December 2, 2005

RORY HUME
ACTING PROVOST AND VICE PRESIDENT-ACADEMIC AFFAIRS AND HEALTH AFFAIRS

BRUCE DARLING
SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT- UNIVERSITY AFFAIRS

Re: Draft UC Guidelines on Non-Competitive Funding

Dear Rory and Bruce:

The Academic Council has completed its consideration of the draft Guidelines on Non-Competitive Funding, which were recently developed by an ad hoc administrative work group as a proposed means of defining and regulating allowable exceptions to UC’s policy against ‘earmarking’ funds for research. The University Committee on Planning and Budget (UCPB) and the University Committee on Research Policy (UCROP) took the lead in reviewing the proposal. At its November 30, 2005 meeting, the Academic Council approved the recommendations of UCPB and UCROP and, based on their comments, endorsed the idea that competitive bidding is generally superior to earmarking and that in the rare instances when earmarking occurs, UC’s regulatory mechanism should include Senate consultation.

I am enclosing the reports of UCROP and UCPB for your information. Briefly, though, the main recommendation common to both committees calls for formally incorporating into the implementation of the guidelines the Senate’s advisory function with respect to the research environment and research policy. The Senate’s role in this process can, we believe, be realized in a supple and effective manner. On the campuses, where much of the review of requests for exception will take place, appropriate Senate representatives - from the campus committee on research, for example - would participate on an ad hoc basis in what may be a fast moving review process. At the systemwide level, UCROP would monitor implementation of the guidelines and provide comments to the administration annually. For general oversight purposes, each local Committee on Research would receive an annual list of campus requests for exception. Similarly, UCROP would receive for review an annual list of all submissions that were considered for the prioritization list sent to our California Senators, with an indication of those that were forwarded.
The Academic Council fully agrees with the administration’s stated position that merit-based peer review provides the best mechanism for allocating government funds for research and for serving the research community at UC and at large. This initiative would offer an internal means for regulating in a reasonable and flexible manner the pursuit of directed funding. We trust that the Senate will play a helpful role in oversight and review of the process and in any further efforts on the part of UC to maintain and promote a healthy funding environment in which competitive peer review remains the standard for academic research.

Sincerely,

Clifford Brunk, Chair
Academic Council

Copy: Academic Council
Senate Director Bertero-Barceló
Encl.: 2
November 9, 2005

CLIFFORD BRUNK
CHAIR, ACADEMIC COUNCIL

Re: Draft UC Guidelines on Non-Competitive Funding

Dear Cliff:

At its November 8, 2005 teleconference, the University Committee on Planning Budget (UPCB) considered the Draft Guidelines for Non-Competitive Funding that were recently developed by a special administrative work group. UCPB endorses the Guidelines as a reasonable and effective way to reaffirm University policy against ‘earmarking’ and rationalize a process by which exceptions to that general position can be accommodated. Further, the committee recommends that divisional Senate committees on research participate in the review and approval process at the campus level of requests for exception, and that the University committee on Research Policy likewise participate in review of those cases that are considered at the systemwide level.

UCPB appreciates the opportunity to comment on this important regulatory initiative.

Sincerely,

Stanton A. Glantz
Chair, UCPB

cc: UCPB
Senate Director Bertero-Barceló
CLIFFORD BRUNK  
ACADEMIC COUNCIL CHAIR  

Re: UC Guidelines on Non-Competitive Funding  

Dear Cliff:  

At its November 14, 2005 meeting, the University Committee on Research Policy (UCORP) considered the draft Guidelines for Non-Competitive Funding that were recently developed by a systemwide administrative work group. UCORP endorses the proposed guidelines as a useful affirmation of the existing university policy against earmarking of federal research funds and a reasonable means of defining and regularizing those instances that would constitute allowable exceptions to that policy.

UCORP sees the Senate’s role in this proposed process as helping to set research priorities and maintain balance in the overall UC research enterprise and within each campus context. Toward this end, we recommend that the draft guidelines and the draft process for review of requests for exception be modified to include Senate consultation at both the local and systemwide levels. At the campus level, for example, the ad hoc faculty review process used for limited submission reviews could be followed; this would allow streamlined Senate participation in what may be a fast moving review process. Additionally, and as a basic measure of oversight, the campus committee on research would receive for annual review a list of all submissions.

At the systemwide level, we suggest that UCORP review implementation of the guidelines on an annual basis. Included within this review, UCORP would receive an annual itemization of all requests for exception indicating those included in the priority list given to the senators from California. Any comments UCORP may have would then be forwarded to the administration through the Academic Council.

UCORP believes that new regulation of an ongoing and heretofore often unmonitored activity should be as unambiguous as possible. The current draft policy in particular appears directed toward establishing a procedure so that UC can respond efficiently when our senators request a priority list. The more general issue of how campuses are to deal with non-competitive funding sources is not so clear. UCORP suggests that the draft guidelines and process be revised to better
clarify the procedural differences, if any, between submissions that will be forwarded with chancellorial approval and those requiring prioritization by the UC Office of the President for action by our US Senators. We appreciate the opportunity to comment on these draft guidelines and look forward to offering advice and direction in the future as we observe the outcome of their application. UCORP believes that academic research is best served by peer review but appreciates the evident need to address the growing trend of federal research dollars being allocated without the benefit of a competitive peer review process.

Sincerely,

George Sensabaugh, Chair
UCORP

Copy: UCORP
Senate Director Bertero-Barceló