

**Draft
Committee on Research
Minutes
October 13, 2015**

Present: Steve Whittaker (chair), Brandin Baron-Nusbaum, John Musacchio, Matthew Clapman, Fernando Leiva, Sharon Daniel, John Bowin. Jarmilia Pittermann, Dan Oliver, GSA

Guest: VCR Scott Brandt

Announcements/Members Items

Chair Whittaker reminded members of the Senate Orientation for Senate committee members scheduled for October 29th

The minutes of September 29, 2015 were approved with corrections.

Research Themes

The Vice Chancellor Research has indicated a willingness to provide funds matching FRG/SRG grants based on proposals with emphasis on identified research themes. To help COR identify relevant research themes and starting from the previous work of the Committee on Planning and Budget (CPB), COR reviewed CPB's recommendation on the Faculty Initiated Group Hires (FIGH), and CPB's letter on Interdisciplinary Themes. Research themes are a good way for the campus to put forth its strengths to the world and also to promote collaboration internally, by making our work more visible to each other.

VCR Brandt noted that the Graduate Dean is interested in creating Graduate Areas of Excellence, possibly with some support from the his office. These two things coming together could create a much large initiative and is worth exploring. The VCR discussed how a matching program might be structured. Since both COR's and the VCR's budgets are low, there will need to be a cap on the amount of award funds that are directed to the program. One way to retain some flexibility about the amount of funding would be to indicate that proposals that match the research themes would be given priority for consideration for matching funds. COR was clear that faculty should not be required to propose research related to the themes to be awarded a COR grant.

COR considered if the themes that arose from CPB's consideration of FTE requests and the Faculty Initiated Group Hire (FIGH) process were different from what should be the focus of seed funding for research. In the end, the committee decided that there had already been considerable ground up effort by the faculty in developing FIGH proposals. They represent the current interests of faculty collaborations as well as aspirational projects and so would be a good starting point for COR to think about the themes. Also, given COR's time line to produce an FRG/SRG call this fall, it is time-prohibitive to start from scratch.

It was agreed that VCR Brandt and COR Chair Whittaker will meet to develop the funding envelope for the matching grants.

Joint Task Force on Graduate Growth (TFGG)

Last year the Senate Executive Committee and the Administration convened a Joint Task Force to look at the obstacles to achieving the 12% graduate enrollment target. COR reviewed the recommendations executive summary and chart of recommendations from the report. COR's discussion focused on the relation between research and graduate student support. The bottom line is that there is not enough funding to reach the target of 12% Ph.D. enrollment. COR agreed that the target needs to change to a number, since undergraduate enrollments vary from year to year. UCSC has lower per faculty funding in comparison to other UCs and lower in graduate enrollments relative to graduate students. This is true across the disciplines. In some disciplines, graduate students research areas that are directly in support of faculty research, in other disciplines graduate students are expected to do research that is independent of work of their faculty advisor, so there is not direct benefit to the faculty's research. The committee noted the disciplinary differentials in availability of external funds for faculty research and graduate support. These differences call for a variety of solutions to address graduate support. The Office of Research is putting more effort into helping faculty identify and apply for extramural funds and the graduate dean is supportive of creating multi-year offers.

COR considered other recommendations in the report noting that; waiving tuition for international students will increase the quality of graduate students, but is unlikely to increase the quantity, the block allocation formula is based on a trailing three year average, and so does not always match the current funding needs of the program. COR also discussed creating more teaching positions for graduate students. In some disciplines, TAing is the main source of support, but with availability of TAs declining, this is not a sustainable model for support. It is common at other universities that graduate students are expected to teach their own courses.

VCR Tour of Academic Departments

VCR Brandt is touring academic departments, which has not been done before with the goal of introducing the Office of Research, answering questions and as a listening opportunity. VC Brandt gave COR the presentation he is giving to departments. The committee noted the many organizational changes that have taken place in the Office of Research.

Center for Research in Open Source Software (CROSS) Proposal

The SOE Dean has request that COR review the CROSS proposal for establishment as a Focused Research Activity. The CROSS model of using a gift to establish a center and then leveraging industry memberships to sustain it is not typical here at UCSC. Nevertheless the proposal presents a cogent plan for how it will function. The proposal states the benefits CROSS will provide; for graduate students and postdocs working in the area of open source software research, faculty will have the opportunity to leverage CROSS support to pursue funding from other agencies, and the special offerings of CMPS105 will provide added benefit to undergraduates. COR does have concerns about the governance structure of the Center, and process of project selection. COR will therefore suggest an augmentation to the Advisory Board, by appointing an 'at large member' with expertise in Software Engineering.

