COMMITTEE ON RESEARCH
Annual Report 2018-19

To: Academic Senate, Santa Cruz Division

The Committee on Research (COR) is charged with reviewing campus and system-wide policies and issues related to UCSC's research mission. The committee also advises and collaborates with the Office of Research to promote faculty research. COR directly supports faculty researchers by awarding Faculty Research Grants (FRG), Special Research Grants (SRG), New Faculty Research Grants (NFRG), Scholarly Meeting Travel (SMT) and Inter Campus Travel (ICT) grants, and works to develop policy and strategy that assist with broad research goals, like increasing multi-principal investigator initiatives.

I.
Summary

In 2018–19, the Committee on Research reviewed a range of proposed policies and initiatives created at the campus and UC wide levels. We consulted with Vice Chancellor for Research (VCR) Scott Brandt on long-term goals of supporting or creating new vibrant research communities across the campus that can produce high-quality research and potentially collaborate. We also discussed issues around improving experiences of submissions of proposals for extramural funding to support the research and our students.

To increase the amount of available funding for COR grants, this year COR worked with Associate Chancellor Ashish Sahni to provide additional funding for COR grants. To this end, COR put an extra effort to facilitate the Chancellor's Office to support new faculty and assistant professors, while not interfering with COR review process. The overall effort was worthwhile allowing COR to increase the total amount of COR funding and award 106 grants (80% of submitted proposals) distributed as 14 New Faculty Research Grants, 68 Faculty Research Grants (FRG), and 24 Special Research Grants (SRG), with the total amount of $286,066.

Throughout the academic year, COR discussed shaping a survey that would give faculty the opportunity to provide feedback to COR and the Office of Research (OR) on important issues such as perceived quality of service and support from the Office of Sponsored Project (OSP) during proposal preparation and submission, satisfaction with proposal handling, as well as campus support for research. Given the departure of the Campus Provost/Executive Vice Chancellor Marlene Tromp, and the decision of Herbie Lee, Vice Chancellor of Academic Affairs (VPAA), to establish an SAP-related research committee, COR and OR have put this project on hold unless the committee is advised otherwise by VPAA Lee or Senate Executive Committee (SEC) in the upcoming academic year.

There is agreement between COR and VCR Scott Brandt that faculty support for research should be increased and our bi-weekly discussions centered on how this could be achieved. Several ideas, such as providing all faculty access to an annual $1500 stipend, were somewhat contentious but deemed to have merit. The committee lamented that a disproportionate amount of time is currently spent on preparing and reviewing proposals for a modest sum of money, and suggested that rather

than apply for FRG grants, needy faculty could simply request funds. This may actually be sustainable if faculty with sufficient support voluntarily opt out. Again, COR and VCR Brandt warmed to this idea but the means by which to implement it remained unclear. COR would do well to request feedback from all faculty on this issue, not just the Senate Executive Committee. It was decided that the topic will be revisited in Fall 2019.

COR also pondered the lack of support for faculty computing needs. Conversations with Academic Council Chair Robert May and Vice Chair Kum Kum Bhavnani confirmed that this is a gaping hole in faculty support at UCSC relative to other campuses in the UC system. COR is delighted to be working with Vice Chancellor for IT Van Williams on bridging this gap and supports him in his endeavours to facilitate campus computing at all scales for faculty, students and staff.

One final aspect of COR's proactive agenda was to improve the FRG and SRG online portals for faculty submitting the grants, as well as the COR members adjudicating them. Along with analyst Chad Silva, COR worked to align the proposal requirements and expectations (PI submission) with the proposal evaluation (COR). Proposal content and style differ considerably among the disciplines and without a standard, clearly articulated set of proposal guidelines as well as matching set of criteria by which to decide whether or not the proposal is meritorious, it is difficult to consistently evaluate proposal quality. We hope our work facilitates the submission and peer review process in Winter 2020.

Regarding COR's work, it is worth mentioning that besides all other activities, COR is responsible for the evaluation of proposals for faculty research grant programs (FRG, SRG, NFRG). Therefore, the committee spent a considerable time in the Fall and Winter quarters evaluating the 132 submitted proposals. Here below is an overview of COR's work in 2018–19.

II.
Strategic Consultations with the Office of Research

A.   Overview
The committee continued to extend a standing invitation to Vice Chancellor for Research (VCR) Scott Brandt to attend relevant COR meetings and consult on issues of mutual concern regarding research policy and culture on campus. Those consultations were also the main vehicle through which COR members could learn about the administrative structure and responsibilities of the Office of Research units, as well as brainstorm potential directions which could improve institutional support for research and creative activities.

As part of the consultations, this year Director of the Office of Sponsored Projects (OSP) Kate Aja helped COR to update COR grant award letters to be compliant with the most recent campus policies. This helped COR to focus its grant review work only on the quality of the proposed research and creative activities. Later in the academic year, Director Aja provided COR a brief overview of the OSP, which has delegated authority to submit proposals and accept awards on behalf of the Board of Regents. Director Aja provided information about the modes of communication with faculty and the OSP operation, the number of the OSP personnel and grants they process to illustrate that the OSP is short-

staffed for the scale of its operation. Finally, during that consultation COR also learned about regulatory challenges that the OSP was dealing with and Director Aja highlighted the openness to informal feedback on how to improve the OSP processes.

COR had three consultations with VCIT Van Williams to discuss support for faculty computing needs, such as scheduled computer replacement, software licensing as well as the implementation of increased server storage and advanced computing clusters.

COR consulted with Susan Gillman, the Chair of the Committee for Development (CDF) and Fundraising to learn more about this committee, its mission and to consider ways in which COR and CDF could work together to leverage our respective strengths. Over the years, the committees have worked separately despite sharing the common goal of increasing resources for research, and other scholarly activities. Chair Gillman suggested that highlighting faculty research accomplishments in Alumni publications may be the first step to help bridge this gap.

The Committee met with Bill Bowman, Chair of the Committee on Emeriti Relations to discuss adjudication of FRG and SRG proposals by Emeriti faculty. Chair Pittermann expressed concern that despite their best efforts in preparing grant applications, even highly productive Emeriti faculty will always rank below junior or established faculty for COR funds, and that this represents a form of discrimination. However, Chair Bowman did not see an urgent need to create a separate pool of COR funds for active retired faculty.

Last but not least, the consultation with the OR enabled VCR Brandt to present insights into:

- *White Paper on Research Development Unit*
  The committee next reviewed an outline for a white paper on the need for a Research Development unit within OR. The white paper presents a concrete mission and plan for operations and development of staff and support capacity at OR, and will be a useful guide as the office develops over the next few years.

- *Draft Late Proposal Policy*
  The Office of Research has proposed to amend their policy on the timeline for submitting grant proposals to the Office of Sponsored Projects (OSP). Specifically, the policy outlines how late proposals will be dealt with. A stated goal is to bring campus practice in line with other R1 schools across the country.

III.
Research Grants

A.   **Funding Overview**
The committee has two funding sources, the Education Fund and University Opportunity Fund. This year the COR Grant program was funded at $279, 608. Compared to $328, 099 for 2017–18 for a percent change of 8.5%. Due to glitches in the COR grant webpage the

program overspent by $6,458. The committee analyst worked with the Office of Information Technology update the site.

Each year, the committee solicits applications for its three research programs, New Faculty Research Grants (NFRG), Faculty Research Grants (FRG) and Special Research Grants (SRG). To increase the amount of available funding for COR research grants, COR Chair Pittermann discussed with Associate Chancellor Ashish Sahni a proposal that allowed the Chancellor's Office (CO) to provide additional funding of $50,000 for NFRGs. Towards this, COR put an extra effort to facilitate the Chancellor's Office priority to support new faculty and assistant professors, while not interfering with the review process.

This year there were 132 FRG, SRG and NFRG proposals, of which 80% were funded. For reference, last year the number of proposals was about the same 148 of which 72% were funded. Our approach followed the prior COR policy in funding the majority of FRGs, which tend to be for smaller amounts. Furthermore, as noted above, this year the CO provided additional funding for COR research grants and we consulted with the CO on spending their funding in alignment with their goal to support new and more junior faculty. In consultation with the CO, out of their provided funding ($50,000), the amount of $39,383 was used to augment New Faculty Research Grants (NFRG). Therefore, the total award budget for FRG and SRG grants was $288,716 and overall effort allowed to award 107 grants (72% of submitted proposal) distributed as 15 New Faculty Research Grants (NFRG), 68 Faculty Research Grants (FRG), and 24 Special Research Grants (SRG), with the total amount of $286,066.

COR encouraged faculty to submit a proposal for COR grant funds in 2018–19. A note about each type of COR grants and the list of spending are provided below.

New Faculty Research Grants (NFRGs): The NFRG program provides new faculty with access to funding in the current fiscal year. It has proved helpful to new faculty as they establish their research careers. Of the 15 NFRG requests, 14 were funded. The award amount increased from last year's $19,000 to $39,383 while the number of the NFRG applications increased from last year's 10 to 15. All NFRG proposals were reviewed by COR and, in consultation with the Chancellor's Office, the NFRG grants were fully funded by the office.

Faculty Research Grants (FRGs) and Special Research Grants (SRGs). The number of grant applications in this category was 83 which is 19 proposals down from 102 applications in 2017–18 as it can be inferred from the annual report for that year. However, this year COR was able to fund about 81% of the FRG proposals and approximately 48% of the submitted SRG proposals.

Travel Grant Budget ($123,930) is used for support of *Travel Grants.* Through these grants, the committee supports faculty travel to scholarly meetings and intercampus travel to research facilities, field stations, and sister UC campuses. Senate faculty may apply for the $700 (scholarly meetings) or $250 (inter-campus) travel grant, respectively.

Research Grant Program	Funded	Amount
New Faculty Research Grants (NFRG)	14	$53,551
Faculty Research Grants (FRG)	68	$105,124
Special Research Grants (SRG)	24	$127,391
Travel Grants	189	$123,930
Total		**$409,996**

B.   Amendments to COR Grant Guidelines
Over the past several years, faculty were dissuaded from purchasing computing equipment (desktops, laptops, back-up storage) with COR funds unless their reasons were particularly compelling. The members of COR, along with many informally polled faculty, feel that given the university's general lack of support for academic computing, this exception places a burden on our faculty and presents a considerable barrier to research.

To this end, the members of COR unanimously agreed that Section E of the COR Grant Guidelines should be modified thusly:

> *3. Computer-Related Expenses:* ~~*COR does not support general replacement of faculty computing equipment.*~~ *Computer equipment is an allowable expense provided that it is an essential component of the research project and is well justified in the application. Upgrades to basic computers, or specific programs that are essential for the applicant's research are an allowable expense. All inventorial equipment must be ordered through the PI's divisional business office (see the link above for university policy).*

All N/S/FRG proposals submitted to COR will still be evaluated on their intrinsic merit – COR will not fund simple computer replacement requests – but decisions regarding the level of funding will now take faculty computing needs into consideration.

COR hopes this shift in proposal policy will help our faculty in their academic endeavors and we look forward to adjudicating the 2019 - 20 submissions.

As well COR simplified the FRG application template to better reflect the modest funding level of this grant as compared to the SRG which is funded at a much higher level and thus requires more of the applicants. The FRG criteria was aligned more closely with the template used by reviewers to evaluate the grant proposals.

IV.
Reviews of Policy and Process

A.   **COR Fact Finding Analysis of Support for Faculty Across the System**
This year Chair Pittermann embarked on a fact-finding mission to determine the level of faculty research support across the UC system. A compilation of these data from 2016 was provided by UCORP analyst Joanne Miller. The document shows that support for faculty is uneven across the UC system, and lacks commonality. In other words, a comparative literature professor at one UC campus will receive substantially different research support than a faculty member in the same discipline at another UC campus. UCORP will revisit this issue in Fall 2019.

B.   **Other Committee Business**
The committee discussed and provided feedback on various issues related to the Academic Senate and research related proposals, including:
- Final Draft of the Strategic Academic Planning process
- Systemwide Review: Proposed Presidential Policy on Open Access for Theses and Dissertations
- Systemwide Review: Research Grants Program Office
- Systemwide Review: of proposed revisions to APM-230, Visiting Appointments
- Genomics Institute Organized Research Unit Proposal
- Proposed leadership of the Institute of Marine Sciences (IMS)
- Humanities FTE Transfer

C.   **Upcoming Agenda for 2019-20**
The committee will further explore the following topics in 2019–20:
- The 2017–18 COR survey analysis
- Follow-up of COR budget for 2018–19 and consultation on how to reverse the negative trend in the budget for support of COR grants
- Consultation with Associate Chancellor Ashish Sahni about the possibility of the Chancellor's Office funding towards COR research grants
- Continued discussions on how to improve support for faculty research and computing needs on our campus

Respectfully Submitted;

COMMITTEE ON RESEARCH

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