



University Committee on Research Policy
Monday, October 13, 2025

Meeting Minutes

I. Welcome, Introductions, UCORP Topics

After introductions, UCORP Chair James Weatherall provided an overview of UCORP and its place in the systemwide Senate and university structure. UCORP advises the administration regarding matters pertaining to fostering research at UC and formulating or revising research-related policies and procedures. UCORP reviews policies, but may also propose new policies or guidance.

Anticipated topics/activities for 2025-26 include monitoring graduate education and the impacts of unionization on graduate student labor, the federal funding crisis and resulting uncertainty, research security, and the new joint Senate-Administration Task Force on UC Adaptation to Disruptions ("UCAD Plus").

Monica Varsanyi is UC's new systemwide Vice President for Faculty Affairs and Academic Programs, which has just launched a new research award program for junior faculty. The Early Career Faculty Research Excellence Awards (ECFREA) will prioritize projects for which access to extramural funding is generally limited, where grants have been terminated, or situations where federal funding has become difficult to obtain.

The university is following a new state Senate bill, SB 607 (introduced by Senator Scott Wiener), which would establish a California-based funding entity comparable to the NIH. If it moves forward, it would be on the ballot in fall 2026.

II. Academic Senate Leadership Update

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

New UC President James B. Milliken joined the recent Assembly and Academic Council meetings. He spoke about the UCLA grant suspensions and subsequent DOJ demands. He said that UC rejects the government's demands, but would engage in good faith discussions. The Regents were briefed in closed meetings, with Senate leadership present at each. On October 3rd, the Academic Council released a statement regarding the federal government's demand letter to UCLA.¹

President Milliken also spoke about UC Berkeley turning over unredacted documents to the Department of Education's Office of Civil Rights (OCR). These files were ostensibly required for the OCR's investigation of UC Berkeley's handling of antisemitism complaints. The position of the

¹ https://senate.universityofcalifornia.edu/_files/reports/council-chair-to-president-council-statement-ucla-demand-letter.pdf

administration is that this practice goes back decades and that the government has authority to require the documents. He said that UC could have communicated better, and he committed to more transparency going forward.

Regarding academic labor, UAW contract negotiations for graduate students and post-docs have begun. Unlike last time, there are two Senate members on the negotiating team. There is also a faculty advisory committee that has been meeting and will provide input. Related to this, the Assembly of the Academic Senate approved an update of Senate Regulation 750 for visiting math fellows, which is now recognized as a teaching role.

UC Chief Financial Officer Nathan Brostrom spoke at the September Regents' meeting about the 2026-27 budget and the tuition stability plan. There will be a change to the index for increase determination, which is capped at 5%. CFO Brostrom said that the current UC compact with CA gov is coming to an end, and that the California budget situation is uncertain. For next year, UC will increase its employer contribution to health care plans to keep the employee increase low.

Also at the September Regents' meeting, Provost Katherine Newman announced the Degree Plus pilot program², which integrates paid internships and certificate programs into a bachelor's degree. It is designed to improve career readiness without prolonging time to degree. Funded with philanthropic and UC support, the small pilot is available on only two campuses for now.

The Academic Senate's Task Force on UC Adaptations to Disruptions (UCAD), which was convened in the spring, issued a report and recommendations in four categories, per its charge. It is continuing this fall as "UCAD Plus,"³ with administrative partners and updated membership. UCAD-Plus will review feedback from the current review and address recommendations for restructuring and resizing academic programs and sustaining UC's research enterprise.

The Senate and Administration have also jointly convened a Task Force on Performance of Undergraduate Degree Programs, co-chaired by Academic Council Vice Chair Susannah Scott and Vice Provost, Faculty Affairs and Academic Programs Monica Varsanyi. It is looking into data collection requirements and assessments that would be required to delve further into online degrees. The Regents and Provost are very interested in expanding online education, and this group will develop a framework for undergraduate program assessment regardless of instructional modality, although with special attention to quality metrics for online programs.

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

Deborah Motton, Executive Director, Research Policy Analysis and Coordination (RPAC)

Kathleen Erwin, Executive Director, Research Grants Program Office

Lourdes DeMattos, Director, Research Policy Analysis and Coordination (RPAC)

- **Federal funding landscape**

UC and other institutions have succeeded in restoring 75-80% of grant funding that had been targeted by the federal government. There are still terminations and cancellations, including grants

² <https://www.ucop.edu/academic-affairs/initiatives/degree-plus.html>

³ <https://senate.universityofcalifornia.edu/committees/ucad-plus/>

provided by USAID, USDA, and Dept of Energy. Once the government reopens after the current shutdown, there are likely to be revisions to the Uniform Guidance regulations that govern all federal financial assistance, including research awards. One change will be to allow for “termination of convenience,” which UC has been fighting against. Another change is caps on indirect cost rates (“IDC,” or “F&A”). Previous attempts at reducing IDC have been successfully fought in court, and there has been an effort by national associations to implement a “Financial Accountability in Research (FAIR)” model of indirect rate calculation. If that is not accepted, a 15-20% rate cap is anticipated for future awards. The systemwide impact of this type of cut from NIH is estimated at \$600 million. The changes would be legal under the Administrative Procedures Act and could not be fought in court.

The UC administration is engaging in financial planning in the event of lower IDC rates. Options include moving indirect costs to direct charges, consolidation of core facilities, hiring freezes, attrition, etc. Decisions would be made at the local level. A California bond measure may be on the ballot in fall 2026 that would fund research in connection with SB 607. The rising cost of conducting research is a huge issue for faculty.

There is a proposal to increase fees for H1-B visa fees. The impact to UC would be significant, but it is still not confirmed. In addition, there is a proposal to remove institutes of higher education from the H1-B visa cap of 85,000 per year. UC sponsors approximately 300 H1-B visas across the system. Academic personnel officers are discussing options in the event that the changes occur.

- **Policy Changes**

UC’s [Presidential Policy on Responding to Allegations of Research Misconduct](#) is currently undergoing systemwide review. Revisions to the policy are based on changes at the federal level, which go into effect January 2026. These are related to confidentiality, assessment, documentation, and the introduction of a new role of “Deciding Official” as the designated administrator responsible for making final determinations of research misconduct findings. Procedures are instituted at the campus level.

UCOP is also continuing to work on a recently revised Policy on Dual Use Research of Concern and Pathogens with Enhanced Pandemic Potential, as changes from NIH and HHS are predicted. UC federal governmental relations will continue to engage in conversations about biosafety and biosecurity.

NIH has posted and then removed guidance over the last few months, including a guide to research security that was rescinded after 24 hours. A new NIH biospecimen policy prohibits institutions and/or persons from sharing biospecimens with individuals or entities in “countries of concern” if those biospecimens were developed with NIH funds. UCOP is working with the campus offices of research compliance, contracts & grants, and IRB directors to spread the word to researchers. Included in the countries of concern are Iran, China, Russia, Cuba, Venezuela, and North Korea.

IV. Local Committee Reports (Round-Robin)

Committee members reported on and discussed the issues facing their local Committee on Research and other research-related campus news. Several noted that their campuses are convening local UCADs to complement the systemwide efforts.

UC Santa Cruz is experiencing an ongoing structural deficit that is proportionally greater than other campuses. Faculty grant funding administered by COR has been cut by twenty-five percent, and so the decision was made to eliminate large grants (which provided \$12,000) and retain scholarly meeting and travel grants.

UC Santa Barbara also has a large structural deficit, which has been building since the end of the pandemic. Last year, a joint Senate-Admin committee was formed to address the shortfall. Overall, there will be a twelve percent cut this year and possibly more cuts next year. The local COR is researching F&A funds: how they're structured, where they go, what happens with the facilities portion versus administrative. A specific concern is that UCSB has research buildings funded by "Garmendi" bonds, in which the research overhead revenue that the university receives from faculty research activities in that specific building are used to repay the bonds that funded its construction. UCSB's new chancellor assumed the role in July, and has been holding monthly meetings with Senate leadership, vice chancellor, and vice chancellor for research.

UCLA also has a structural deficit. With a new chancellor and CFO, the Senate is concerned with the administration withholding funds without notice. This is part of bigger concerns about shared governance on the campus. If the faculty grant program is not funded, COR will use leftover funds to help those whose work has been disrupted. The notice of suspension of federal funding came to UCLA very unexpectedly and resulted in much uncertainty among the faculty.

UC Davis also has a structural deficit. The university recently opened Aggie Square, a new public-private partnership for research facilities at the Sacramento campus. The implementation of new financial software last year led to major problems, including awards turned back to funders and some faculty leaving the university. The research administration claims that problems are being fixed, but the staffing is not appropriate to the work.

UC Merced has been dealing with Oracle financial software problems since the system was implemented a few years ago. It has taken much time and effort on the part of the faculty and the administration to get sponsored research offices back on track, but things finally seem to be better. UCM was recently recognized with R1 status, and now needs to focus on retaining it. COR will receive \$275,000 for faculty grants, which is the same amount as past years. The chancellor has set aside \$1.5 million for research continuity to those who lose funding.

UC Berkeley's COR is concerned with potential restructuring of graduate programs in light of changes to federal funding. The committee is looking into graduate student tuition and whether it is used to fund research and fellowships, and into the practice of faculty paying graduate student tuition. The campus has established a small fund for those whose grants were blocked.

UC San Diego's COR used to spend a lot of time on ORU reviews, but has seen the number of ORUs decreasing in recent years. UCSD's COR does not handle faculty research grants. The committee is requesting a change to its charter that includes more oversight of research finances and operations in the wake of the significant disruption resulting from UCSD's implementation of the Oracle financial software. Like UC Merced, UCSD's administration created an emergency fund for those impacted, but it was available only after all departmental, college, and other discretionary funds were depleted. To address the situation, an outside consultant was hired to find out what went wrong, who to hold accountable, and to determine corrective actions. COR has been reviewing the consultant's report. The structure for offering additional funding for terminated grants seems to be similarly formulated. The general campus budget will likely take a cut next year. Due to

financial considerations, some departments are not able to admit any graduate students. However, computer science and engineering masters' program enrollments are bigger than ever.

UCSF's COR is focusing on the impact to faculty and trainees of federal funding losses and a transparent process for allocating any additional funding. The local committee is talking with the VC-R to bring more nuanced attention to what researchers are experiencing and to describe impacts to faculty that go beyond terminations, including junior faculty and students not seeing a future in scientific research and disproportional impacts to groups of faculty who are less represented. Large research projects are not simple to restart once they've been shut down. The UCSF Senate conducted a survey to understand how faculty were impacted and how the university has responded. The committee is also concerned with academic freedom for researchers in light of federal actions and the new faculty discipline guidelines for expressive activities. There was a downsizing of the sponsored research office that resulted in delays. International research, computing and IT resources, and unionization of research workers are also concerns. A new timekeeping process for staff has not been successful.

UC Riverside is facing similar issues and also has a new chancellor. The university enrolled its biggest incoming freshman class in its history, which comes alongside the shrinking of academic programs. COR was tasked with figuring out how to boost faculty compliance with research conduct training.

V. Systemwide Issues Under Review

Members shared feedback from their divisional councils and made suggestions for UCORP's comments. UCORP will send comments on the Interim Report of the Academic Senate Task Force on UC Adaptations to Disruptions (UCAD) (due October 31, 2025) and the Interim Systemwide Guidelines on Faculty Discipline and Revisions to APM - 015 and 016 (Due November 10, 2025). The review items with December deadlines will be revisited at UCORP's November 10th meeting.

Action: Draft letters will be circulated via email for committee members to review and edit.

Meeting adjourned: 12:35

Meeting minutes drafted by: Joanne Miller, UCORP Analyst

Attest: James Weatherall, UCORP Chair

Meeting participants:

James Weatherall (Chair, UCI), Elina Zuniga (Vice Chair), Ana Arias (Berkeley), Eliza Bliss-Moreau (Davis), Tryphon Georgiou (Irvine alternate), Dimitri Shlyahtenko (Los Angeles), Ramendra "Ramen" Saha (Merced), Padma Rangarajan (Riverside), Ramesh Rao (San Diego), Kartika Palar (San Francisco), Dave Valentine (Santa Barbara), Nirvikar Singh (Santa Cruz), Manar Ahmed (Undergraduate Student, UC Merced), Ahmet Palazoglu (Ex-Officio, Academic Council Chair), Susannah Scott (Ex Officio, 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), Lourdes DeMattos (Director, Research Policy Analysis and Coordination)