UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA Academic Senate

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University Committee on Research Policy
Monday, February 10, 2025

Meeting Minutes - DRAFT

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I. Announcements, approval of minutes

Action: Meeting minutes from December 9th were approved.

- Provost Katherine Newman will join UCORP's meeting in Oakland on March 10th.

- UCORP members were reminded to send questions for MRU directors. The directors of the Bioengineering Institute of California and UC Observatories will join UCORP's meeting on March 10th to give presentations and engage in discussion.

- UCORP will send its approval of revisions to the Presidential Policy on the Use of Animals in Research, Teaching, and Testing.

- The UC Research Congress has changed the format of one of its sessions to a "Town Hall" that will provide an opportunity to ask questions of UC leaders and state and federal agency heads.

- Chair Nicholas noted that she watched the Full Committee Hearing of House Committee on Science, Space, and Technology on February 5th. The topic of the hearing was Ensuring U.S. Global Leadership in Science and Technology.

- UCORP Vice Chair Jim Weatherall reported on the systemwide Academic Council meeting, where President Drake advised faculty to keep calm and carry on with their work. He wants to make sure that does not take preemptive compliance actions, and also UC is not going to lead the charge against the federal government. UC is working with national education organizations. Weatherall noted that outside of California, "DEI" means a type of affirmative action that is already illegal in CA. Several administrators who joined the Council meeting drew attention to a Regents' item on faculty discipline. Some Regents have expressed dissatisfaction with the process of faculty sanctioning for certain recent misconduct cases. The LA Times ran two stories in January that drew attention to controversial faculty conduct, which seemed to grab the Regents attention.

- APC Workgroup the Future of Graduate Education will release a report soon.

II. Academic Senate Leadership Update
Academic Council Vice Chair Ahmet Palazoglu joined the meeting to provide an overview of current activities of the Senate.

- January Regents' meeting – Some Regents were discouraged that there seemed to be no discipline for faculty misbehavior after Middle East protests last year. The Senate and Academic Affairs Office put together a presentation to address the concerns, but there are three issues that will need to be addressed in the near future, as the Academic Senate is perceived to be the bottleneck of timely discipline. The Regents agreed to form a joint workgroup with representation from the Regents, administration, and Senate. Part of the group will be same configuration of the task force that is currently reviewing APMs 015 & 016 (faculty

code of conduct and faculty misconduct). Academic Council Chair Cheung confirmed with President Drake that amending the P&T process is not on the table, but the workgroup may propose non-location bound or systemwide hearings, more efficiency, and more consistency between campuses. Timeline is very tight, with a report due back to the Regents in May, and action taken in July. Regents Anguiano, Leib, and Saris will serve on the group.

- The task force that is reviewing APM 015 and 016 has already presented findings to the President on 015, Faculty Code of Conduct, and the report was accepted. The group found that no changes to policy are necessary, but that guidelines, similar to those for SVSH (sexual violence and sexual harassment) would be useful. The group will next review APM 016, Faculty Misconduct. The key issue was the proposed addition of a pause promotion cases where there is simultaneous charges of misconduct.

- The university is anticipating a $271 million reduction to the core budget. Any additional tax income in the state will likely go to fire recovery efforts in Los Angeles. This will have an impact on the university's multiyear compact with the governor, including a pause in non-resident student tuition buyout (impacts Berkeley, UCLA, and UCSD). These campuses may admit more non-residents in response to supplement their budgets. A proposed one-percent employer increase to the retirement system may be paused to free up money for campuses. The actual budget will be released in May.

- Vice chancellors for research are meeting every day at 7am to talk about federal orders impacting research. In consultation with UC's Federal Government Relations, the VC-Rs have drafted talking points about impacts of executive orders, including the most recent order from NIH drastically reducing indirect cost rates. A temporary injunction is supposed to stay the change until further legal action.

  In discussion, UCORP members noted that the dispersal of overhead reimbursement has been opaque to researchers too. While the process of determining IDC cost is transparent and well-documented -- there are audits, every 5 years or so - but spending is not. There are no restrictions that the money must actually go to the thing that were calculated. It is understood that much of the money is diverted to central funding, to defray other costs, rather than to research. At most campuses it's opaque, but some have moved to more transparent process. Campus committees on Planning & Budget should have or be able to obtain the information about spending.

- There will be a Special Assembly Meeting on February 13th to discuss three items, as requested by a petition of the faculty.

- A new joint task force on the performance undergraduate degree programs will convene to continue the work of the President's Task Force on Instructional Modalities and UC Quality Undergraduate Degree Programs ("iMod"). The University Committee on Education Policy (UCEP) has provided input on the new task force's charge.

- Systemwide Academic Calendar workgroup is in its final phase. The last meeting addressed costs, which included faculty time and effort for any conversion efforts. The workgroup spoke to representative from institutions who have recently made the transition (or are working on it currently). The workgroup will issue a report at the end of February/early March for a formal 90-

day review. It will meet again in June to finalize its report and send to Academic Council. Ultimately, the decision is made by the Regents.

III. Consultation with the Office of the President – Office of Research and Innovation
Theresa Maldonado, Vice President for Research and Innovation
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
Kathleen Erwin, Executive Director, Research Grants Program Office

- The upcoming UC Research Congress is hosted by the Provost's Office with planning assistance from VP Theresa Maldonado and the Office of Research & Innovation. A keynote speaker will be Dr. Sudip Parikh, CEO of the American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS), who has been participating in the new federal task force for a Vision for American Science and Technology (VAST). Due to recent federal government events, some guests have had to drop. The afternoon session on March 12th will be an opportunity for discussion and questions with vice chancellors for research.

- VP Maldonado talked about the NIH announcement of an indirect cost cap. Facilities and administration rates vary across agencies and institutions. Foundations often have lower rates, and State rates are capped as well. The indirect costs reimburse the university for costs associated with research compliance, including cybersecurity, as well as basics such as electricity, building maintenance, and research administration. While calculations of the costs are documented, faculty are generally left in the dark about how the funding that comes in with their grants are spent. For example, how much goes to the school, department, lab, etc. At this point faculty are directed to contact their vice chancellor for research or contracts & grants office for guidance. They have been provided with short-term guidance to assist those with grant applications or proposals due this week.

- A Climate Action Summit was held last week in Sacramento to highlight the research efforts of the California Climate Action Seed and Matching Grant awardees. The two-year funding is now halfway through the second year, and grantees gathered to talk about what they've achieved so far with each other and with representatives from agencies and state government. In response to a question, it was acknowledged that the success rate for the competition meant that several worthwhile proposals did not get funded. These groups worked hard and put in a lot of time, and it might have left a bad taste, especially for community partner participants. Other UC grant competitions where the acceptance rate is 5-15% have similar issues. VP Maldonado said that the short time frame and large amounts of money made it challenging, and that she might recommend more, smaller awards if this type of opportunity arises again.

- In discussion, UCORP members asked about reaching out to universities in more "blue" states to join together in terms of fighting back against federal orders harms to scientific advancement. It was agreed that this would be helpful.

- A member brought up the extensive UC faculty expertise in areas that are currently relevant such as authoritarianism and empire, and whether that knowledge could be used by the research administration to brainstorm and strategize how to best protect the university's research mission.

IV. APC Workgroup on Systemwide Academic Calendar Request for UCORP Input
Nirvikar Singh, UCSC Representative and UCORP liaison to the Workgroup

The APC Workgroup on Systemwide Academic Calendar has been meeting every two weeks and covering wide-ranging topics related to academic calendars. Professor Singh said that the context for the group was a presumption that a common calendar for all UC campuses would be semesters. Nationwide, universities are moving to semesters as the default model. The last meeting focused on costs. The group has looked at models of other large institutions that have made the transition. Acknowledging that it is a tough budget time to be putting resources toward this change, the impression is that upper-level UCOP administrators seem to be committed to making something happen.

UCORP members reviewed the results of the informal survey distributed by the committee, and will include the following points in a letter that expresses concern about the transition:
- In the short term, faculty time spent to convert classes will mean loss of research, perhaps irreparably.
- In the long term, there will be loss of flexibility for research and loss of the current quality of research time.
- The change will bring more limitations and challenges for collaboration.
- Bad timing in terms of budget. The money spent on making the change could instead go to student services.

Members wondered whether the change could be used as an opportunity to negotiate for more sabbatical/research time.

Professor Singh will draft an initial version of a letter that will be shared with UCORP members for comment and editing. Because the workgroup is moving fast and will soon issue a report, UCORP's letter will be sent to the workgroup on Friday with a request that it be included in the final report.

V. Local Committee Reports – (Round-Robin)
UCLA: UCLA's COR continues to work on principles for the Westside mall research park. There are two research-related responses to the recent fires in LA. One is small amounts of emergency funding for basic losses. The other is grants of up to $30k for faculty members that can be used for basic research or community assistance. The funds come from unspent faculty research grant funds.

UC Davis: The implementation of Aggie Enterprise, the Oracle financial management system, at UC Davis in January is causing many problems for researchers. To make matters worse, staff from sponsored programs and offices of research were apparently let go, so help is not available. A survey was sent to all Senate members on Friday. The survey could be available to be modified and used at other campuses.

UC Santa Cruz: UCSC is facing a greater proportional deficit than the other campuses. A communication indicating that research will be deprioritized was not well received. The Vice Chancellor for Research is receptive and communicating with faculty, but recent federal mandates have impacted research forecasts.

UC Santa Barbara: UCSB's COR has completed revisions to its faculty research and travel grant process. It will next go to the faculty legislature for approval. The campus currently has a vacancy in the VC-R position, so two administrators are filling in on an emergency basis. One is an associate on recall and the other is an assistant VC. With searches underway for a new chancellor as well as a new VC-R, there is a leadership vacuum. The campus is slated to transition to an Oracle financial system in July, and there is a proposal to restructure the Office of Research at the same time.

UC Irvine: UCI has rolled out new homegrown AI services that offer APIs for use in research. UCI's Committee on Research, Computing, and Libraries (CORCL) is discussing how to expand the services across uses, but there are also concerns about wide use of AI for research and teaching and all the implications therein.

UC San Diego: Although the Oracle financial system continues to be a problem, a new algorithm that can pull data from various sources seems to be helping. COR reviewed a report showing that graduate programs have overall not decreased in size since the graduate student unionization. Some programs are up and some down. Sharing this type of information among campuses might be helpful.

UC San Francisco: UCSF has a history of government advocacy. This year, reform of indirect costs was a priority. Another COR priority this year was a proposal for a faculty bill of rights and responding to faculty concerns. In May, UCSF will implement a new time tracking system, mainly for hourly and part-time, temporary workers. COR is looking into how this will impact grants and whether there are privacy issues.

UC Riverside: Apart from some issues already mentioned, UCR's COR is looking into whether research grant funding has been impacted since graduate student unionization, including changes to the number of grants and how extra costs were covered. The Senate has found that there are inconsistencies around maternity leave campus-wide, depending on when in the quarter the leave starts.

UC Berkeley *(via Chat):* Berkeley's COR has been focused on identifying priorities for improving research administration at Berkeley and sent a memo with recommendations to DIVCO (the Senate Executive Council) two weeks ago.

There was a brief discussion about whether UCORP should initiate further communication about Oracle systemwide. UCORP previously conveyed concerns and warnings about Oracle in October 2021 (https://senate.universityofcalifornia.edu/_files/reports/rh-md-oracle-software-problems.pdf)

VI. Wrap up and Next Steps

- UCORP members will send their MRU templates and questions by Wednesday.
- Further information on the UC Research Congress agenda will be shared. Please register if you are able. The Senate may be able to provide travel funds.
- The analyst will follow up regarding whether there is interest in having a letter from UCORP regarding Oracle.
- Anyone who needs guidance for current grants and indirect costs is asked to reach out to your vice chancellor of research or contract and grants office.

- UCORP's draft letter providing input to the systemwide calendar workgroup will be circulated.

Meeting adjourned: 12:25
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), Nícola Ulibarrí (UC Irvine), Dennis Lettenmaier (UCLA), Tao Ye (UC Merced), Rachel Wu (UC Riverside), Elina Zuniga (UC San Diego), Bin Liu (UC San Francisco), Stephanie Hom (UC Santa Barbara), Nirvikar Singh (UC Santa Cruz), Ahmet Palazoglu (Academic Council Vice Chair), Joanne Miller (Committee Analyst), Theresa Maldonado (Vice President for Research and Innovation), Deborah Motton (Executive Director, Research Policy Analysis and Coordination), Kathleen Erwin (Executive Director, Research Grants Program Office), Coreen Harada (Executive Director for Research and Innovation and Special Assistant to the Vice President), Lourdes DeMattos (Director, Research Policy Analysis and Coordination), Agnes Balla (Director, Research Policy Analysis and Coordination)