UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA Academic Senate

University Committee on Research Policy
October 19, 2026

Meeting Minutes

I. Welcome, Introductions, UCORP Topics
UCORP Chair James Weatherall welcomed members and provided an overview of the systemwide Academic Senate and the work that UCORP members can expect in the coming year. Most members are new to systemwide Senate service.

Anticipated topics/activities for 2026-27 include:

- Research Funding Transparency Task Force
- Two reviews of multicampus research units (MRUs)
- Federal actions related to research
- Restricted research

II. Consultation with the Office of the President – Office of Research and Innovation
Vice President for Research and Innovation Theresa Maldonado joined the meeting to provide updates, focusing on UC's interest in what is called "restricted research" at UC. At issue is UC's ability to accept research funding that comes with restrictions on publication or citizenship. Though this category includes classified research opportunities, at the present time UC is not considering accepting classified research awards on campuses. (Classified work is done at the National Labs and some other facilities already.) The context for the discussion is that federal awards are increasingly calling for certain restrictions, which UC has not historically accepted as a long-standing practice. Exceptions have been granted on case-by-case basis, but it is often not clear who has the authority to make exceptions, and under what circumstances exceptions would be granted. Conversations are ongoing at the campuses; as chairs of their local CORs, UCORP members may be in a position to ask their local VCR about discussions on their campus. It is important to be clear about the "restricted research" under discussion, and under what circumstances the UC would accept funding with restrictions. UC Vice President and Chief Compliance and Audit Officer Alex Bustamante is looking into the issue from a compliance standpoint, including how a change might impact the campuses. Chancellors are exploring what might be appropriate for their campus, with some locations better positioned than others to meet additional federal requirements. In some cases, there may be additional costs for IT compliance.

Members suggested that UCOP provide data about the scope of restricted research to enable informed input from faculty. VP Maldonado said that she could bring more information to the next meeting, and that many funding opportunities are in the "critical and emerging technology" areas of fusion, quantum, and AI.

Research Policy Director Lourdes DeMattos and Manager Tim Miller from the UC Office of Research Policy Analysis and Coordination joined the meeting to provide background on an interim UC Policy on High-Risk Life Sciences Research.

They also noted that the UC system passed a federal government audit of research security at higher education institutions that included confirmation of termination of relationships with specified "foreign entities of concern."

III. Proposed Interim UC Policy on High-Risk Life Sciences Research

UCORP members were asked to review and provide comments on a proposed Interim UC Policy on High-Risk Life Sciences Research. Due to changes at the federal level, the policy replaces the proposed Presidential Policy on Dual Use Research of Concern and Pathogens with Enhanced Pandemic Potential (DURC-PEPP) that was reviewed last year. Changes include the extension of the policy to all life sciences, use of "dangerous gain of function" framework, and introduction of international restrictions. Campuses are working on the infrastructure needed and will provide training to those potentially impacted.

Members questioned whether non-federal funding needed to be included in the draft and noted that the definitions – which are from the federal policy/executive order – could be misunderstood if taken out of context.

Action: Chair Weatherall will draft a UCORP response letter focused on avoiding ambiguity, the inclusion of non-federally funded research, and the implementation burden.

IV. Early Career Faculty Research Excellence Awards

UCORP will have an opportunity to provide feedback on the next iteration of the Early Career Faculty Research Excellence Awards, offered by UCOP's Faculty Affairs and Academic Programs unit. A goal of the pilot program was to provide funding in instances where federal funding was cancelled or reduced.

Criticism of the program in its pilot year included offering the same amount ($50k) for all recipients and lack of clarity about how the grants were disbursed.

Action: UCORP will request a list of grant recipients.

V. Academic Senate Leadership Update

Academic Council Chair Susannah Scott and Vice Chair Amani Nuru-Jeter joined the meeting to provide an overview of current activities of the Senate.

- Changes to the federal OMB Uniform Guidance guidelines were blocked until December due to a continuing resolution but some federal agencies are going ahead with changing their rules. Whenever opportunities are provided for public comment, UC opines.
- The search for a new systemwide provost continues, with Ralph Hexter serving as interim. Former Provost Katherine Newman is continuing the work she started on the degree-plus pilot program and investigation into international research collaborations. The UCAD-Plus report will be issues soon and will contain campus-based and systemwide recommendations.

- President Milliken has convened an AI Steering Committee that is co-chaired by UC San Diego Chancellor Pradeep Khosla, former UC Academic Senate Chair Ahmet Palazoglu (UC Davis), and UC Vice President for Information Technology Van Williams.
- UCORP members brought up continuing issues with the financial system at UCSD and cuts to research administration when it is needed more than ever. Members were also interested in learning of any potential changes to graduate education at UC.
- Chair Scott noted the review item on clinical faculty and encouraged faculty to review the recommendations from the Presidential Task Force on Clinical Faculty Representation in Governance and to discuss whether it succeeded in addressing clinical faculty concerns about representation. She noted that UC colleagues who are engaged in neither research nor teaching have very different jobs than non-clinical faculty.
- A new total remuneration study will likely be released this fall.

VI. Local Committee Reports (Round-Robin)

Committee members reported on the top research-related issues facing their local Committee on Research. Common issues included research administration, particularly support for researchers in areas of financial accounting and technological compliance. Members mentioned communication with faculty about changes to federal funding and finding out who is being adversely affected. Divisions are discussing issues around AI, reviewing organized research units and maintaining faculty grant awards where such programs exist.

Shared governance, the NIH salary cap gap, support for core facilities, and barriers to working with scheduled drugs were other topics that arose from divisions.

VII. Systemwide Issues Under Review

UCORP members discussed the Report and Recommendations of the Presidential Task Force on Clinical Faculty Representation in Governance and determined that due to the strong, varied, and campus-based opinions on the issue, there was nothing that UCORP could contribute beyond what the campus CORs will express in the divisional responses.

Meeting minutes prepared by: Joanne Miller, committee analyst
Attest: James Weatherall, UCORP Chair

Meeting participants:

James Weatherall (Chair), Kartika Palar (Vice Chair), Dmitrios Zekkos (Berkeley), Laura Borodinsky (Davis), Joachim Vandekerckhove (Irvine), Judith Currier (Los Angeles), Ramendra Saha (Merced – first hour only), Eva de Alba (Merced alternate – partial), Anupama Dahanukar (Riverside), Olivier George (San Diego), Brian Graham (San Francisco), Teresa Shewry (Santa Barbara), Todd Lowe (Santa Cruz), Stephen Cadieux (Graduate Student, UCR), Susannah Scott (Academic Council Chair), Amani Nuru-Jeter (Academic Council Vice Chair), Joanne Miller (Committee Analyst), Theresa Maldonado (Vice President for Research & Innovation), Lourdes DeMattos (Director, Research Policy Analysis and Coordination), Tim Miller (Research Policy Manager, UCOP)