



May 31, 2016

VICE CHANCELLOR FOR RESEARCH PAUL ALIVISATOS

Subject: Committee on Research (COR) report on the governance structure of organized research units (ORUs)

Dear Paul,

In fall 2015, Senate leadership tasked the Committee on Research (COR) with conducting a study of ORU governance on campus and reporting its findings to Divisional Council (DIVCO). On behalf of DIVCO, I am forwarding the resulting report, which DIVCO endorsed on April 25, 2016.

In its discussion, DIVCO underscored the following key points.

The study found strong support for the current governance structure—that is, for the ORUs to be centrally administrated by the Office of the Vice Chancellor for Research (OVCR) rather than by campus deans. DIVCO echoed this finding. As noted in the COR report:

The primary argument for VCRO governance of the ORUs revolves around the interdisciplinary nature of most of the ORU research programs. Many of the ORU Directors thought any particular Dean would be unable to represent the breadth of activity in their units.

Both the report and DIVCO expressed significant concern about financial support for the ORUs, and DIVCO strongly urges the OVCR to develop a coherent plan for fundraising to support ORUs.

Finally, DIVCO strongly agreed with the need to undertake a comprehensive review process for the portfolio of ORUs campus wide. While we find the recently reinstated five-year review process useful for evaluating individual or small clusters of ORUs, we believe it is time to evaluate ORUs as a whole to ensure their ongoing relevance, vitality, and contribution to the campus research profile. DIVCO calls on the OVCR to actively engage COR in planning and conducting this review.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'R. Powell', with a horizontal line underneath.

Robert Powell
Chair, Berkeley Division of the Academic Senate
Professor of Political Science

Encl.

Cc: Stuart Bale, Chair, Committee on Research
Diane Sprouse, Senate Analyst, Committee on Research

**Committee on Research (COR) report on the
governance structure of Organized Research Units (ORUs)**

April 15, 2016

Background: During the Spring semester of 2015, the Vice Chancellor for Research (VCR) alerted several of the ORU Directors that the administration was considering a wholesale reorganization of the governance structure of ORUs on the Berkeley campus. In particular, an argument was made that the ORUs would be more effective at fundraising if they reported *directly* to Deans, rather than the VCR.

In mid-2015, Interim VCR Chris McKee produced a report on ORU governance that concluded that the existing structure is vibrant and highly functional.

Following that, Senate leadership tasked COR with conducting a study on ORU governance issues and writing this short report.

Process: COR sent a written survey (appended) to 47 ORU Directors and received 25 responses (53%). In addition, COR met with the following campus leaders to invite viewpoints on governance: EVCP Claude Steele, L&S and Division of Social Sciences Dean Carla Hesse, Dean Frances Hellman of the L&S Division of Mathematical and Physics Sciences, and Museum of Paleontology Director Charles Marshall. The COR Chair met privately with former VCR Graham Fleming.

Findings: The ORU Directors who responded to the COR survey almost unanimously supported the existing organizational structure: ORUs reporting to the VCR. It should be noted, that only slightly more than 50% of the ORU Directors responded.

The primary argument for VCRO governance of the ORUs revolves around the interdisciplinary nature of most of the ORU research programs. Many of the ORU Directors thought any particular Dean would be unable to represent the breadth of activity in their units. Furthermore, there was concern that the priorities of the Deans (teaching, recruitment and retention, etc) would distract from, and perhaps compete with, support for the research initiatives and infrastructure requirements of the ORUs. There was a concern that under Deans, 19900 funds would be directed away from ORU support towards other uses; indeed there are examples of this.

Some of the ORUs have special facilities (field stations, museums, the Botanical Garden) or compliance requirements (animal research, ITAR, etc) for which the VCRO has developed specialized expertise and been very attentive. Many faculty research programs with such special requirements have migrated to the ORUs and returning those efforts to the Deans would be onerous.

An issue that needs attention is fundraising and development. While some ORUs have had positive experiences raising funds from donors, others feel ignored. There is a feeling that the VCRO has not been active in reaching out to the ORUs with development opportunities; rather, some units have approached the VCR and successfully raised donor funds. The Deans may in fact be better organized with respect to fund raising. COR heard from Irene Kim and Jeff Jankanicz about plans to centralize development at Berkeley. COR urges University Development and Alumni Relations to reach out to the ORUs and build an active relationship.

The portfolio of ORUs has not had a comprehensive review since the 2000 Sunset-to-Dawn review. The mandated '5 Year' ORU external reviews had been languishing, but have recently restarted. In general, the 5 Year reviews show that the ORUs are very highly regarded research enterprises. The central campus funding levels for the ORUs are primarily historical; ORUs are established with healthy budgets that erode over time. Given the limited financial resources, the ORUs should be reviewed against each other (as in the Sunset review) or as subject clusters (e.g. the astronomy/astrophysics cluster review) to reassess the vitality and relevance of their programs.

The new VCR Paul Alivisatos has initiated discussions on a Berkeley research agenda that reflects Berkeley's ethos and role as a great public university. This is very likely to introduce enhanced and reinvigorated research efforts across the traditional Departmental boundaries. The ORUs will play an important role in developing that plan.

Conclusions: The existing ORU governance structure is healthy and achieves the important goal of promoting interdisciplinary research. Indeed, as Berkeley develops a more coherent research agenda the ORUs are likely to provide an important backbone for that effort. However, the ORU portfolio needs to be reviewed more frequently for vitality and new opportunities. The ORUs need a more coherent approach to fundraising.

Dear colleagues:

Senate leadership has tasked the Committee on Research (COR) to conduct a study and to produce a report on Organized Research Unit (ORU) governance on campus. Our goal is to complete this report in mid-November.

We are contacting you to assist the committee in understanding if the present reporting lines are suitable and supportive of your unit's mission, and your views on whether an alternative structure would be more favorable or effective. In this regard, we hope you will take this opportunity to respond to the following questions. If you would like to discuss this issue with the committee personally, please contact committee analyst Diane Sprouse to arrange a time that is convenient for you.

1. How long have you been the director of your unit/center?
2. In your experience, has the present organizational structure and support for your unit been satisfactory? If not, please explain.
3. In considering an alternative structure, what is your opinion of the idea that ORUs presently reporting to the VC-Research be transferred to the Deans. Do you have any thoughts on how this would work in practice?
4. Please describe your experience working with University Relations or other development staff on campus in securing external funding. Do you believe that opportunities would be enhanced if your ORU moved to a Dean's office? If not, please explain.
5. Do you have any additional comments that you would like to share with COR?

You may be assured that your responses will remain confidential.