solutions. A preliminary RFP yielded several options, but the pricing was much higher than UC had anticipated. A second RFP is in the works.

- **UCORP's meeting minutes from May 13, 2024 were approved.**

II. Academic Senate Leadership Update

James Steintrager, Academic Council Chair

Steven Cheung, Academic Council Vice Chair

Academic Council Chair Jim Steintrager and Vice Chair Steve Cheung joined the meeting to provide an overview of current activities of the Senate. The rolling strikes and protests are the biggest topics right now, including with the Board of Regents. The Board selected Janet Riley as the next chair. Riley previously chaired the public engagement committee. Steintrager suggested that Regent Riley be invited to the congress on research. The Regents' proposed policy to limit "discretionary" statements on UC websites is still pending; the Senate believes that recent revisions bring it into alignment with previously issued recommendations from the Academic Council.

The other big news coming out of the last Regents' meeting was about UCLA football and the compensation that UCLA will have to provide to UC Berkeley for the next three years and possibly beyond.

In budget news, UC will have a 2.9% decrement to its base funding from the state. An increase is promised next year or in subsequent years. Given inflationary pressures and increases in healthcare premiums, UC is committed to providing employees with the promised 4.2% increase to base salary.

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

Kathleen Erwin, Executive Director, Research Grants Program Office

Anna Ward, Director, UC Research Initiatives

Deborah Motton, Executive Director, Research Policy Analysis and Coordination

Lourdes DeMattos, Director, Research Policy Analysis and Coordination

Agnes Balla, Director, Research Policy Analysis and Coordination

• Office of Research Policy Analysis and Coordination (RPAC)

UCOP Office of Research Policy Analysis and Coordination (RPAC) directors briefed UCORP on two topics of note:

1. UCOP's Office of Research and Innovation has been tasked by the Regents with looking into UC's conflict of interest and conflict of commitment (COI and COC) policies and processes to identify and fill gaps. An outcome of the Regents' Special Committee on Innovation Transfer and Entrepreneurship (since disbanded), the intent is to prevent future legal issues. The president would prefer to fine-tune existing policies and guidance rather than embark on a transformative systemwide project. RPAC staff are working with stakeholders to determine the best process. The likely change is that more people would need to fill out Form 700 (note that this is different from Form 700-U). UCOP's Office Ethic, Compliance, and Audit Services (ECAS), which controls current policies related to COI and COC, would be responsible for assessing Form 700 and any systemwide review of changes. Executive Director Motton emphasized that form 700 is NOT research-related, but rather it concerns the duties and responsibilities of UC employees in both faculty and staff positions (e.g., department chairs, positions with patient care responsibilities). The Regents have asked for a presentation on conflict of interest to be held in public session.
2. UCOP is investigating how to strengthen and fund additional research IT security, which is increasingly required by federal funding agencies. RPAC directors met with UC Chief Financial Officer Nathan Brostrom and Chief Information Officer Van Williams to discuss the expanding needs for research IT security and the cost. Ideas for how to pay for additional security measures included indirect cost rates, direct funding within grants, and others. RPAC is seeking input into whether/how researchers are currently thinking about these costs. UC is considering offering a menu of services that includes costs, so researchers would know what to incorporate into grant proposals.

Committee members agreed that cost information – in advance – would be helpful. It was noted that data management plans have become mandatory for many federal grants, and if there is a price for data storage then it comes out of direct cost. However, only so much additional cost can be included in grants. The

UCOP staff noted that while research IT security overlaps with data management, it is more about technology controls for sensitive data that is not for public release. For example, the Department of Defense's Cybersecurity Maturity Model Certification (CMMC) program covers "controlled unclassified information" and will require high-level cybersecurity standards. Other universities and institutions are struggling with how to handle the requirements as well, especially those with distributed structures like UC. It seems clear that IT security needs and solutions will be very discipline specific.

- ***UC Research Initiatives/RGPO***

UC Research Initiative Director Anna Ward updated UCORP on the MRPI (multicampus research programs and initiatives) and LFRP (lab fees research program) competitions. 164 eligible letters of intent (LOIs) were submitted by the May 16th deadline for the MRPI. The LOIs undergo an administrative review to ensure they qualify. The actual proposals get thorough reviews, primarily by experts outside of UC. With the high rate of submission this year, the MRPI success rate may be below 20%. Many of the LOIs were related to climate, possibly due to the big climate action state funding initiative from last year.

The LFRP Graduate Fellowship award received 45 eligible LOIs and the targeted Collaborative Research and Training award received 14 eligible LOIs. For the latest competition, LFRP is putting more emphasis on the collaborative workshops that occur before the RFP deadlines. The workshops on Research Advancing Microelectronics were completed in January. Next will be Community-Engaged Research for Clean Energy Solutions. A third topic is still under discussion; it will either be Scientific Application of Artificial Intelligence (AI) at Scale or Research Advancing Fusion Energy. New leadership at Los Alamos National Lab prompted the addition of the AI topic as one of the LFRP thematic areas.

IV. Systemwide Items Under Review

- Proposed Revisions to APM 016, Faculty Conduct and the Administration of Discipline

UCORP will not comment on this proposed revision to APM 016.

V. Research Topics Committee Discussion – Round Robin

Committee members discussed the issues facing their local Committees on Research and other research-related topics.

UCLA: COR had been talking about how to use the newly acquired research park at the Westside Pavilion but realized there was already a memo from 2022. The Senate has restructured its faculty grants program to eliminate review and make funding available to any faculty member who applies. A large portion of the funding ended up being provided to faculty in the humanities. UCLA's Senate has made a formal recommendation for the COR chair to be a member of the Executive Committee. Much campus activity was curtailed by protests and graduate student strike. UCLA faculty were told not to engage with graduate students regarding the strike. The main impact has been blocked parking lots; it is unclear how many graduate students are striking their labor.

UC San Diego: COR sent feedback on the preliminary report on the future of graduate education. Primarily, faculty were uncomfortable with the one-size-fits-all syllabi idea. At UCSD, the faculty is occupied with various resolutions of no-confidence in the chancellor. Faculty have noted a generational change in graduate students – and younger faculty – who prioritize work-life balance. The extent of actual striking is hard to gauge.

UC Davis: UC Davis divides its faculty grants into three parts: travel support for conferences, small grants of \$2,000 that are available for the asking and generally provided based on high-teaching load, and large competitive grants of \$25,000. The review committee has found it difficult to compare the diverse applications that are submitted and is looking into a simplified process. The competitive grants have a success rate of 10-25%. The local COR is engaged with the administration around research cores.

UC Santa Barbara: UCSB's COR has been looking into research data management across campus. A workshop was held with administrators and IT staff, and it appears a coordinated research data plan will be implemented across the campus. The administration offered strike preparation guidance and some impacts were felt on the campus, but it has not been a significant topic for COR. UCSB has a competitive faculty research grant program with \$1m to distribute.

UC Riverside: An inaugural "Campus Interdisciplinary Research Center" held an RFP and received thirteen proposals. The award requires at least three PIs from different colleges. The committee that reviewed the proposals was composed of deans and COR Chair Weixin Yao. An objective of the center is to leverage the funding to attract large grants.

UC Merced: UC Merced hosted the May Regents meeting and broke ground for a new medical education building. The Senate is conducting a survey about core facilities; it was noted that since UCM is so small, some faculty use facilities at other campuses. As Merced gains status, there is concern about loss of funding for non-R1 institutions and whether the budget for fall will decrease. The VC-R has committed to join COR meetings more often. Student protests at the campus were respectful and did not occur during graduation. The Oracle financial system continues to cause problems.

UC Santa Cruz: UCSC has seen a lot of protest and strike activity. Because of limited access points to the campus, a small group can close an entrance and shutdown the campus. Research has been affected by protests, but the chancellor's decisive actions helped to open the campus. The COR is working on faculty grant adjudication. Some faculty award funding is competitive and some is not. The competition yielded very interesting proposals. UC Santa Cruz is facing a structural budget deficit and is looking at areas to cut, including hiring. Indirect costs may be impacted. Apparently, the state took back funding from UCSC even after it was already encumbered.

UC San Francisco: UCSF's committee has formed a subcommittee to explore how to cover over-cap salaries in grants and how to reward faculty who bring in large grants. There is also interest in finding out how the indirect cost is distributed. Another issue is that department chairs are now asked to include a set of template language in all appointment and reappointment letters to specify series expectations and job duties, but the language is virtually identical, from adjunct to ladder rank. The request was made by the vice provost office in response to the recently issued guidance from the Office of Academic Personnel Program at UCOP. Local faculty wanted to know if department chairs at other campuses received similar instructions.

Meeting adjourned: 12:30pm
Meeting minutes drafted by: Joanne Miller, UCORP Committee Analyst
Attest: Cynthia Schumann, UCORP Chair

Meeting participants:

Cynthia Schumann (Chair), Susanne Nicholas (Vice Chair), David Rocke (Davis), James Weatherall (Irvine), Alapakkam (Sam) Sampath (Los Angeles), Ramen Saha (Merced alternate), Weixin Yao (Riverside) Tom Csordas (San Diego), Bin Liu (San Francisco), Alan Murray (Santa Barbara), Michael Hance (Santa Cruz), James Steintrager (Academic Council Chair), Steven Cheung (Academic Council Vice Chair), Joanne Miller (Committee Analyst), Deborah Motton (Executive Director, Research Policy Analysis and Coordination), Kathleen Erwin (Executive Director, Research Grants Program Office), Anna Ward (Director, UC Research Initiatives), Lourdes DeMattos (Director, Research Policy Analysis and Coordination), Agnes Balla (Director, Research Policy Analysis and Coordination).