

COMMITTEE ON RESEARCH

Annual Report 2021-22

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) and travel grants (SMT/ICT), and works to develop policy and strategy that assist with broad research goals, like increasing multi-principal investigator initiatives.

I. Summary

The primary focus of the committee for the 2021-22 year was to discuss and implement a new COR Faculty Allowance (CFA) program which will begin its roll out in fall 2022. In addition, COR administered a campus-wide survey to assess the impact of the COVID pandemic on faculty productivity.

II. COR Faculty Allowance (CFA) program

Building on the work of last year's committee, COR proposed a new funding model for internal research support. Acknowledging the severe and disparate effects of the COVID pandemic on research activities and in light of the discrepancies between the research stipends faculty receive here compared to other UC campuses, COR concluded that a stipend of \$2,000 per senate faculty member for 3-5 years would be the most direct way to help meet the diverse needs of faculty restarting and repairing their research endeavors.

Thanks to a generous allocation by Campus Provost and Executive Vice Chancellor (CPEVC) Lori Kletzer, a new COR Faculty Allowance (CFA) has been created that will provide an allowance of \$2000 to all FTE Senate faculty who apply for it. COR expects this new funding model will reduce barriers for many of our faculty, address aspects of equity, and allow faculty to focus more time on research and other scholarly activities. COR has developed a streamlined application process in which faculty will indicate the requested amount (up to \$2,000) and check off which categories the funds are planned to be spent on (e.g. research equipment and materials, graduate student funding, conference travel, publishing fees, etc.). This information will provide COR with prospective data on how the new faculty allowance is being spent across the divisions. Similarly, future applications will require reporting back on how previous CFA funds were spent. COR will work with research analysts to ensure consistency across the campus regarding allowable expenses. The goal is for CFA funds to be flexibly spent toward any scholarly activities, much like startup funds are spent. By default, CFA funds have a two-year period in which they must be spent.

Although the new funding model does not maintain a separate funding source for the SMTP (Scholarly Meeting Travel Program), COR anticipates being able to fund SMTP from carry-over funds as well as the main fund supporting the CFA. Based on the first year of implementation, COR will determine whether there are enough left-over funds to support larger grants (e.g. \$10,000 - \$20,000 awards) in the second year and beyond.

III. COVID Impact Survey

In order to assess the impact of COVID on faculty research activities and give faculty a chance to voice their concerns, COR administered a campus-wide COVID impact survey distributed to all senate faculty. The survey included 20 questions asking faculty to reflect on how the pandemic has impacted their research, teaching, service, mentoring, and other activities. Preliminary results of the survey are described below.

Overall, 121 respondents completed the survey, representing faculty from across the divisions: 30% from Social Sciences, 24% from Physical & Biological Sciences, 23% from the Humanities, 12% from Baskin School of Engineering, and 11% from the Arts. Several questions asked faculty to quantify the pandemic’s impact and increased demands on various scholarly activities using a 5-point scale (from 1 = little to no impact/increased demands, to 5 = significant impact/increased demands). The mean and median responses are summarized in the table below:

	Mean	Median	# Respondents
Impact on data/information acquisition	3.8	4	119
Impact on interaction with colleagues	4.1	5	121
Impact on travel	4.6	5	120
Impact on publishing/performing/exhibiting	3.8	4	119
Increased demands on teaching	3.6	4	117
Increased demands on service	3.1	3	117
Significant setbacks for graduate trainees	3.6	4	111

Finally, the survey asked faculty to estimate the *financial* impact the pandemic had on their research activities. Responses were distributed as shown in the table below:

Financial impact	None	\$1K - \$5K	\$5K - \$10K	\$10K - \$20K	Over \$20K
% Responses	24%	8%	13%	14%	42%

Overall, the median reported impact was in the \$10K - \$20K range, and although it is not possible to quantify the precise average impact, it is clear that the pandemic has had considerable financial impact on most UCSC faculty’s research activities.

The survey also included some open-ended questions asking faculty to describe aspects of the pandemic impact that were not specifically covered by the questions, as well as to suggest steps the university could take to ameliorate the situation moving forward. Next year’s COR will analyze

these open-ended responses and include them as part of a comprehensive report.

IV. Research Grants

A. Funding Overview

The committee has two funding sources, the Education Fund and University Opportunity Fund. The annual budget for the COR grant program (FRG/NFRG) was allocated at \$196,805, plus a carry forward of \$49,488 and other budget adjustments of \$44,172 for a total of \$290,465. This year the COR SMT/ICT program was funded at \$125,483 with a carry over of \$121,389 for a total of \$246,272. These carry overs are the result of COVID-19 related travel restrictions that had a significant impact on research activity in FY 20-21.

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, all were funded. This is an increase of 2 applications from last year’s 13 proposals submitted. The average amount of the awards was \$1,500 and the maximum amount awarded for this program was \$2,000. All NFRG proposals were reviewed by COR.

Faculty Research Grants (FRGs): The number of grant applications in this category was 98, which is 15 proposals up from 83 applications in 2020-21. However, this year COR was able to fund roughly 100% of the FRG proposals at an average award amount of \$2000.

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 \$1,000 Scholarly Meetings (SMT) or \$250 Inter-Campus (ICT) travel grant, respectively. This program is funded annually in the amount of \$125,483. As travel restrictions and other challenges to research activities were lifted, COR saw a significant uptake in the number of applications for the SMT/ICT grant. This year all 104 of the completed applications were approved compared to the 22 completed and approved applications in 2020-21.

Research Grant Program	Funded	Amount
New Faculty Research Grants (NFRG)	15	\$27,486
Faculty Research Grants (FRG)	98	\$194, 704
Travel Grants	104	\$110, 337
Total		\$332, 527

V. Reviews of Policy and Process

A. Divisional

- Graduate Students Inclusion in the Areas of Expertise Tab on the Campus Directory
- Proposed Implementation of the Faculty Allocation Program

- Staffing Levels of Our Campus’s Institutional Review Board (IRB)
- Review of the Patent Royalty Research Share Income Disposition

B. Systemwide

- Systemwide Review of Proposed Presidential Policy on Sustainable Practices
- Department Political Statements
- Proposed Revisions to Academic Personnel Manual (APM) §759
- Proposed Revisions to Academic Personnel Manual (APM) §25 and §671
- Systemwide Review of the Report of the Negotiated Salary Trial Program Phase Two Taskforce

VI. Upcoming Agenda for 2022-23

The committee will further explore the following topics in 2022-23:

- COR will assess the rollout of the CFA and prepare a report on how funds were used across divisions and across different categories of spending. Based on the number of faculty who receive this support, COR will be able to determine whether there are sufficient funds to expand the following year’s rollout by including larger grants.
- COR will further analyze the results of the COVID impact survey, in particular examining the open-ended responses in which faculty expressed in their own words how the pandemic has impacted their scholarly activity.

Respectfully Submitted;

COMMITTEE ON RESEARCH

Michael Hance

L.S. Kim

Aims McGuinness

Francois Monard

Tyler Sorensen

Massimiliano Tomba

Gina Athena Ulysse

Jarmila Pittermann, Chair (*F, W*)

Nicolas Davidenko, Chair (*S*)

Quinn Brail, GSA Rep.

August 31, 2022