

University of California
San Francisco



Academic Senate
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Communication from the Committee on Research
Edward L. Murphy, MD, MPH, Chair
David Saloner, PhD, COR-RAP Affiliation Subcommittee Chair

August 7, 2009

David Gardner, MD
Chair, UCSF Academic Senate
500 Parnassus Avenue, Box 0764

Re: Proposal to Affiliate Committee on Research's Grant Process with UCSF's Research Allocation Program (RAP)

Dear Chair Gardner,

Earlier this academic year, and after extensive discussion by the full Committee, the Committee on Research (COR) appointed a subcommittee to review affiliating the Committee's grant review process with UCSF's web-based Research Allocation Program (RAP). The subcommittee has developed a proposal (attached), which has been vetted and approved by the COR at large. We expect appreciable improvements in efficiency for the COR staff, as well as transparency and ease of use for our faculty applicants.

In summary, the proposal structures the use of the grant submission and review process of RAP analogous to NIH Center for Scientific Review receipt, triaging and review of grants, while retaining COR's role in the final awarding of grants, analogous to NIH's scientific councils. The Committee on Research felt strongly that it was their responsibility to ensure equitable distribution of research funds that derive from the Academic Senate. As such, line items in the proposal focus on guaranteeing COR oversight of the review process and an option to cancel the affiliation should Academic Senate priorities not be met.

It is the hope of the Committee on Research that the attached proposal be discussed and approved at the next Coordinating Committee meeting in September 2009. Thank you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'E. L. Murphy'.

Edward L. Murphy, MD, MPH
Chair, Committee on Research

David Saloner, PhD
Chair, Subcommittee, COR-RAP Affiliation

UCSF Academic Senate Committee on Research Communication from the Subcommittee on COR-RAP Affiliation David Saloner, PhD, COR-RAP Affiliation Subcommittee Chair

This subcommittee was formed to develop a proposal for the Academic Senate Committee on Research (COR) that would structure the use of the grant submission and review process of the Research Allocation Program (RAP) at UCSF. A broad range of potential advantages and disadvantages of this action have been discussed in meetings of the COR members, in e-mail communications, and in presentations given to the COR by RAP representatives over the past several months. In the June 09 meeting of the COR there was extensive discussion of these issues and a consensus was reached to proceed with that action and this subcommittee was formed to formulate specific guidelines under which this action would move forward.

It was felt that the COR has a mandate to ensure the equitable distribution of research funds that derive from the Academic Senate. It is therefore important that the COR continue to have strong oversight of decisions that might impact the way in which grant applications are administered, reviewed, and distributed in the future. It is also important that the COR members continue to have an active role in reviewing proposals and in monitoring the review process of proposals that are submitted for COR awards. It was also felt that COR should maintain the control of the awarding of funds that they distribute. This would allow COR to maintain equity across different schools and disciplines in the event that pure reliance on grant scores did not provide that outcome. The COR members felt that the committee should retain the function of distributing funds using the RAP review scores as guidance but with the flexibility to adjust rankings to fulfill criteria such as discipline and school representation, much as an NIH council acts. Finally, it was thought that the COR should have the flexibility to rescind this agreement, and to revert to in-house review of proposals as is currently done, should the RAP process prove to be unsatisfactory.

In order to achieve the objectives outlined above, we propose:

1. The Chair of the COR, or their designate, will be appointed as a member of the executive committee of the RAP;
2. Every review panel of the RAP must include at least one member of the COR. Further, to the extent possible, each COR member should be assigned to one of the RAP review panels. The name of the COR representative will be forwarded to RAP by the COR Chair;
3. To the extent possible each of the four schools should be represented on each of the review panels, and particular care should be taken to ensure that each school have representation on review panels in their area of expertise;
4. An effort should be made to ensure appropriate review of grants in the social and behavioral sciences emphasis area either by constituting a new review panel, or by restructuring an existing review panel to explicitly incorporate that area;
5. A new member of the COR will be appointed to serve on the RAP review panel when the sitting COR member's COR appointment terminates;
6. The COR will retain its function of distributing grant awards. Scores from the RAP study sections will be forwarded to the COR, and the COR will then rank order the proposals and will distribute the COR funds;
7. Meetings will be held, one month after each review cycle, between a COR subcommittee and RAP to review whether the process whereby RAP reviews COR applications is satisfactory, and to provide suggestions for future improvements. The COR subcommittee will consist of the COR Chair, Vice Chair, and all members of COR who serve on the RAP study sections;
8. If a majority of the COR members feel that the RAP review process is not serving the COR well, the COR retains the prerogative to terminate this relationship and return review of grants to the COR.

COR-RAP Affiliation Subcommittee Members

David Saloner, Chair

Kevin Delucchi

Dejana Braithwaite

John McLeod Griffiss