

Minutes of Teleconference

February 14, 2011

I. Consultation with the Office of the President – Office of Research and Graduate Studies: MRUs

Steve Beckwith, Vice President

Mary Croughan, Executive Director, Research Grants Program Office

Kathleen Erwin, Director, Program Application Review Center

ISSUE: Chair Kolaitis summarized the current draft of the MRU guidelines and discussed the rationale for having only 2 types of multi-campus research entities, namely, MRUs and MRPs.

DISCUSSION: Executive Director Croughan asked about the two lengths of funding cycles, one being 3 years and one being 5, and also noted that market funding instability could complicate financial planning. She also suggested the development of transition procedures for current MRUs and MRPI winners to become functional under the new guidelines. Finally, she suggested that limiting new MRU and MRP principal investigators (PIs) to Senate faculty may be too delimiting and unnecessarily prevent junior faculty from advancing their careers. Director Erwin inquired as to reporting guidelines for research entities that do not receive OP or MRPI funding. Vice President Beckwith noted that since current MRU sunset reviews seldom occur, the default might be better switched to automatic sunset and disestablishment unless the MRU actively requests review and renewal. He further suggested that disestablishment be automatic if an MRU or MRP failed to meet its funding goals.

II. Chair's Announcements

Phokion Kolaitis, UCORP Chair

1. Academic Council meeting of January 26, 2011:

UPDATE: 1) The funding streams proposal (also see Item VI.1. below) was discussed at length by the Council. Many feel that the changes to the graduate student funding formula will disproportionately harm the smaller campuses. The Council will return to this topic at its next meeting. 2) The Council also discussed possible cuts to OP-funded academic programs (also see Item IV below), focusing on the varying degrees of restrictedness for the various funding sources. Some programs, such as the President's Post-Doctoral Fellowship Program, have already been suspended. 3) The Council voted to allow the fees generated from UC's partial management of the DOE national lab LLCs, which had previously been restricted to funding research collaborations between the campuses and the labs, to be unrestricted and available to fund other University operations.

III. California Institutes of Science and Innovation (Cal ISIs) Draft Review Protocols

Phokion Kolaitis, UCORP Chair

ISSUE: UCORP has been asked to comment on the draft review protocols for the upcoming first 5 year academic review of the California Nanosystems Institute (CNSI) and the second 5 year academic review of the California Institute for Telecommunications and Information Technology (CalIT2), both of which are California Institutes for Science and Innovation created by Governor Gray Davis.

DISCUSSION: Chair Kolaitis noted that the CalIT2 protocol was not responsive to feedback submitted by the previous UCORP that reviewed its first 5 year academic review. Members concurred, adding the protocol seems to have a serious flaw: the guidelines for the self-study generated by the Institute directors do not align with the questions asked of the review committee itself.

ACTION: Analyst Feer will draft the committee's response to the draft protocols and circulate it to the committee for electronic review.

IV. Cuts/Curtailments to Office of the President Funded Academic Programs

Larry Pitts, Provost

Steve Beckwith, Vice President, ORGS

ISSUE: Departments University-wide are being asked to cut costs again, and since the obvious targets have all been hit, UCORP has been asked to advise on how to allocate more painful cuts. The Provost has compiled a list of academic programs funded wholly or in part by the Office of the President; the list is presented by level of restriction on funding: restricted, partially restricted, and unrestricted. In the research arena, VP Beckwith has been asked to examine several drastic options: MRPI funding, lab fee funding, Discovery Grant funding – all are at risk.

DISCUSSION: Members inquired whether VP Beckwith had been given a dollar target for cuts to be made, and he indicated that between 25-33% of OP research funds may have to be cut. The impacts of any possible cuts are difficult to anticipate: many programs have significant external funding multipliers, but they are often not in areas where external funding is scarce. Members agreed that any cuts to research would most likely not be restored to research, either at the system-wide or campus level, either in the short or long term. If further mid-year cuts are required, members asked where the line of irreparable harm lies. Provost Pitts posed an alternate question: if the University budget were on the rebound, what would be the ideal funding distribution template?

Members noted that world class research is the bright line between UC and the state universities and the community colleges. Members added that central funding should be preserved only where centralization adds clear value, despite the risks of funding redirection at the local level. Several members posited that it was dangerous to make new standards of excellence during times of economic peril. Members also asked which generated greater external research income: new hires and starting packages or increased in-house research line items.

ACTION: Analyst Feer will draft the committee's response to the request for guidance on administering these cuts and circulate it via email for review.

ACTION: Analyst Feer will forward to VP Beckwith the campus COR profile summary spreadsheet.

V. MRUs (continued)

Members

DISCUSSION: Members discussed further the merits of including or omitting time frames from the guidelines, as well as automatic disestablishment and aligning the funding cycles. It was noted that UCORP will have to subsequently develop further guidelines to implement the Compendium reviews it recommends for itself, perhaps similar to the program review guidelines employed by the Coordinating Committee on Graduate Affairs (CCGA).

ACTION: Chair Kolaitis and Vice Chair Crawford will revise the draft and circulate it to the committee for further review.

VI. Consent Calendar

1. Response to [Systemwide Review of "Funding Streams" Proposal](#) (Formal comments due by February 17, 2011)

DISCUSSION: Some members felt that this topic was beyond UCORP's purview, but others argued that graduate student funding and research were closely entwined. Some members asserted that researchers should be encouraged to solicit ever-increasing levels of external grants, but other worried that smaller campuses and certain academic areas would be disadvantaged under such tactics.

ACTION: Analyst Feer will further edit the draft and circulate it to the committee for additional review.

2. Response to [Report and Recommendations of the Task Force on Senate Membership](#) (Formal comments due by Friday, March 11, 2011)

ACTION: This item was approved as noticed.

VII. New Business

None.

Call adjourned at 3:10 p.m.

Minutes prepared by Kenneth Feer, Senior Policy Analyst
Attest: Phokion Kolaitis, UCORP Chair