



Robert C. May
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*Chair of the Assembly of the Academic Senate
Faculty Representative to the Regents
University of California
1111 Franklin Street, 12th Floor
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July 29, 2019

**MICHAEL T. BROWN
PROVOST AND EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT
UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA**

Re: Current State Assessment Report for Research Grants Program Office

Dear Michael,

As you requested, I distributed for systemwide Academic Senate review the Current State Assessment Report for the Research Grants Program Office (RGPO). Eight Academic Senate divisions (UCB, UCD, UCI, UCM, UCR, UCSB, UCSD, and UCSC) and three systemwide committees (UCORP, UCPB, and ACSCOLI) submitted comments. These comments were discussed at Academic Council's July 24, 2019 meeting and are attached for your reference.

We understand that the RGPO oversees a \$118 million research grant-making portfolio that includes several State-sponsored research programs as well as a number of UC-sponsored research initiatives, including the Laboratory Fees Research Program, Multicampus Research Units (MRUs), and the Multicampus Research Programs and Initiatives (MRPI) award program. The Assessment Report recommends maintaining RGPO's administrative home at UCOP, identifying new funding streams to counterbalance diminished research support, including expanding RGPO's scope to grant-making for non-research related activities; reorganizing RGPO's internal organizational structure and staffing model to improve efficiency and accountability; and making other improvements to increase the accountability and transparency of RGPO's operations and finances, including establishing a Committee of Visitors to advise leadership and review grant structures.

The Academic Senate supports the RGPO missions to advance research in areas important to California, the nation, and the world; enhance UC's research capacity and excellence; and create research opportunities for emerging scientists. Academic Senate reviewers appreciate the thoroughness of the Assessment Report, and endorse many of its recommendations to the extent that they support these missions and maintain RGPO as a vibrant and relevant resource for the research needs of all UC faculty. This includes broad support for the recommendations to maintain RGPO's home at UCOP and for reorganizing RGPO's staffing and focus to become more flexible, accountable, and effective.

Reviewers also support making the RGPO and its services more inclusive of disciplines and campuses, and for increasing funding to the MRU/MRPI programs, given their broad multi-campus and multi-disciplinary focus on innovation. Several reviewers, however, are concerned about the proposal to extend the RGPO's grant evaluation and management services to external entities and provide peer-review and administration for non-research grants. We encourage the University to think carefully about how such a shift would affect the core RGPO missions, the cost versus benefits of adding new staff functions, and whether some added functions could be carried out more appropriately and effectively by other State agencies. The RGPO also should coordinate with campuses on the development of any new funding streams, particularly those involving fundraising.

We also encourage you to consider UCORP's requests for more details about four specific areas of the proposed accountability and governance structure for the RGPO related to 1) funding decisions; 2) assessing the performance of its funded research; 3) RGPO's ability to modernize its funding programs; and 4) its capacity to adapt programs to emerging needs.

In addition, several reviewers support a more detailed consideration of the Committee of Visitors concept, including a possible Senate faculty role in such a body. UCI recommends pushing fund administration up to the RGPO only when there is explicit agreement for doing so among all stakeholders. UCSF recommends specific criteria to help guide decisions about when RGPO should receive State funds to distribute for grants and when the funds should be allocated directly to a campus.

UCPB also recommends a more general assessment of the current MRU program and the extent to which the MRU funding model is best suited to all entities currently identified as MRUs, particularly the UC Humanities Research Institute.

Finally, we echo UCORP's concern that several key constituencies were not consulted on the recommendations, including funded investigators, UCORP, and Principal Investigators of MRUs and other UCOP-funded research programs.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the State Assessment Report. Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have additional questions.

Sincerely,



Robert C. May, Chair
Academic Council

cc: Academic Council
Senate Directors



320 STEPHENS HALL
UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

June 26, 2019

ROBERT MAY
Chair, Academic Council

Subject: Research Grants Program Office (RGPO) Review

Dear Robert,

The Berkeley Division of the Academic Senate received the request for divisional review of the report cited in the subject line, too late in the academic year to conduct a full review. Accordingly, we asked the relevant divisional committees, the committees on Academic Planning and Resource Allocation, and Research, for informal commentary. Their response is attached for Academic Council's consideration, but has not been discussed and endorsed by Divisional Council.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Barbara Spackman'.

Barbara Spackman
Chair, Berkeley Division of the Academic Senate
Cecchetti Professor of Italian Studies and Professor of Comparative Literature

Encl.

cc: Jennifer Johnson-Hanks, Chair, Committee on Academic Planning and Resource Allocation
John Colford, Chair, Committee on Research
Deborah Dobin, Senate Analyst, committees on Academic Planning and Resource Allocation, and Research



June 13, 2019

PROFESSOR BARBARA SPACKMAN
Chair, Berkeley Division of the Academic Senate

*Re: Joint CAPRA/COR comments on the
Research Grants Program Office (RGPO) Review*

With their spring semester meetings finished, CAPRA and COR were not able to discuss the report from the Research Grants Program Office (RGPO) review in committee. Instead, a small group of committee members in relevant fields, including the chairs of CAPRA and COR, met to discuss the report. This memo summarizes the key points outlined in that discussion.

We understand that the goal of the review was to assess whether the RGPO should stay under the governance of the Office of the President or whether UC's research mission would be better served if the office moved to one of the campuses. We recognize that the office is the sponsor for large, multi-campus research projects, and that those hold great value for UC. We are impressed with the tremendous detail in the report and commend the office for undertaking such a comprehensive self-study. From this review, it is clear that the advantages of keeping the office at UCOP far outweigh any reasons to move it.

However, we are struck by the inward-facing nature of the review. We believe it would be useful at some point to tackle the broader issues of the role the UC should play in grantmaking and the focus of any grantmaking program. The RGPO currently oversees grantmaking for a diverse set of topics, mostly funded by the state. For multi-campus UC programs (such as MRPI), it makes perfect sense for the UC to oversee the grantmaking. However, the report offers no clear justification for UC to oversee programs that are open to groups outside of UC. In light of the apparent downward trajectory of funding for these programs, this seems an opportune time for the university to consider whether RGPO should continue at the university at all, or whether its functions could better be carried out at one or more state agencies. A broader review, along the lines of an Academic Program Review (which would include the feedback through the lens of some outside reviewers), would help the university address those questions. While the current review is sufficient, in our view, to justify maintaining RGPO's current placement in the Office of the President, only a broader review can assess whether RGPO's current form best supports the research mission of the university.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment.

With best regards,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'J. Johnson-Hanks', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Jennifer Johnson-Hanks, Chair
Committee on Academic Planning and
Resource Allocation

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading 'John M. Colford, Jr.', written in a cursive style.

John Colford, Chair
Committee on Research



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July 1, 2019

Robert May
Chair, Academic Council

RE: Review of Research Grants Program Office

Dear Robert:

The review of the Research Grants Program Office (RGPO) was forwarded to all standing committees of the Davis Division of the Academic Senate. The Committee on Research (COR) responded.

COR found the report to be thorough and informative. Enclosed, COR offers a few recommendations to consider moving forward.

The Davis Division appreciates the opportunity to comment.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Kristin H. Lagattuta".

Kristin H. Lagattuta, Ph.D.
Chair, Davis Division of the Academic Senate
Professor, Department of Psychology and Center for Mind and Brain

Enclosed: Davis Division Committee Responses

c: Hilary Baxter, Executive Director, Systemwide Academic Senate
Michael LaBriola, Principal Policy Analyst, Systemwide Academic Senate
Edwin M. Arevalo, Executive Director, Davis Division of the Academic Senate

June 12, 2019

The Committee on Research has considered the review of the Research Grants Program Office (RGPO). The report is very thorough and offers a number of good suggestions. We have the following comments/questions:

- Regarding “Funding Stream Development”, it was wisely suggested that RGPO consult with the campuses. We would like to know who would be responsible for coordination and arbitration between the campuses (and RGPO) in these development efforts.
- In the “Additional Recommendations” sections, the RGPO requests increasing MRPI funding. The Committee on Research is generally in favor of this increase, but would prefer to understand which other program funding would be decreased in order to expand the MRPI budget.
- It is not clear whether the suggested reorganization of the office includes the same number of Directors who would just be moved into new positions.
- We would recommend more detail on what type of delegates will be on the "Committee of Visitors".
- We would recommend more detail and transparency for each program on how funding decisions are made. For instance, are they based entirely on peer-reviewed score; is it a combination of score and programmatic needs; does that vary by program?
- We would recommend more consultation with UCORP on future implementation of the plan.

June 25, 2019

Robert May, Chair
Academic Council

RE: Systemwide Senate Review of the Research Grants Program Office

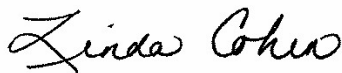
On our campus, the Council on Research, Computing, and Libraries (CORCL) and Council on Planning and Budget (CPB) reviewed the Current State Assessment Report of the Research Grants Program Office (RGPO). The Councils' individual responses are attached. At its June 18, 2019 meeting, the Senate Cabinet discussed the report and voted unanimously (7-0-0) to endorse CORCL's comments. CPB's response was submitted following our final Cabinet meeting of the academic year.

The Cabinet agrees with CORCL's conclusions that the administration of funds should only be pushed up to the RGPO when there is explicit agreement amongst all stakeholders in the funding that this is the best option, that NIH and NSF should serve as models for the administration and review of grants, that additional UC faculty should be involved in running the RGPO, and that the concept of the Committee of Visitors requires further development and should include Senate representation.

CPB suggest that NIH and NSF are more appropriate benchmark organizations for the RGPO than some of the non-profit foundations listed in the Current State Assessment Report. CPB discourages restructuring of the RGPO to allow for internal promotions, and endorses maintaining a relatively flat organizational structure with greater emphasis on cross-training and flexibility in project and task assignments. CPB found that the Current State Assessment Report did not fully address the root cause of RGPO constraints and did not assess possible impacts of the proposed RGPO changes on campuses and faculty investigators. CPB did not endorse the report's recommendation that the RGPO consider providing grant peer-review and administration for non-research grants.

The Irvine Division appreciates the opportunity to comment.

Sincerely,



Linda Cohen, Chair
Academic Senate, Irvine Division

Enclosures: CORCL memo dated 5/22/19
CPB memo dated 6/24/19

C: James Steintrager, Chair Elect, Academic Senate
Jeffrey Barrett, CORCL Chair
Steven Gross, CPB Chair
Michelle Chen, CORCL and CPB Analyst
Kate Brigman, Executive Director, Academic Senate



June 14, 2019

**LINDA COHEN, CHAIR
ACADEMIC SENATE, IRVINE DIVISION**

RE: Systemwide Review of the Research Grants Program Office (RGPO)

At its May 16, 2019 meeting, the Council on Research, Computing, and Libraries discussed the review of the Research Grants Program Office (RGPO).

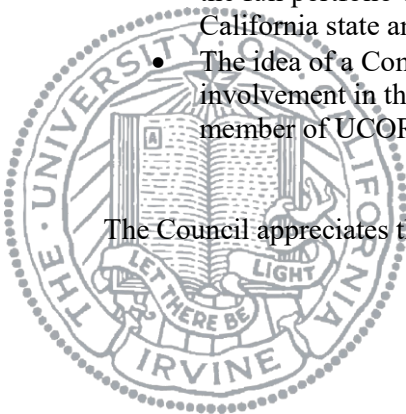
Created in 2008 as a result of a broader reorganization of the UC Office of the President, RGPO is a system-wide unit located in Oakland. It was organized to put research administered at the UCOP level in one place. The unit is responsible for impartially administering funds for select State-sponsored and UC-sponsored research programs and initiatives across institutions.

The review comes in response to systemwide pressure to minimize UCOP expenditures. The report includes considerations as to whether a change the RGPO's organizational structure is warranted. It noted concerns about the financial stability of the office citing diminished funds in coming years. The review concluded that the RGPO should remain a centralized office and was supportive of dedicating additional resources to it.

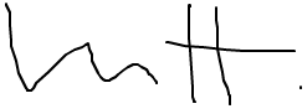
The Council expressed the following:

- The Council understands the review as a proposal for the RGPO to take some grants that are currently run at the campus level and move it to system-wide. On one hand, if a grant is pushed up to system-wide, then the campuses can more fairly compete for those funds. On the other, the RGPO would assess an administrative overhead. CORCL feels strongly that the administration of funds should only be pushed up to RGPO when there is explicit agreement amongst all stakeholders in the funding that this is the best option.
- The Council suggests that the RGPO use NIH and NSF as models for the administration and review of grants. NSF utilizes academics for both administration and review on a rotating basis. Something along these lines might make sense for the RGPO as they have access to the expertise of UC faculty. This could also help to inform faculty and campuses of the grant opportunities administered by the RGPO.
- A standing problem for the RGPO is that its workload changes depending on the current grants it is administering. One advantage of involving faculty in running RGPO might be to allow for increased flexibility in resources for the office as additional labor might be recruited on an ad hoc basis with suitable compensation.
- The proposal for a Committee of Visitors is a good one. Our sense is that such a committee might regularly review (1) the specific grants administered by the RGPO, (2) the structure of the full portfolio of grants, and (3) the efforts of the RGPO to pull in more funding from California state and other sources.
- The idea of a Committee of Visitors needs to be further developed. There must be senate involvement in the overview of RGOP. One way to accomplish this would be to include a member of UCORP on the Committee of Visitors ex officio.

The Council appreciates the opportunity to comment.



On behalf of the Council,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'J. Barrett', with a horizontal line extending to the right.

Jeffrey A. Barrett, Chair

c: Kate Brigman, Executive Director
Michelle Chen, CORCL Analyst

June 24, 2019

LINDA COHEN, CHAIR
ACADEMIC SENATE, IRVINE DIVISION

RE: Systemwide Review of the Research Grants Program Office (RGPO)

At its May 22, 2019 meeting, the Council on Planning and Budget (CPB) discussed the systemwide review of the Research Grants Program Office (RGPO).

Although the Council found that the assessment unduly focused on personnel and administrative issues that are essentially internal to the RGPO office and did not require a systemwide review by the UC Provost and multiple Academic Senate Councils, CPB was impressed by the detail and apparent effort reflected in the report. While staff concerns about career progression, the number of directors and reports to directors, and the organization of the Program Office teams are relevant to the efficient functioning of any administrative unit, they should be assessed and managed by the RGPO leadership without requiring extensive systemwide review.

That said, on the figures on benchmarking Program Officer requirements and salaries, the Council commented that the RGPO Program Officers appear to be similar to the entry level requirements and salaries of the NIH and NSF, which are more appropriate benchmark organizations for the RGPO than many of the non-profit foundations shown. The RGPO has a sufficiently hierarchical structure with six directors and about 16 Program Officers as subject matter experts in an office with about 40 total staff. It would not be efficient to reorganize the RGPO into a more complex hierarchical reporting structure just to allow for internal promotions. The CPB endorses the alternative priority of enhancing efficiency by maintaining a relatively flat organizational structure with greater emphasis on cross-training and flexibility in project and task assignment.

The Council expressed the following concerns:

- The assessment did not address the root cause of RGPO constraints. So, it is unclear that the proposed internal organizational changes will be sufficient to address the long term issues. For example, the Executive Summary emphasizes significant findings as being Growth Constraints because the “RGPO...has been constrained in its ability to hire staff”; Diminishing Fund Sources because “primary sources of funding are expected to decrease in the coming years”; and Fixed Internal Costs which are due mostly to fixed staffing levels. The report did not explain clearly why the RGPO is so constrained in being able to change staffing and costs in response to changes in the grant programs.
- The mostly likely reason is that the RGPO is based in the UCOP, which has been under scrutiny to decrease the number of programs and personnel, to decrease its budget vis-à-vis funding to the campuses, and to document the need for and efficiency of its component programs. The assessment assumed that the RGPO organization and operations must be changed internally in response to this external constraint on the UCOP that was not caused by nor directly related to the RPO. The report does provide support for RGPO by documenting the program’s accomplishments and operational efficiency. However, the



assessment should address directly why the UCOP and Office of Academic Affairs cannot protect the RGPO, so it is not impacted by the general need for the UCOP to constrain funding and personnel.

The UCOP should make broader administrative changes to facilitate increased flexibility in staffing and funding within its component programs if this flexibility is important for cost-efficient and high quality operations. It should then deal with external stakeholders to defend the programs' funding, staffing, and functioning rather than assuming that the constraints are fixed and the programs must live within constraints that are not appropriate. Specifically, the UCOP should ensure that the RGPO has flexibility to adjust staffing levels and have a highly flexible organizational structure with cross-training, so it can adjust efficiently to changes in grant funding levels. Alternatively if the UCOP cannot change the broader administrative constraints for component programs within the UCOP, the Council recommends that the option of moving the RGPO outside of the UCOP but still be maintained at a systemwide level be more fully considered. This option was mentioned in the report, but it was not sufficiently analyzed as a viable option.

- Another limitation of the assessment is that it focused exclusively on the UCOP and RGPO in evaluating possible impacts and opportunities for the proposed changes, but it did not include assessment of potential impacts on campuses and faculty investigators. For example, the report discussed potential value to the RGPO if the 25% limit on F&A rates for UC investigator proposals could be changed to allow regular full F&A rates. It is clear that it would be beneficial for the State general fund, the UCOP, and the campuses to be allowed higher F&A rates. A consequence is that smaller total direct funds would be available to faculty investigators who compete for the grant funding, resulting in either smaller awards or fewer awards. This issue should have been addressed with assessment of options.

Another option, for example, would be to change the F&A allocation formula, so the campuses would receive the same percentage of F&A allocation as for other grants (e.g., the allocation received for NIH or NSF negotiated rates), while the UCOP or State general fund would possibly receive smaller allocations. Another example of potential impacts on faculty investigators was the proposal that total funds for grant awards be paid during the first year of the grant with possible provisions for return of proceeds from investments of funds that would not be expended until future years (e.g., years two and three of a three year grant). The report does not assess the potential impacts of this proposal if, for example, the campuses keep the investment income but require that that Principal Investigators pay the RGPO out of direct funds.

It also does not assess whether there would be any impact on campus and academic unit monitoring of research grant awards, considering that some academic units "credit" grants based on the date the grant funds were received, while other units "credit" grants based on annual expenditures. The pattern of receiving credit only every few years rather than consistently every year could impact some faculty investigators.

- The report also indicated concern about the longer-term Financial Stability of the RGPO if additional sources of revenues for its mission grant peer-review and administration are not identified. This issue would be addressed if the UCOP makes administrative changes to allow component programs more flexibility to change staffing and fixed costs as recommended by the CPB, since the RGPO staffing levels could be decreased if additional peer-review grant programs are not assigned to the RGPO for grant administration. In any case, the CPB does not endorse the report's recommendation that the RGPO consider providing grant peer-review and administration for non-research grants. The mission and focus of the RGPO should be on "research grants".

Systemwide support for the RGPO is likely to decrease if the RGPO dilutes its mission to become a general grants administration organization which possibly could just be sub-contracted outside of the UC system.

The Council appreciates the opportunity to comment.

On behalf of the Council,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Steven Gross". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Steven Gross, Chair

CC: Kate Brigman, Executive Director
Michelle Chen, CPB Analyst



OFFICE OF THE ACADEMIC SENATE
KURT SCHNIER, CHAIR
senatechair@ucmerced.edu

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JUNE 24, 2019

ROBERT MAY, CHAIR, ACADEMIC COUNCIL

RE: RESEARCH GRANTS PROGRAM OFFICE (RGPO) REVIEW

Dear Robert:

The *Current State Assessment Report on the UC Research Grants Program Office* was distributed for comment to standing committees and school executive committees of the Merced Division of the Academic Senate. One committee, the Committee on Research, offered comment. With this memo, we forward CoR's thoughts for Academic Council's consideration.

The Merced Division thanks you for the opportunity to opine.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Kurt Schnier".

Kurt Schnier, Chair
Divisional Council

CC: Divisional Council
Hilary Baxter, Executive Director, Systemwide Academic Senate
Laura Martin, Executive Director, Merced Senate Office

Encl (3)

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, MERCED

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SANTA BARBARA • SANTA CRUZ

ACADEMIC SENATE, MERCED DIVISION
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June 21, 2019

To: Kurt Schnier, Chair, Division Council

From: Michael Scheibner, Chair, Committee on Research (COR)

Re: UC Research Grants Program Office Assessment Report

CoR reviewed the *Current State Assessment Report* on the Research Grants Program Office (RGPO) as generated by UC Provost Michael Brown at the request of UC President Janet Napolitano. CoR's comments on the major components of the report as detailed below.

Background

The background section provided useful context for the review of the report.

Organizational Structure

CoR considers the perceived need for greater career pathways for program officers and the desire for more intermediate positions between program officers and program directors an important issue that needs to be addressed in order for RGPO to attract and retain talent. In addition, it appears that the entry level salary for program officers is comparatively low given the experience required, which potentially hampers RGPO's ability to compete on the job market for program officer. With respect to "Budgeting and Hiring", a more flexible structure that adapts to the fluctuations in funding streams would certainly be appropriate. Such flexibility, could maybe be achieved if RGPO had a discretionary budget to hire (non-permanent) staff up to a certain level without approval from higher up in UCOP. Only positions above a certain level and permanent positions will need to be approved by UCOP.

Grants Management

The Application Process section states that grant competitions that are managed by RGPO follow a similar process that RGPO has adapted from the NIH and the NSF. CoR inquires what the process is for those that do not follow this process and/or how is this determined?

How is it determined when Letters of Intent (LOI) are required? When used for just approval and not to limit the number of applications are most approved and if so what is the point of the LOIs?

The section on Disbursements states that the process for UC campuses is standard for research grants, but is nonetheless more time-consuming and labor-intensive than the process used for non-UC institutions. CoR supports the consideration to treating the UC campuses equally to the non-UC institutions in terms of grant disbursement.

Under Effort Reporting, the assessment report states that RGPO staff time is divided across the three allowable expense categories (Administration, Research Evaluation, Research Development and Dissemination) based on predetermined percentages. Staff submit detailed monthly estimates of the time they had spent on these three categories, and these estimates were used to allocate personnel costs across each category of expenses. CoR wonders whether this is something that could be allocated upfront allowing consideration of the cap on administrative expenses.

California Breast Cancer Research Program

No comments. CoR reaffirms the findings in the report.

California HIV/AIDS Research Program

No comments. CoR reaffirms the findings in the report.

Tobacco-Related Disease Research Program

No comments. CoR reaffirms the findings in the report.

UC Research Initiatives

The UC Lab fees program has a sizable budget and some faculty could benefit considerably from it. The problem with the program is that, at least in practice, it has not been implemented in a transparent way and this has led to wasted effort and frustration. While pages 97-98 describe the process to determine priority areas to be funded, in practice this has varied significantly from iteration to iteration. Some years there has not been consultation with the faculty. In the last iteration, the faculty were asked to provide suggested areas. The selection process for goals and priority areas should be established in a clear and transparent manner and in a way that avoids creating false expectations among faculty.

The national lab scientists apparently have disproportionately large fringe benefits compared to UC faculty, which makes it difficult to construct a budget. It is also unclear whether lab scientists should receive funding from this program, given that these are fees paid to the UC. The report should clarify this point.

Consolidated Financials

It is noted in the report that funds from tobacco taxes are likely to decline as tobacco consumption declines. This is likely true, but not necessarily negative - much is already known about the health effects of tobacco, and as fewer people smoke the benefits in prioritizing this area of study will also decline. Perhaps the RGPO could discuss with the relevant people at the state level other research priorities the office could promote - wildfire and groundwater management and carbon sequestration are already areas of interest in CA that have some funding behind them (though this may already be handled by other entities), and other areas such as the effects of particulate pollution on health probably should be higher priorities. The latter could be proposed as a special research priority similar to the Valley Fever program.

As mentioned in the report, money from a sugar tax or cannabis could usefully be put toward research, perhaps with a focus on diabetes and/or understanding food consumption behavior in the case of the former, and the medical effectiveness of cannabis products and potential negative impacts (of smoked cannabis to lung health or of cannabis on brain development) in the case of the latter.

The accounting structure and number of codes, as described, does seem overly complex. For the administrative home of the program, moving it to one of the campuses (Option 2) does not seem to make sense, as the program is meant to serve the whole UC system plus other grantees across the state. It is noted that stakeholders overwhelmingly would prefer the RGPO remain part of the office of the president (Option 1). Some constraints are mentioned that need clarification, for instance, why would constraints on hiring be more likely to affect the program as part of the Office of the President?

Analysis of Findings

CoR supports the conclusion of the report that, at least for the time being, the administrative home of RGPO remain as is within the UCOP (Option 1). However, in light of the contemplated diversification towards non-research programs a transition of RGPO into a distinct entity within the UC system, but separate from UCOP and the campuses, should be given some thought. In particular, if programs that provide funds to develop certain administrative goals are to be created, it may make sense for administrative units within UCOP to apply for such funding, which could cause issues with (real or perceived) impartiality if RGPO was part of UCOP.

The determination of when RGPO should accept or manage future fund streams is important for RGPO to run efficiently. To maintain a minimum cut-off limit, based on (predicted) administrative expenses is essential in this regard. For incoming funds that do not meet the minimum cut-off one could either consider pooling such funds or directing them to individual campuses where they may be managed at a lower administrative cost.

Proposal for the Future State

CoR supports the idea that the RGPO should become more involved in soliciting funding streams. However, we would like clarification on the following sentence: "These development activities should complement campus fundraising efforts and be carried out in consultation with campuses to avoid conflict." (pg. 135) How would any potential conflict be dealt with? Will the default position be that if a solicitation effort conflicts with a campus effort that the RGPO will not engage in it? Or will there be some expectation that campuses try to change?

CoR supports the effort to clarify which funding streams will be run through the RGPO vs campus based. However, we would like clarification on the following phrase "(2) the scope of research is clearly articulated;" (pg. 136) What is "scope" in this instance? And, how would it be determined whether the scope is clearly defined?

It would be useful to have an example of a program that would make sense as a block grant (as described on pg. 138).

CoR would like more detail on how exactly the proposed Grants Team structure (pg. 139-140) would increase flexibility. It seems like it might do the opposite and hardcode teams around existing funding streams. What procedure will be in place to reevaluate the Grants Team structure to see whether it still makes sense in light of any funding stream changes?

Would the interns (described on pg. 141) be paid?

CoR supports the idea of RGPO making its expertise available to other UC external organizations for a fee, as this could lead to further efficiencies in grant administration (pg. 143). How will fees (dollar amount) be determined?

With regard to the proposed diversification towards inclusion of non-research programs, CoR recommends that proposals to such programs should address their impact on research and/or the utilization of UC research output.

We appreciate the opportunity to review the report.

cc: CoR members
Senate Office



CHAIR, ACADEMIC SENATE
RIVERSIDE DIVISION
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June 12, 2019

Robert May, Chair, Academic Council
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RE: Research Grant Program Office – Current State Assessment Report

Dear Robert:

I am happy to offer the Riverside Division's full consultative feedback on the UC Center Sacramento report. The UCR Executive Council met on June 10, 2019 to discuss this report, and affirmed the content of the attached memos. I have attached the full complement of committee feedback, and will note that one substantive and meaningful suggestion entailed the need for more robust circulation and advertisement of information regarding the Center so that UCR students will have equitable representation in its programs. I trust these responses will be useful to the consultation process.



Peace
dylan

Dylan Rodríguez
Professor of Media & Cultural Studies and Chair of the Riverside Division

CC: Hilary Baxter, Executive Director of the Academic Senate
Cherysa Cortez, Executive Director of UCR Academic Senate Office

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, RIVERSIDE



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EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE:
COLLEGE OF HUMANITIES, ARTS, AND SOCIAL SCIENCES

RIVERSIDE, CALIFORNIA 92521-0132

May 29, 2019

TO: Dylan Rodriguez, Chair
Academic Senate

FROM: Johannes Endres, Chair
CHASS Executive Committee

RE: Systemwide Review Report Review: Research Grant Program Office - Current State
Assessment Report

The CHASS Executive Committee discussed the Systemwide Review Report Review: Research Grant Program Office - Current State Assessment Report at the regular meeting on May 29, 2019. The committee applauds the hard work and flexibility of the people who manage grants despite the lack of staffing and approves of their desire for further transparency and integration into the President's Office. The committee has no objections to or concerns with the report.

Johannes Endres, Chair

CHASS Executive Committee



May 22, 2019

To: Dylan Rodriguez, Chair
Riverside Division

From: Djurdjica Coss, Chair
Committee on Research

RE: Systemwide Review: Research Grant Program Office - Current State Assessment Report

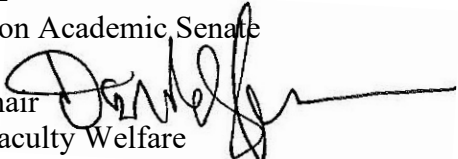
The Committee on Research reviewed the Research Grant Program Office current State Assessment and felt that the information provided was too broad to provide meaningful feedback.



COMMITTEE ON FACULTY WELFARE

May 28, 2019

To: Dylan Rodriguez
Riverside Division Academic Senate

From: Daniel Jeske, Chair 
Committee on Faculty Welfare

Re: Report Review: Research Grant Program Office - Current State
Assessment Report

The Committee on Faculty Welfare (CFW) met on May 21, 2019 to discuss the review report of the Research Grants Program Office (RGPO). Per the cover letter of that report by Provost Michael T. Brown:

... this assessment was at least partially initiated to help determine the most appropriate administrative home for RGPO. I discussed this topic with the Chancellors and Executive Vice Chancellors/Provosts from all then UC campuses, and my team collected perspectives from stakeholders across the UC system and the State. It is clear to me from these conversations that RGPO, and a central resource for the UC system and the State of California, should be connected and operated by the UC office of the President.

The UCR CFW agrees with that conclusion; if the duties of the RGPO were distributed to the ten campuses, there would be a huge amount of duplication of effort.



PLANNING & BUDGET

May 28, 2019

To: Dylan Rodriguez, Chair
Riverside Division

From: Katherine Kinney, Chair *Katherine Kinney*
Committee on Planning and Budget

Re: [Systemwide Review] Report Review: Research Grant Program Office - Current
State Assessment Report

The committee on Planning & Budget (P&B) discussed the Research Grant Program Office report at their May 28, 2019 meeting. P&B supports the finding of the report that the Research Grant Program Office should remain in the Office of the President to ensure equitable and impartial distribution of funds. P&B also notes that staffing remains a challenge and the report offers no clear resolution.



ACADEMIC SENATE
Santa Barbara Division
1233 Girvetz Hall
Santa Barbara, CA 93106-3050

(805) 893-4511
<http://www.senate.ucsb.edu>
Henning Bohn, Chair

July 1, 2019

To: Robert May, Chair
Academic Council

From: Henning Bohn, Chair
Santa Barbara Division

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Henning Bohn".

Re: Research Grants Program Office (RGPO) - Current State Assessment Report

The Santa Barbara Division delegated its Committee on Research Policy and Procedures (CRPP) to review and comment on the Research Grants Program Office Assessment Report. The Committee shared the following observations.

The assessment report clearly indicates that a reorganization of RGPO is needed in order for the unit to operate efficiently. The current structure seems to have too much redundancy in managing its programs. The proposed organization structure (page 139-140) appears to be logical and makes sense, since similar functions are going to be combined into Budget & Award Management and Program Evaluation teams. Some additional comments:

Senate Oversight

Currently only the Lab Fee and MRPI programs are under oversight of the Academic Senate (specifically UCORP). There did not appear to be any plans for additional senate oversight, specifically in "Oversight Committee" section on page 145.

MRU Issues

A few years ago, UCORP revised the MRU section of the Compendium to incorporate MRPI (and possibly Lab Fee) funding models. With the other programs, it is not clear whether and how MRU policies defined in the Compendium are still applicable and/or need be revised again. At the core of the issues are the policy to start, review, and sunset a research entity (MRU/ORU). The proposed plan isn't very detailed concerning review and evaluation. Clearly the Academic Senate (UCORP) should be able to provide help in the details for review and evaluation.

Balancing Funding Levels and Promoting Research Integration

The MRPI program should be a priority for increased funds, since it has a very broad scope, promotes integration of research across the UC, and promotes innovation (relatively short life, recycling funds to new initiatives as opposed to the other programs). Currently, out of the \$118 million the RGPO awards, the MRPI is merely a bit over \$8M.

The Lab Fees program is reasonable but is focused on very specific topics of interest to the National Labs, which limits the scope of most proposals.

CRPP also recommends more transparency in the process of reviewing and selecting MRPIs. Currently PIs are unaware of their review team's composition and they receive no direct feedback; thus, they struggle to improve their proposals in a meaningful way.

Faculty Visitors

The proposal describes a Committee of Visitors to advise RGPO leadership, provide feedback, and review Grant Structure. RGPO could potentially go one step further to have some faculty visitors serve as program officers/managers for a 2-3 year term. Given the availability of expertise within the UC system, it is possible and should be easier to have faculty serve temporarily on the Grants Team to provide the needed expertise and make decisions (rather than just giving advice). Since it isn't very difficult to travel to Oakland, it might be possible for a faculty visitor to serve for only a part of each year. Faculty visitors should not replace all program officers but such a program would reduce management cost.



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9500 GILMAN DRIVE
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June 17, 2019

Professor Robert May
Chair, Academic Senate
University of California
1111 Franklin Street, 12th Floor
Oakland, CA 94607

Re: Research Grants Program Office (RGPO) Review

Dear Professor May:

The Research Grants Program Office report was circulated to standing Senate committees for review, and responses were received by the Divisional Committee on Research (COR), and discussed at the Divisional Senate Council meeting on June 10, 2019. Senate Council endorsed COR's letter which is attached and represents the Divisional view.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Robert Horwitz".

Robert Horwitz, Chair
Academic Senate, San Diego Division

Enclosure

cc: Maripat Corr, Vice Chair, San Diego Divisional Academic Senate
Ray Rodriguez, Director, San Diego Divisional Academic Senate

May 23, 2019

ROBERT HORWITZ, Chair
Academic Senate, San Diego Division

SUBJECT: UC Research Grants Program (RGPO) Review

The Committee on Research (COR) discussed the UC Research Grants Program (RGPO) Review at its May 20, 2019 meeting. The committee did not formally vote to on the report due to significant concerns about the report itself. The concerns are summarized below in a point-by-point manner.

- (1) The committee felt that transparency is extremely important. For the current and subsequent fiscal years, our committee would like to see the aggregate funding information provided in an Excel table so that funding streams are easy to see. In its current form, it is difficult to determine what funds are a “pass through” and what portion of funds are retained for overhead.
- (2) Detailed information on fund sources is missing. Involvement of the UC-wide and divisional Committees on Planning and Budget would be advisable.
- (3) The report benchmarks staff requirements and duties to external agencies, e.g. NSF, NIH, American Heart Association, CIRM, etc. (Figures 6 & 7 of the report). However, it does not provide benchmarks for expenditures and overhead at comparable agencies. If faculty are to evaluate the success of the RGPO, comparison to other agencies in this respect is important.
- (4) What are the priorities of RGPO when developing new “funding streams?”
- (5) If numerous small foundations and state agencies shift grant management to RGPO to provide funding streams, how will this reduce the administrative burden to RGPO? This would seem counterintuitive as there seem to be fixed administrative burdens for each grant mechanism, but when sufficient funding is present, those fixed costs become negligible with scale.
- (6) It is not clear if RGPO administers self-supporting programs (SSP), and if so, which streams are present at each campus? The report should specify if these are included or not.

The committee recognizes the value of the office, the need for flexibility in staffing and structure and in grants management, but priorities of the office with respect to growth of smaller programs vs. larger ones that have driven the administrative burden currently felt is curious.

We seek answers to the above queries before being able to render a decision on the report. Thank you for the opportunity to review and provide feedback on the review.

Sincerely yours,
Adam Engler, Chair
Committee on Research

cc: M. Corr
A. Kehler
R. Rodriguez
A. Montgomery



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SANTA CRUZ DIVISION
125 CLARK KERR HALL
(831) 459 - 2086

June 27, 2019

Michael T. Brown, Ph.D., Provost and Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs
University of California Office of the President

Re: Research Grants Program Office (RGPO) Review

Dear Provost Brown:

The Santa Cruz Division of the Academic Senate has completed its review of the Research Grants Program Office (RGPO) Current State Assessment Report submitted for review on April 8, 2019, and the Committees on Research (COR) and Planning and Budget (CPB) chose to comment. Both committees agreed with the recommendation that the RGPO remain housed within UCOP, and their specific comments were generally positive. Given the different nature of each committee's observations and specific suggestions, I am enclosing both letters for your consideration.

On behalf of the Santa Cruz Division, I thank you for the opportunity to comment on this assessment of the RGPO and hope that the content of these responses is helpful.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Kimberly Lau".

Kimberly Lau, Chair
Academic Senate, Santa Cruz Division

Enc: COR Re: RGPO Assessment
CPB Re: RGPO Assessment

Cc: Jarmila Pittermann, Chair, Committee on Research
Bruce Schumm, Chair, Committee on Planning and Budget

June 13, 2019

Kimberly Lau, Chair
Academic Senate, Santa Cruz Division

Re: Systemwide Review of the Research Grants Program Office

Dear Chair Lau,

During its meeting of May 21, 2019, the Committee on Research (COR) discussed the Current State Assessment Report of the Research Grants Program Office (RGPO).

By way of introduction, the RGPO is unique among higher institutions as it bridges the gap between state-funded initiatives and the UC campuses that perform the research. RGPO disburses over \$110 million in annual grant payments, which support approximately 500 awards at the University of California. These grants seek to advance research that is important to California, that is broadly relevant around the globe, that enhances and promotes partnerships and that supports the research endeavours of young scientists at all stages of their careers. The RGPO is vital to the University of California's research economy.

The RGPO's stated mission is to prioritize research that addresses the most critical needs of California. Tables 1 and 2 of the report (pp. 8-9) indicate that over 80% of RGPO's funded research initiatives support health-related research programs, with the balance going to the Lab Fees program and MRPIs. COR expressed strong support for these research investments, which address critical health issues and fund some of the most innovative research in the world. However, the committee felt that the RGPO should diversify its research portfolio such that all UC campuses can benefit, not just those with strong medical programs. The committee also suggested that RGPO should firmly support other research initiatives such as those related to climate change and sustainability. Our overall suggestion is to make the RGPO more inclusive and more interdisciplinary, thereby expanding access to research opportunities beyond STEM fields. The diversity of research opportunities at RGPO should more closely align with the diversity of students and PIs at the University of California, and indeed the demographics of our state.

In concurrence with the RGPO staff, COR saw no practical benefit of moving RGPO away from the UCOP offices.

COR appreciates the opportunity to review the RGPO assessment report and looks forward to engaging with RGPO leaders and staff as the office evolves to better support UC's and California's research needs.

Sincerely,
IsI
Jarmila Pittermann, Chair
Committee on Research

Cc: Elizabeth Abrams, Chair, Committee on Affirmative Action and Diversity
Bruce Schumm, Chair, Committee on Planning and Budget
Lissa Caldwell, Chair Pro Tem, Graduate Council

June 18, 2019

Kimberly Lau, Chair
Academic Senate

RE: Systemwide Review: Research Grants Program Office

Dear Kim,

The Committee on Planning and Budget (CPB) appreciated the opportunity to review the Provost's report and recommendations on the Research Grants Program Office (RGPO). The committee found Provost Brown's review to be comprehensive and well considered, and appreciated its thoughtful recommendations and conclusions. Below we offer several comments and observations, and offer a few suggestions for consideration.

First and foremost, CPB is in strong agreement with the recommendation that the program continue to be housed at the Office of the President (UCOP). This seems to be an ideal use of the independent, unbiased position that UCOP maintains. It is truly unfortunate that a series of missteps, actual or perceived, have led to an erosion of confidence in UCOP by its benefactors and overseers, and that this loss of confidence has resulted in a set of constraints that run counter to the efficient exercising of this role. UCOP should continue to energetically address this gap of confidence, making sure to work with the faculty of the University so that they are themselves broadly inclined to support UCOP in burnishing its reputation. With that said, though, CPB sees no evidence that faith in the impartiality of UCOP and its operations has been compromised, which to the committee seems to qualify and promote UCOP as the natural home for the Office.

In general, the recommendations of the report represent a somewhat significant internal reorganization that hopes to address several concerns, including introducing career incentives that can be important for establishing a stable staff and introduce efficiencies. Before ratifying these ideas and moving forward, would it make sense to explicitly seek consultation with UC experts in organizational structure, presumably within one or more of our Business Schools, about this potentially innovative restructuring?

CPB supports well-scripted attempts to increase support for UC's research mission from funding sources outside of the institution. In carrying this out, it might make sense to coordinate closely with campus-based development groups. In fact, we wonder if development work for the Office might be advantaged and made more efficient if the central fundraising capability at UCOP were enhanced. In addition to multi-campus research funding, there are a number of other activities with a broad footprint within the UC system that might be joined under a single development group at UCOP, including the UCCS and HBCU initiatives, as well as developing activities within the area of faculty equity and inclusion.

While the development of grant teams that administer a range of RGPO programs in a broad area seems well-reasoned, it's a little difficult to assess whether this idea would work well "on the ground" if implemented. Before forming such teams, it might pay to consult with existing staff about what they see to be the pros and cons of doing so, perhaps with an initial "straw" model in mind.

Extending services to external entities is an interesting idea that might leverage growing expertise in grant evaluation and management to mutual advantage and make RGPO a visible center both within and outside of the UC system for the administration of grant initiatives that lie outside of large governmental or foundation auspice. Possibly, this might build an efficiency into the system that would allow the fixed cost

of grant administration to be lowered, allowing in turn a lower threshold of activity for any given UCRI initiative.

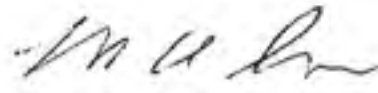
Another interesting idea is the formation of an overall oversight committee (“committee of visitors”) to advise on overall procedure and policy, but not on any disciplinary direction (the individual program or program area overseers, with their specific expertise, would remain responsible for this latter function). This might be fleshed out just a bit more; for example, who might be expected to sit on such a committee? A number of new staff roles are envisioned, including the development of a new Program Evaluation Team. To the extent that these require the use of additional, rather than re-allocated, resources, we encourage the program to think carefully about the costs versus the benefits of these new functions, in order to avoid unnecessarily increasing UCOP and putting administrative cost limits at risk.

The report recommends the restoration of MRPI (Multi Campus Research Programs and Initiatives) funding, and notes that this is already recommended by a number of campus stakeholders. However, CPB wonders if these recommendations were formed in the context of a full consideration of the UCOP budget, and would want to understand what proposed cuts would be made to other UCOP programs in order to realize this recommendation.

The idea of moving to full F&A rate recovery principle seems sound – we don’t want to place the campuses in the position of having to effectively provide “matching funds” for the costs of administering grants for individual PIs. However, for UCRI programs, this rate should probably be reduced by the amount of external funding that is currently captured by UCOP, since presumably UCOP won’t tax itself on the disbursement of these funds.

All in all, though, we would like to compliment Provost Brown on an excellent and thoughtful report, with its thorough analysis and its number of creative proposals. We hope that these comments are found to be of help in refining those proposals and developing the ensuing action plan.

Sincerely,



Bruce Schumm, Chair
Committee on Planning and Budget

cc: CAAD Chair Abrams
COR Chair Pittermann

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David Teitel, MD, Chair
Sharmila Majumdar, PhD, Vice Chair
Vineeta Singh, MD, Secretary
Jae Woo Lee, MD, Parliamentarian

July 17, 2019

Robert C. May, PhD
Chair, Academic Council
Systemwide Academic Senate
University of California Office of the President
1111 Franklin St., 12th Floor
Oakland, CA 94607-5200

Re: Research Grants Program Office Current State Assessment Report

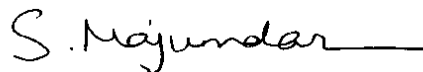
Dear Robert:

UCSF's Committee on Research (COR) endorsed the Research Grants Program Office (RGPO) Current State Assessment Report, and expressly supported the recommendations concerning the mission, funding, and administrative home of the RGPO. In particular, we emphasize the following points:

- Expanding the scope of the RGPO to grant-making for non-research related activities could permit UC to pursue opportunities that support its fundamental purpose of teaching, research, and public service.
- In the face of decreasing tax revenue and state support, the RGPO should develop and maintain relationships with a diverse array of funding partners including individual donors and private foundations.
- Keeping UCOP as the administrative home for RGPO promotes fairness and efficiency, and spinning off non-competitive programs to campuses receiving the funds allows capacity building within RGPO-UCOP.

The detailed and comprehensive assessment report attests to the critically important role UC plays in addressing the most pressing needs of California, and the proposed future-state is a measured and reasonable vision for the ongoing success of RGPO.

Sincerely,



Sharmila Majumdar, PhD, 2018-19 Vice Chair
UCSF Academic Senate

Encl. (1)

Cc: UCSF COR Chair Lea Grinberg, MD, PhD

Committee on Research
Lea Grinberg, MD, PhD, Chair

July 1, 2019

Dear David,

After reviewing the Research Grants Program Office (RGPO) Current State Assessment Report, I would like to highlight some of its findings and recommendations.

Mission

The mission of RGPO is currently to fund “research to address the most critical needs of California.” In response some staff and stakeholder comments that “a better definition makes [RGPO] more attractive for additional opportunities,” the proposal would expand the scope of the RGPO to “include other forms of grant-making for non-research related activities.”

Funding

Diminished funding is one of the risks facing RGPO. For example:

- “The Breast Cancer Program funding from the California Breast Cancer Act (CBCA), which assesses a nominal tax on cigarette sales, is projected to fall.”
- “The *HIV/AIDS Program*’s budget allocation is currently held flat in nominal terms, and its grantmaking ability will similarly continue declining in real terms because of inflation.”

The future-state RGPO would “solicit funds from and funding partnerships with State and federal agencies, individual donors, and private foundations that raise money for research or other grants.”

Administrative Home

Most stakeholders agreed the RGPO should stay within the UC Office of the President. However, 39% of staff survey respondents suggested “that **non-competitive programs should be managed directly by the campus or campuses receiving the funds.**”

The proposal states that “UC should establish clear criteria to help determine when *RGPO* should receive State funds to distribute for grants and when the funds should be allocated directly to a campus. These criteria should be:

- **RGPO Appropriations:** UC or the State of California will direct funding to *RGPO* for distribution if ANY of the following are true: (1) the funding could be awarded to any campus or qualified researcher; (2) the exact scope of research is not pre-determined; or (3) the awarding of funding will require independent peer review of applications or proposals.
- **Campus Appropriations:** UC or the State of California will direct funding to a campus for distribution if ALL of the following are true: (1) the funding is intended for only one campus or researcher; (2) the scope of research is clearly articulated; and (3) the awarding of funding does not require independent peer review of applications or proposals.”

COR endorses the assessment report and believes these particular recommendations can strengthen the RGPO and support more research across UC.

Sincerely,



Lea T. Grinberg, MD, PhD
Chair, Committee on Research



UNIVERSITY COMMITTEE ON RESEARCH POLICY (UCORP)
Andrew Baird, Chair
Email: anbaird@ucsd.edu

University of California
Academic Senate
1111 Franklin Street, 12th Fl.
Oakland, California 94607

July 17, 2019

ROBERT MAY
CHAIR, ACADEMIC COUNCIL

RE: Research Grants Program Office (RGPO) Review

Dear Robert,

UCORP members discussed the “Research Grants Program Office (RGPO) Current Assessment Approach Report” at our June 10, 2019 meeting. I would like to take this opportunity to let you know our preliminary thoughts regarding this important document.

UCORP members were delighted to learn that RGPO has gone forward with this timely exercise in self-reflection. We fully support the intent to assess the current state of RGPO and more importantly, to imagine what the future could hold. We view this process as a critical step towards keeping RGPO a vibrant and relevant resource for the research needs of all UC faculty systemwide.

UCORP is in full agreement with the recommendation that the program continue to be housed within the Office of the President, as the central nature of UCOP can help ensure the program’s impartiality. We are concerned, however, with the proposal to extend the definition of the grants mandate outside of the realm of “research” to encompass other non-research activities (p135). We believe that this change would represent significant “mission drift” and that the Assessment report does not appreciate that the skills of administering one program (from peer review through to implementation through to evaluation of performance) do not easily translate one to the other. On the other hand, UCORP would encourage RGPO to expand mechanisms for complementary funding in and outside of the biological sciences (the bulk of its current portfolio) for opportunities in the humanities, physical sciences and informatics. Flexibility would allow responsiveness to emergent national challenges like that presented by climate change today and HIV-AIDS in the 1980s.

UCORP would like to highlight the fact that we were disappointed that there was little consultation with one area of RGPO’s constituency -- that is the funded investigators. There was seemingly also no consultation with past or present members of UCORP by the consultants who prepared this report. As you know, “research and research policy” are at the

core of UCORP’s overall mission, the interest of its members, and part of the committee’s collective expertise. Comments, concerns, and recommendations from the “user” community who have successfully competed for grants could have given significant insight. Like the funding agencies, these faculty are ultimate stakeholders. While we applaud the robust consultation with Vice Chancellors for Research, Directors of Contracts and Administration, Directors of Sponsored Projects (e.g. Table 46) and chairs of funding review committees (e.g. Table 44), we note that no opinions were solicited from Principal Investigators of extant UCOP funded programs like the Multi Campus Research Units (e.g. ITS), the California Institutes (e.g. CITRIS and QB3) or mandated research programs (e.g. the California Cancer Coordinating Committee). This seems to be a weakness in the current assessment that is not offset by the list of 111 documents analyzed in its support.

Along with enthusiastic support for the Assessment’s recommendations for reorganizing staffing, teams, and focus to become more flexible, more accountable and more effective, UCORP also requests that attention be given to four specific areas: (1) accountability of funding decisions, (2) critical assessment of funded research for performance, (3) ability to modernize funding programs, and (4) capacity to adapt programs to emerging needs. The proposed creation of “program evaluation teams” will be critical, if they are empowered and diverse. We also note that there is a need to separate the process of research review from the decisions of research funding, from research administration during the funding period and from post-award research assessments. This issue was superficially addressed in some areas of the report, for example in developing a “committee of visitors” that is modeled on the oversight structure used by the National Science Foundation. UCORP would like to see more details about this proposed accountability and governance structure.

UCORP appreciates the opportunity to provide feedback on the report. UCORP members look forward to continued regular interaction with RGPO staff on this important process.

Sincerely,



Andrew Baird
Chair, University Committee on Research Policy

cc: Kum-Kum Bhavnani, Academic Council Vice Chair
Hilary Baxter, Academic Senate Director
UCORP members



UNIVERSITY COMMITTEE ON PLANNING AND BUDGET (UCPB)
James Steintrager, Chair
jsteintr@uci.edu

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July 1, 2019

**ROBERT MAY, CHAIR
ACADEMIC COUNCIL**

RE: Research Grants Program Office (RGPO) Current State Assessment Report

Dear Robert,

The University Committee on Planning and Budget (UCPB) appreciated the opportunity to review the Provost's report and recommendations on the Research Grants Program Office (RGPO). The committee found Provost Brown's review to be comprehensive and well considered, and appreciated its thoughtful recommendations and conclusions. Below we offer several comments and observations, and offer a few suggestions for consideration.

First and foremost, UCPB is in strong agreement with the recommendation that the program continue to be housed at the Office of the President (UCOP). This seems to be an ideal use of the independent, unbiased position that UCOP maintains. It is truly unfortunate that a series of missteps, actual or perceived, have led to an erosion of confidence in UCOP by its benefactors and overseers, and that this loss of confidence has resulted in a set of constraints that run counter to the efficient exercising of this role. UCOP should continue to energetically address this gap of confidence, making sure to work with the faculty of the University so that they are themselves broadly inclined to support UCOP in burnishing its reputation. With that said, though, UCPB sees no evidence that faith in the impartiality of UCOP and its operations has been compromised, which to the committee seems to qualify and promote UCOP as the natural home for the Office.

In general, the recommendations of the report represent a somewhat significant internal reorganization that hopes to address several concerns, including introducing career incentives that can be important for establishing a stable staff, and introducing efficiencies. Before ratifying these ideas and moving forward, would it make sense to explicitly seek consultation with UC experts in organizational structure, presumably within one or more of our Business Schools, about this potentially innovative restructuring?

UCPB supports well-scripted attempts to increase support for UC's research mission from funding sources outside of the institution. In carrying this out, it might make sense to coordinate closely with campus-based development groups. In fact, we wonder if development work for the Office might be advantaged and made more efficient if the central fundraising capability at UCOP were enhanced. In addition to multi-campus research funding, there are a number of other activities with

a broad footprint within the UC system that might be joined under a single development group at UCOP, including the UCCS and HBCU initiatives, as well as developing activities within the area of faculty equity and inclusion.

While the development of grant teams that administer a range of RPGO programs in a broad area seems well-reasoned, it is a little difficult to assess whether this idea would work well “on the ground” if implemented. Before forming such teams, it might pay to consult with existing staff about what they see to be the pros and cons of doing so, perhaps with an initial “straw” model in mind.

Extending services to external entities is an interesting idea that might leverage growing expertise in grant evaluation and management to mutual advantage and make RPGO a visible center both within and outside of the UC system for the administration of grant initiatives that lie outside of large governmental or foundation auspice. Possibly, this might build an efficiency into the system that would allow the fixed cost of grant administration to be lowered, allowing in turn a lower threshold of activity for any given UCRI initiative.

Another interesting idea is the formation of an overall oversight committee (“committee of visitors”) to advise on overall procedure and policy, but not on any disciplinary direction (the individual program or program area overseers, with their specific expertise, would remain responsible for this latter function). This might be fleshed out just a bit more; for example, who might be expected to sit on such a committee?

A number of new staff roles are envisioned, including the development of a new Program Evaluation Team. To the extent that these require the use of additional, rather than re-allocated, resources, we encourage the program to think carefully about the costs versus the benefits of these new functions, in order to avoid unnecessarily increasing UCOP and putting administrative cost limits at risk.

The report recommends the restoration of MRPI (Multicampus Research Programs and Initiatives) funding, and notes that this is already recommended by a number of campus stakeholders. However, UCPB wonders if these recommendations were formed in the context of a full consideration of the UCOP budget, and would want to understand what proposed cuts would be made to other UCOP programs in order to realize this recommendation.

Further, UCPB also thought that the review of the disposition of the RGPO would be a good time to assess the current state of Multicampus Research Units (MRUs). These units fit under the umbrella of centrally administered research and appear relevant to the RGPO’s charge. The current slate of MRUs is disparate in nature and history. To take an example of a MRU recently reviewed by the Academic Senate, the University of California Humanities Research Institute (UCHRI), created to serve the research needs of faculty in the humanities and humanistic social sciences across the system, was not at the outset an MRU at all and only recently found itself needing to compete for MRPI funding. It was far from clear to several committee members that the current funding model and MRU status are well-suited to UCHRI, and we suspect that the MRU model itself should be reconsidered.

The idea of moving to full F&A rate recovery principle seems sound – we don’t want to place the campuses in the position of having to effectively provide “matching funds” for the costs of administering grants for individual PIs. However, for UCRI programs, this rate should probably be

reduced by the amount of external funding that is currently captured by UCOP, since presumably UCOP won't tax itself on the disbursement of these funds.

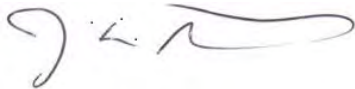
Finally, we offer one comment relating to the grant reviewing and selection procedure. While the Office is to be commended for its engagement of best practices from the largest governmental funding agencies in the nation, one member of UCPB expressed concern about the ability of the Office to assess proposals objectively when large, successful Principle Investigators are well-known throughout the system. This member pointed out that in such cases, it often the practice to review such grants in a "blind" fashion, for which both the identity of the Principle Investigator and their institution is kept from the reviewers. This member cited practices within the Department of Defense, and provided the website below for further details. UCPB recommends that the Office consider whether this can be mirrored in its own procedures, and that it be adopted if so.

https://cdmrp.army.mil/funding/pa/09prorphda_instruct.pdf

All in all, though, we would like to compliment Provost Brown on an excellent and thoughtful report, with its thorough analysis and its number of creative proposals. We hope that these comments are found to be of help in refining those proposals and developing the ensuing action plan.

Thank you for your consideration,

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'J. Steintrager', written in a cursive style.

James Steintrager, Chair
UCPB

Encl.

cc: UCPB
Executive Director Baxter



ACADEMIC COUNCIL SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON LAB ISSUES (ACSCOLI)
Michael Todd, Chair
Email: mdtodd@eng.ucsd.edu

University of California
Academic Senate
1111 Franklin Street, 12th Fl.
Oakland, California 94607

June 17, 2019

ROBERT MAY
CHAIR, ACADEMIC COUNCIL

RE: Research Grants Program Office (RGPO) Current State Assessment Report

Dear Robert,

I am writing on behalf of ACSCOLI in response to Provost and Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs Michael Brown's request for Academic Senate comment on the Research Grants Program Office (RGPO) review and future recommendations/proposal. ACSCOLI discussed the document at its June 3, 2019, meeting.

ACSCOLI's area of interest as it pertains to the document is the "Laboratory Fees Research Program" program (LFRP), which reinvests funds from the University of California's Department of Energy laboratory management fees into competitive collaborative Campus/Laboratory research interactions. ACSCOLI notes that the future recommendations/proposal portion of the document is unclear with regard to the LFRP. ACSCOLI speculates that this might be intentional to create a flexible management structure in the reorganized RGPO. However, ACSCOLI maintains that any proposed specific or concrete changes in the management and execution of the LFRP – such as the suggestion to place it under the new "Interdisciplinary Grants Team" (pg. 0139 of the document) – include close consultation with ACSCOLI.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide feedback on the RGPO assessment.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Michael Todd".

Michael Todd
Chair, Academic Council Special Committee on Laboratory Issues

cc: Kum-Kum Bhavnani, Academic Council Vice Chair
Hilary Baxter, Academic Senate Director
ACSCOLI members