

MINUTES
Committee on Research
January 14, 2014

Present: Judith Habicht Mauche (chair), Pranav Anand, Sharon Daniel, Yat Li, Jason Nielsen, Paul Roth, Matt Wagers, Matt Robinson (Committee Analyst)

Absent with Notice: Steve Whittaker, Fitnat Yildiz

Committee Business and Announcements

The minutes from the November 19, 2013 and December 3, 2013 meetings were approved as written.

Chair Habicht Mauche informed the committee that Jim Schoonover, environmental health and safety adviser for the Physical and Biological Sciences Division, has reached out to COR regarding the need to educate UCSC faculty on issues of personal liability relating to laboratory and research safety. The committee discussed various ways the COR could aid in this manner, and decided that co-sponsoring a forum or session on the issue would not be the best way to disseminate the pertinent information.

FRG/SRG Review Preparation

The committee reviewed the mechanics of the new COR grant application website and prepared for the review period. Grant applications for both programs are due on Tuesday, January 21, 2014.

Composite Benefit Rate Post-consultation Discussion

The committee met with Troy Lawson, UCSC Director of Costing and Data Management on December 3, 2013 to discuss the proposal to create composite benefit rates (CBRs) for campus. The committee discussed this consultation and possible follow-up actions for COR. Members expressed uncertainty about the planned fluctuation of the CBRs, as Director Lawson stated that the rates may change on a two-year basis. Though some forecasting was provided during the consultation, the committee would like to see a more thorough investigation into the most accurate CBRs, using financial data more recent than FY2011.

COR's major concern with the CBR proposal is the new charge it poses on faculty summer salary paid through grants. Faculty members receive nine months of salary, and health benefits costs for the unpaid summer months are paid out during these nine months. The CBR proposal would charge faculty summer salary an additional amount for these benefits. Also, faculty members do not accrue retirement credit for summer work at the university, so the CBR proposal to also charge retirement to grant funds strikes COR as unfounded. The committee understands the philosophical push for this new model, one that moves part of the cost of benefits and retirement off of the general fund and onto federally funded grants. COR contends, though, that this new source of money will come at the expense of research getting done on campus. The new summer salary benefit rates will make UCSC proposals less competitive and discourage faculty from conducting research during the summer. The proposal presents faculty with an

unfortunate choice of supporting themselves with summer salary or supporting a graduate student researcher.

The meeting adjourned at 4:00 pm