



University Committee on Research Policy
Monday, December 8, 2025

Meeting Minutes

I. Chair's announcements, approval of minutes

UCORP Chair Jim Weatherall reviewed the agenda, noting that committee discussion would follow visits from guests and consultants.

A proposed California Senate bill (SB607: "California Science and Health Research Bond") would create a California Foundation for Science and Health Research. UC constituencies will advocate for it, but the university cannot engage in lobbying. The bill will have to pass through the Senate in time to get on the November ballot. Implementation would happen after that.

UC's budget for the upcoming fiscal year was presented to the Regents at their November meeting, UC is trying to secure funding owed from the state for meeting the goals set by the multi-year compact with the governor, including for capital projects.

The most accurate and up to date information on the ongoing negotiations with unions representing TAs and GSRs can be found in an email message sent recently from Provost Newman. The message included information on some proposed salary changes.

UC has engaged Deloitte Consulting to manage its latest total remuneration study. UC salaries have decreased in relative standing to the "[comp 8](#)" since the mid-2000s. There is some controversy around Deloitte's measures, which assess cost to the employer, as the report will not be comparable to past studies that assessed value to the employee.

The Academic Council reviewed feedback from the systemwide review of the interim UCAD report. Many faculty expressed concern about the administration attempting to use current or anticipated disruptions to push through systemic changes without adequate input and consultation. UCAD is continuing to meet and to discuss feedback from the report and meet with administrative leaders.

The timeline for UCAD's successor, UCAD Plus, was extended to include time for consultative review. The core group of UCAD Plus members has met once. The initiative is structured into workgroups that feed into a central group. Chair Weatherall is the co-chair of the Research Activities and Infrastructure workgroup. Proposed goals included multicampus collaboration and finding efficiencies, but the group has decided to focus on scenario-planning around specific disruptions. These might result in recommendations for intercampus cooperation, but the workgroup will avoid making proposals for systemic changes that would be made regardless of disruptions.

Action: November 10th meeting minutes were approved.

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

Theresa Maldonado, Vice President for Research and Innovation (via Zoom)

Deborah Motton, Executive Director, Research Policy Analysis and Coordination

Kathleen Erwin, Executive Director, Research Grants Program Office

A task force has been jointly convened by Research and Information Technology administrators – with faculty involvement – to discuss the research security work that needs to be done in response to federal regulations. The group will also discuss communication strategies to inform the broader UC community of any new requirements or changes.

VP Maldonado has heard from faculty who need additional infrastructure to support artificial intelligence (AI) research.

There is much concern about what the federal government will do to change indirect cost rates. The National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) was recently released, and it preserves current rates for Department of Defense funding. Proposed changes to the Code of Federal Regulations from the Office of Management and Budget may also impact the indirect cost rate. The Vice Chancellors of Research met in November in Washington DC with republican legislators and discussed preserving overhead rates. Congress is being encouraged to adopt the FAIR model (“Fiscal Accountability in Research”), which was proposed by a group of academic and research institutions, into legislation. Although implementation of a new model will be challenging and could take up to two years, passage by Congress would effectively block any change by the executive branch.

UCORP members discussed the implications of potentially moving some grant award costs from indirect to direct costs, and the impact of funding caps. R&I staff emphasized that any changes would only apply to prospective grants, not to current awards. There is still much uncertainty.

The committee briefly discussed the federal government’s pressure on higher education and the court decisions that have been helpful. For UC researchers, grant funding in certain areas will likely decrease going forward, but the overall picture is unknown. Right now, funding for FY2025 looks similar to 2024, but there is little data. The NSF’s Higher Education Research and Development (HERD) Survey only shows data for 2023. In terms of diversifying funding, applications for some internal UC research initiatives have increased, but there is no significant evidence of PIs seeking alternative funding. It has been noted that foundations and philanthropy do not intend to fill in for or replace federal funding. Some disciplines can tap into industry opportunities, and UC is working hard to partner with the state for funding opportunities.

One UCORP member asked about the NIH cap on the number of awards per PI per year – which also impacts the number of applications PIs are allowed to submit. With all funding for certain scientific fields totally reliant on grants, it takes multiple efforts to support the work. UCOP staff noted that only about 6% of UC faculty are PIs on six or more awards.

- *UC Research Initiatives updates*

The Lab Fees Research Program (LFRP) is undergoing program and administrative changes. After a successful pilot program with Los Alamos National Lab on AI Science at Scale this year, the LFRP

will be overseen by the Office of National Labs rather than the Office of Research and Innovation. UCORP will learn more via its ACSCOLI liaison in February and will invite VPNL June Yu to an upcoming meeting. VP Maldonado said that the university is still working on facilitating joint appointments with the national labs.

The Research Grants Program Office (RGPO) is expanding its offerings of trainee positions including fellowships and post-doc programs. These are targeted opportunities in specific subject areas. RGPO offered bridge funding, but it has not been used.

The Multicampus Research Programs and Initiatives (MRPI) program will now be offered annually rather than every-other year. Funding has decreased, however, and the program will consolidate to offering just one type of award.

III. Research Funding Transparency

Craig Callender, Professor of Philosophy and Co-Director, Institute for Practical Ethics from UC San Diego, joined the meeting via Zoom to talk about research disinformation and how universities might address the problem. He made the case that academic institutions are inadvertently contributing to disinformation in part by accepting funding from industry, drawing examples from big tobacco and fossil fuel companies funding of educational centers and thus exerting influence. These funders gain access to researchers and the creation of eco-systems that feed their narrative. This leads to erosion of public faith in academic work as institutions become part of the industry's PR efforts. Insufficient disclosure of funding sources plays a big role in enabling the spread of misinformation.

Callender would like UC to take actions to prevent the spread of misinformation such as banning funding from specified sources, enhanced review, publicity of funding from specified sources, mass pooling of funds, and/or full public disclosure and transparency for all funding. In 2024, UCSD's Academic Senate sent a formal request to the chancellor for UCSD to adopt its resolution on public disclosure of external funding, but it was not implemented.

Callender also talked about the harms of news stories spreading from press releases that are based on non-reviewed studies. Press offices often choose the most wild or public-interest stories to promote, and these of course are the ones that get picked up and spread. At least one campus is looking into differences in preprints and final reviewed papers, and how to communicate with a local press office to make changes if needed.

UCORP members asked about the extent to which a funding source would really influence research outcomes. Although the vast majority of researchers are ethical, unconscious bias can come into play. Or the framing might be influenced. As the university looks for alternatives to federal funding, issues around influence are ones to consider.

IV. Consultation with UC Office of Federal Government Relations

UC Federal Government Relations Research Director Phillip Harman joined the meeting via Zoom to provide updates from Washington DC. After the reopening of the federal government, only the Department of Agriculture has confirmed appropriations for the remainder of the fiscal year. The current continuing resolution, which applies to almost all agencies, expires on January 30, 2026.

Asked about the indirect costs issue, Harman said that the recently released NDAA blocked reduction of F&A rates for Department of Defense funding. If the FAIR model is included in the final appropriations package from Congress, that would override anything from the Office of Management and Budget, even uniform guidance.

Harman also provided updates on research security, university intellectual property, anticipated opportunities for research funding in the coming years (likely areas are AI, microelectronics, quantum, and fusion) and what types of proposals are less likely to get funded, FGR's work with California legislators across the aisle, and general thoughts on the government's interest in UC campuses.

Asked what faculty can do to help him in his work, Harman noted that FGR tries to focus on the positive, including the impressive work of the faculty. In presenting information to legislators, FGR showcases specific areas, often with faculty involvement.

V. Local Committee Reports & Committee Discussion

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

UCLA: Federal awards seem to be down in number, at least from NIH and NSF, but that could be a result of the federal government shutdown. The unionization of TAs and GSRs, has led to the elimination of some fellowships. The status of the Senate faculty grant program is still uncertain.

UCSD: The EVC will step down in 2026. A joint committee is forming that will focus on research reproducibility and rigor. COR was approached with a request to propose actions to be taken against faculty members who do not comply with NAGPRA policy.

Some biology labs are reducing the number of rotating graduate students that they take. Other campus reps noted the variety of ways that graduate students are funded and supported by campus, school, and department.

UC Merced: Senate research awards are still in limbo. An endowment gift of \$38 million from MacKenzie Scott was announced that morning. The COR is concerned about ORUs (organized research units) and how ongoing funding impacts the ability of new ones to be funded. UC Merced is trying to address ongoing issues with its Sponsored Projects Office, which may have originally resulted from the Oracle Financial System transition in past years, but the current issues are not related.

UCSC: The EVC has stepped down and there are cuts across the board due to the large structural deficit. Some cuts are impacting curriculum and graduate students. The central campus administration is taking funds from divisions and although not large, some are small pockets of

money that faculty rely on – especially in the social sciences and humanities. Some graduate programs may shift to admitting students every other year.

UC Berkeley: The Senate has convened multiple task forces and conducted studies over the past few years to find ways to improve research administration, yet nothing has been implemented. COR reviewed the results of this work and wrote a letter to Senate leadership requesting action. Suggestions were drawn from task force reports, and included requests for assistance with implementing contracts and hiring more people. COR has also asked that the committee have a broader role in grant administration for the faculty awards. COR is interested in seeing a reduction or elimination of PhD tuition after a student advances to candidacy, as these are paid for by PIs. COR would also like to see UC policies or guidance on the role of AI on research. Of great interest to UCORP members was the news that UC Berkeley’s rep – a professor of electrical engineering – went directly to Nvidia and Apple to pitch giving funds for workforce development. She received significant donations that are being used to pay TAs.

UC San Francisco: The UCSF Senate is facing funding challenges and had to cut its conference and writing grant funding. With a lot of turnover on committees, the Senate has had discussions about how to strengthen shared governance. A faculty survey gathered opinions on executive orders and federal funding impacts. Although the response rate was very small, it showed impacts of the current environment more acutely on associate and adjunct faculty. COR is interested in enhancing support provided by the administration for connecting to potential donors and identifying non-federal funding.

UC Riverside: Senate faculty grant funding has so far not been discussed. UCR enrolled its biggest freshman class ever, and the message has been that this upward trajectory will continue. Ongoing conversations about shrinking the number of graduate students continue.

VI. Provost Katherine Newman

UC Systemwide Provost Katherine Newman joined the meeting via Zoom to discuss academic affairs and research-related topics. She began by thanking the faculty for their work and dedication in a time of uncertainty. She mentioned the work of UCAD Plus and its workgroups. She hopes that the research workgroup will provide recommendations about areas of focus, including core facilities. She mentioned the Cal-ISIs – the California Institutes for Science and Innovation – and their innovative ways of sharing resources.

Provost Newman has testified three times in Sacramento on the impact of federal cuts to the university, especially in research. She noted UC’s support of SB607 (the Scott Wiener bill) and whether UC could consider the European Union’s “Horizon Europe” program for research funding opportunities. She mentioned the Russell Group of top UK universities and their research efforts as well. The message seems to be that UC is exploring collaborations at the worldwide institutional scale. Any new initiatives would be properly vetted by the VCRs and Senate.

UCORP Chair Weatherall noted that in addition to the UK, South Korea has also joined Horizon Europe, so there is a precedent for non-EU participation..

The committee asked about increasing incentives for companies to invest in UC. Provost Newman said that last year the Regents provided a small fund for bridging the gap in tech transfer. Proof of concept funding has proven challenging. The university is seeking ways to expand philanthropic and

institutional funding, possibly through expanding intellectual property opportunities, tax incentives, and more.

Issues around graduate student funding, training, job market, and support continue to be discussed systemwide. Committee members informed the Provost that tuition cost for graduate students does not decrease after advancement to candidacy, and is often the obligation of the sponsoring faculty member.

VII. Systemwide Items Under Review (<https://senate.universityofcalifornia.edu/under-review/>)

UCORP will send comments on two of the systemwide policies under review:

- Proposed Presidential Policy on Sustainable Practices
- Proposed Presidential Policy on Responding to Allegations of Research Misconduct

VIII. Wrap up and Next Steps

Potential topics for future discussion include gathering information on the fees that UC earns for management of the two NNSA labs and how the money is spent, the origins of UCSC's structural deficit, the administration's thoughts about productivity and AI, improvements to research administration on the campuses, and dealing with increased faculty workload.

Meeting adjourned: 3:00

Minutes draft by Joanne Miller, Committee Analyst

Attest: James Weatherall, UCORP Chair