

**Minutes  
Committee on Research  
February 28, 2012**

**Present:** Scott Oliver (chair), Elisabeth Cameron, David Koo, Sri Kurniawan, Debra Lewis, Barbara Rogoff, Hamid Sadjadpour, Kim Smith (ASO)

**Absent with notice:** Nathaniel Deutsch, Deborah Letourneau

**Guests:** Xavier Prochaska, Claire Max, Andrew Smith (GSA)

**Chair's Announcements**

- 1 Chair Oliver reminded the committee that the first two meetings in the Spring Quarter would be extended for grant adjudication and that the Senate meeting will take place at 2:30 pm on February 29, 2012.
- 2 Chair Oliver reported on the Chief of Police's visit to the Senate Executive Committee regarding anticipated protests on campus.

**Committee Business**

The minutes from the December 6, 2011, January 17, 2012, January 31, 2012, and February 14, 2012 meetings were approved as written.

**FRG/SRG Budget Review**

The committee continued its discussion of the COR budget available to fund 2012-13 Faculty Research Grants (FRGs) and Special Research Grants (SRGs). No decisions can be made until the grant proposals are adjudicated. The committee expressed hope that Rebenching will improve the budget situation for 2013-14 COR grants.

**UCO/Lick Observatory Updates**

COR continued its discussion of the External Review of UC Observatories. Chair Oliver solicited feedback from UCSC astronomers but none have responded yet. The committee expressed concern that many decisions are being made by UC leadership without faculty input. There remains much uncertainty about the future organization of UC Observatories, as UC will be hiring a new Provost next year. The new Provost will supervise the Vice President of Research, Steve Beckwith, who has overseen the review of UC Observatories.

**Consultation with UC Observatories Faculty Xavier Prochaska and Claire Max**

COR asked about the top priorities for UC Observatories (UCO). Professor Max explained that a recent survey of university astronomers showed that instrumentation is a top priority in the field. The telescope and the observatory were identified by ninety percent of respondents as the most important aspects of astronomy in the next decade. UCO has provided this key instrumentation for

major astronomical programs. UCSC has partnered with the W. M. Keck Observatory on Mauna Kea, Hawaii to construct the Thirty-Meter Telescope (TMT), the largest and most advanced telescope ever built. This type of infrastructure and instrumentation represent the priorities of UCO.

Professor Max expressed frustration that all of the positive stakeholder feedback has seemingly been ignored by VP Beckwith. Despite the prestige of UC Observatories and taskforce reports outlining the positive cost/benefit ratio of UCO as a Multi-Campus Research Unit (MRU), VP Beckwith is pushing forward with the creation of a new governing board and structure. Nine of ten Executive Vice Chancellors (EVCs) wrote letters to VP Beckwith and each conveyed strong support of UCO. COR discussed ways to hold VP Beckwith accountable to these messages from the EVCs. COR also considered writing to Chancellor Blumenthal regarding this matter.

COR will continue to follow this matter closely.

The meeting adjourned at 3:45 pm.

So attests,

Scott Oliver, chair  
Committee on Research