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

MINUTES  
Monday, May 18, 2009  


The Committee on Research was called to order by Vice Chair Sorensen on May 18, 2009 at 10:11 a.m. in room S-30. A quorum was present.  

Chair’s Report  
Chair Sorensen requested volunteers for review of the NIH Stem Cell guidelines.  

Report from the University Committee on Research Policy (UCORP)  
J. Pittet updated the the Committee on issues facing UCORP this past year. Full length minutes to UCORP meetings can be found here: http://www.universityofcalifornia.edu/senate/committees/ucorp/  

Budget  
Throughout the year, UCORP discussed the ramifications of $100M flat funding cut to the University. A restoration of inflation-adjusted full-funding for the University would require an additional $900M for 2009-10. Such funding would cover faculty and staff raises, employer contributions to UCRP, enrollment growth, and restored programs. Unfortunately, only cuts are expected. In response, to rehired retirees, the University is trying to standardize its recall policies.  

Multiple Research Units (MRUs)  
UCORP was provided a summary of MRU funding issues and of the current recommendation, which is to require extant and proposed MRUs to compete for funding, rather than assume that funding will continue from year to year. The Office of Research and Graduate Studies (ORGS) is developed an RFP to compete for unrestricted research funds allocated by the Office of the President. Some concerns with the RFP included: that the page limit may be too low, that funding requests should be capped, and that more details regarding the matching campus funds requirement should be given.  

Stimulus Package  
In regards to the stimulus package, UCORP noted that there are two interrelated topics to consider: stimulus money itself and the president’s overall budget. The stimulus funds must be used quickly, so consideration is being given only to projects “with legs.” Members were encouraged to contact program officers if they have an unfunded project that received good scores; new projects are not appropriate for this funding. The president’s budget includes new categories, or grand challenge areas, for new projects, especially in the areas of health, climate, and energy research.
Los Alamos
UCORP spent some time discussing UC’s involvement in weapons development (pit production). The Committee reviewed the pit production report. Currently, any pits produced could be used in one of three ways: placed into warheads, dismantled for research, or stored for aging research. In 1996, when UC had sole proprietorship of the labs, the federal government ordered the production of 31 pits; the first was produced in 2007, and since then, 17 have been completed. It is not known if the federal government will place another order, but press reports suggesting an annual production of 50-80 pits was a hypothetical exercise never implemented; the current pit production limit at Los Alamos is no more than 20 pits per year. UCORP sought clarification on the difference between production and stewardship, arguing that any new pits constituted production. The government's position; however is that stewardship necessarily involves production as destructive testing requires a replacement device. Further, the science involved in both analyzing destroyed pits and creating new ones has led to notable increases in refereed publications in the actinide sciences. Chair Croughan noted that that (1) UC, as sole manager of Los Alamos National Lab (LANL) in 1996, agreed to assume pit production following the closure of the Rocky Flats, CO, facility, and (2) stewardship and scientific oversight have been endorsed repeatedly by the Senate. Some members of UCORP remain unconvinced and as such, UCORP will continue to monitor.

UC Seminar Network
UCORP has proposed a seminar network, consisting of streaming broadcasts via the web to multiple campus locations, multiple campuses, or directly to individual's computers, after which the talks could be archived. J. Pittet reported that members are enthusiastic and he recommended that the Committee endorse such an endeavor.

UC Seminar Network Proposal
Overall, members of the Committee were in favor of the proposal. Some of the comments included:

• This is a good idea that could potentially save a lot of time and money.
• There is the minor concern that some faculty members could be let go if their duties are covered by someone from another campus.
• Members wondered whether there was demand on the campuses to support such a program.
• What are the cost ramifications?
• Why not just upload to Youtube?

The Committee unanimously agreed to support the proposal.

Lack of Applications/Nominations
The Committee discussed the lack of nominations and applications. Some ideas included:

• Targeting department chairs with a letter.
• Simplify the process by making the application two-pronged – for instance having an intent to nominate form.
• Consolidate the call.
• Find a way to incentivize the nominators.

Vice Chair Sorenson committed to examining the above in the long-term. For the short-term, we will extend the DCRL call to June and contact nominees from the following two years and ask them to resubmit.

Old Business
None.

New Business
None.

Vice Chair Sorenson adjourned the meeting at 11:30 a.m.