A draft report dated April 28, 2010, was issued by the Chancellor's Blue Ribbon Committee on Research. The report has been issued for general campus comment.
The L&S Executive Committee has discussed the report of the Chancellor's Blue Ribbon Committee on Research and agreed upon the following:

- The report is first-rate and has many useful recommendations (e.g., for returning more indirect cost recovery to investigators (recommend 10%) and to the units (recommend an additional 10%)); however, there is little discussion about funding mechanisms and many of the proposals may be unrealistic given the current budget (e.g., providing release time to participate in grant preparation).

- The recognition of the value of interdisciplinary research and the different characteristics of research across disciplines is noteworthy (e.g., the greater frequency of single-authored work and independent graduate student research in the humanities and social sciences).

- The emphasis on entrepreneurship and the commercial value of research is understandable, but the report should also emphasize research in which the value is mostly social or scholarly and for which the contributions cannot be easily monetized.

- The proposal to adjust faculty salaries to recognize and reward success in extramural funding is troubling: extramural funding may not result in any contributions (scholarly or otherwise) and much of the best research on campus has not been conducted with external research support (e.g., Pulitzer-prize-winning research in history). Excellence in scholarship, teaching and service should be the main criteria for adjusting faculty salaries.

- Research is only one part of the University's mandate and a discussion of it must make explicit how research policies will influence the delivery of the curriculum.

Bill McCarthy, Chair
Executive Committee
College of Letters and Science
CAP Oversight Committee

June 9, 2010 7:59 AM

The Committee on Academic Personnel (CAP) has reviewed the draft report published by the Chancellor’s Blue Ribbon Committee on Research and offers the following comments on the specific recommendation items (numbered as in the report).

1. II – CAP agrees with the recommendation to initiate a campus-wide strategic planning to establish a grand research vision that would address national and local needs.

2. I.2 and I.3 – CAP also agrees with the recommendation on the investment in strategic disciplinary excellence by targeted appointments (TOEs).

3. I.6 – Highlight success in research, including track record of extramural funding, acquisition and management as a prominent factor in merits and promotions. Research funding record is currently part of the dossier submitted for faculty merits and promotions. This information is used to gauge the faculty member’s peer recognition, influence on defining national research agendas, leadership in carrying out a research program and effectiveness in providing training and research opportunities to students and scholars.

4. III.11 (also VI.2) – Assign each dean the responsibility of creating a unit specific transparent policy that appropriately allocates workload (teaching vs. research vs. service). This policy should ensure lower teaching/service loads as research productivity increases (funding, awards, unit specific impact) and vice versa, likely via mechanisms such as “trade out” or “buy out” systems. The UC mission and the criteria for faculty advancement have three categories: research, teaching and service. Creating a strategic plan for favoring one component over the other would lead to an imbalance in assessing faculty performance. Furthermore, research productivity (and excellence) is not synonymous with funding (see also Blue Ribbon Report, page 7, Item 1) and would unfairly disadvantage some faculty members.

5. III.14 – In order to reduce bureaucratic workload, emphasize formal review of promotions over merits. Streamline the merits and promotion process while maintaining academic senate control of the process. Some members thought routine merits could be reviewed by the chair and college committee and not require faculty review (unless requested by the candidate for merit), but accelerated merits, promotions, and appeal would use the full, current process. Others felt this could be accomplished by not requiring the college personnel committees to reiterate what the department letter says that is then followed by the Associate Dean writing the same thing again. CAP has proposed a set of streamlining guidelines that are currently under discussion by senate and administrative bodies. The issues outlined in this recommendation are addressed there.

6. III.15 – Merit/promotion applications should be shorter and use electronic review modalities when possible; fewer letters should be solicited for routine merits; approvals should require only a few sentences. As part of the new streamlining guidelines, CAP emphasizes the use of MyInfoVault (MIV) for electronic dossier submission and review. Letters have always been only sought for promotions and advancements to barrier steps, not routine merits. Furthermore, all Deans have recently agreed to provide shorter letters for approvals of actions.

7. III.16 – Incentivize and recognize in merits and promotions research done in conjunction with community partners and research having a positive impact on the region and state. Faculty research is evaluated through peer-reviewed publications and creative works and the impact they generate locally, nationally and internationally.
8. IV.4 – Vice Provost, Committee on Academic Personnel and faculty personnel committees should provide credit in merits and promotion for interdisciplinary creative activities, including multi-author papers and non-traditional creative products. In addition, merits and promotion in “non-primary” departments, especially when they are without compensation, should be significantly streamlined. The existing merit/promotion process duly recognizes the need for and rewards the success of multi-disciplinary research activities that result in publications with multiple authors. Academic Personnel Manual (APM) and local interpretations provide clear language as to how a faculty member’s scholarship and role in such studies can be determined and judged. CAP believes that special attention should not be given to any type of research and current standards of review should be retained. Furthermore, APM UCD-220 provides guidelines on the personnel process for joint appointments. It indicates that all joint appointees shall be reviewed by the “non-primary” departments (non-review/non-vote would violate Davis Division Bylaw 55) but these departments do not need to add any material to the review file.

9. IV.5 – Provide time, funding, and merit/promotion credit for faculty to participate in interdisciplinary research; special attention should be given to this issue in the humanities and social sciences where single-author publications and independent graduate student research are frequently the norms. In evaluating a faculty member’s research record for merit/promotion actions, the most often used criteria are independence, productivity, impact and quality. If a faculty member demonstrates willingness and leadership in engaging in multidisciplinary research and/or large scale research initiatives, such activities have always been deemed as value added to the review file.

10. VII.2 – Recognize and reward knowledge transfer in merits and promotions. This recommendation is somewhat vague and needs further clarification. There are many avenues for knowledge transfer (including open-access) and they all need to be accommodated within the merit/promotion process. We look forward to more input on this specific item. CAP adds that the merit and promotion process has always recognized patents as one of the metrics for creative output.

11. VIII.13 – Establish a joint faculty administrator committee to determine if/how faculty salaries can be adjusted to recognize and reward success in extramural funding (including analysis of extra stipends paid from “salary savings” generated by extramural funding). At UC the salaries are defined by merit-based salary scales. This makes us unique and has been critical in the excellence of our faculty. Off-scale salary components (often associated with appointment and retention cases) notwithstanding, tying faculty salaries to grant funding success would fundamentally change this philosophy. Rewarding grantsmanship at the expense of scholarship would be ill advised.
Graduate Council

June 11, 2010 2:07 PM

The Graduate Council has reviewed the draft report from the Chancellor’s Committee on Research and was pleased that graduate education figured prominently throughout.

Council suggests that the overarching statements be modified to reflect that strong ties must exist between research and the training and mentoring of both graduate students and postdoctoral scholars.

More specific recommendations follow:

- **III. Incentivize research and researcher excellence**  
  *(Blue Ribbon Committee on Research Report, page 12)*

  13. The Provost should charge the Office of Graduate Studies to create a plan that sets graduate group teaching load expectations (e.g. in proportion to graduate student numbers, FTE allocation, etc) and mechanisms for "trade out" or "buy out" between Schools, or to recommend a suitable alternative.

  This issue gets to the heart of a serious problem hampering the Graduate Group structures and their ability to fully capitalize on offering a multidisciplinary research environment. In response to a charge by the Academic Senate Executive Committee, Graduate Council in 2007 performed a survey that found that "non-departmental-based programs faced larger problems in involving faculty in their programs for teaching and administration of the groups compared to departmental-based programs." [Report On Graduate Education At UC Davis: http://www.gradstudies.ucdavis.edu/gradcouncil/APD%20Report%20Grad%20Education%202008.pdf] The 2007-08 Report on Graduate Education from the Graduate Council subcommittee on Academic Planning and Development makes two recommendations related to faculty in graduate groups that could serve as a starting point for the Dean of Graduate Studies and the Provost in addressing this issue:

  - **Amending APM210.** To enable all interested faculty to engage in graduate teaching and to receive full teaching credit for teaching a graduate podium course, APM210 should include the right of faculty to be given the opportunity (at the minimum and possibly averaged over several years) to devote 20% of their regular teaching load to teach graduate podium courses. Furthermore, when teaching is evaluated for the merit and promotion process, such teaching will rank equally with lower and upper division undergraduate instruction. The proposed specific changes in APM210 are inserted in capital letters in Appendix E. It is anticipated that this measure will, in effect, lead to an increase in instructor hours available for graduate instruction, and will strengthen the visibility and importance of graduate instruction. *(Report on Graduate Education, page 2)*

  - **Requesting FTEs to strengthen graduate instruction.** To enhance substantially the pool of teaching resources available to graduate groups, and to ensure that anticipated growth in graduate student enrollment will not unduly impact existing teaching resources, approximately 15-20 new FTEs are requested to be provided by the Provost, explicitly for graduate teaching. These FTEs will be assigned to departments, depending on their commitment to provide instruction for graduate groups, as evidenced by MOUs that commit the department to provide instruction for graduate groups. If a department commits to staffing courses for graduate groups on a level that is equivalent to staffing four graduate podium courses, this will make the department eligible for the allocation of one such FTE. A new department-based graduate program that involves more than four annual podium courses in teaching requirements at the graduate level will also make a department eligible for such a FTE. *(Report on Graduate Education, page 3)*

- **VIII. Expand resources for research and researcher support** *(Blue Ribbon Committee on Research Report, page 16)*

  **Graduate student support:**

  15) Encourage academic plans to include recommending goals for graduate student vs. postdoctoral training opportunities; insure tuition policies support those goals.

  19) Recommend a campus study to understand graduate student support funding, including amount and use of non-resident tuition; graduate students versus post-doc ratios; and expenses of graduate students.

  Council appreciates the sentiment of these recommendations which seek to equalize the cost-benefit ratio
to faculty in employing graduate students and postdoctoral scholars, but Council also notes that perhaps recommendation 15 is redundant unless revised as:

“Encourage academic plans that provide an appropriate balance of graduate student and post-doctoral training opportunities; ensure tuition policies support this goal”.

More importantly, the recommendations should be reordered to reflect their importance; recommendation 18 is arguably the most important and difficult challenge and should be noted first, followed by 15 and 19 together. Recommendations 16 and 17 should be moved to the bottom of the list.
I solicited and have received comments from the members of CORP and provide them here. I have edited and organized these comments to help with separation of our thoughts into an Executive Summary. The general sense of CORP is that the Blue Ribbon report has many praiseworthy recommendations. To some extent, this report echoes the UC Davis Vision Document and, therefore, some of our comments on that report are also included here.

General Comments:

The eleven recommendations are not of equal weight to the success of the University. As an example, recommendations I, II, III, V, VI, VIII, IX, and perhaps XI fall to a significant extent under the broad recommendation: "Reorganize, repopulate and determine the strategic goals of the Office of the Vice Chancellor for Research in order to create a service oriented organization that facilitates faculty efforts to seek external funding." This has a larger significance than any single recommendation. Within this broader goal for improving research service would fall: Review the OVCR office structure to obtain a clear understanding of how research administration is organized, Review and restate its Mission, and other specific steps for renewing the efficacy of that office. (Note that the processes of research strategic planning are widely studied in business related literature and well documented case studies from successful reorganizations are available in publications such as Journal of Research Administration.)

As a general comment, nowhere in the document is there a recommendation for faculty review of research administrative functions. One of the primary reasons for poor research administrative performance is the absence of timely faculty review and negative consequences to administrators for poor service to the faculty. Creating an Ombudsman’s office whose charge includes detecting and eliminating administrative failure or creating a regular formal review of the administrative units by faculty would go far towards increasing efficiency and the focus on success. Faculty are responsible for their own research. Regular review by the faculty of the administrative functionaries who are to support faculty research is needed.  

Specific Comments:

Page 7, Mission: An important component is missing in the report’s short statement of the mission of our university. The omitted portion is, "Preservation of knowledge and culture." This portion of our mission is not explicitly educational, novel or progressive, but is essential. A fine violin must be played regularly to retain its tone and timbre—so must knowledge and culture be kept alive in the minds of our faculty in order to retain their depth and significance. As a specific case, the library is organized to facilitate preservation and dissemination of
knowledge and is essential to the performance of all research. The needs of the library and the resources it requires to support research efforts should be explicitly considered beyond the single statement, "As part of the assessment of the UC Davis library, determine how well all researchers needs are being met." Page 8, Overarching Goals, "Create a campus environment...[that] value[s] risk-taking." How to determine whether a risky venture is not foolhardy remains unclear even after years of grant reviewing practice. UCD along with most Universities often relegates assessment of an idea’s quality (and risk) to external reviewing agencies that fund (or do not fund) the proposal. This is a rational approach, since each specialization at the University might be represented by only one or two real experts. It is important to not "bureaucratize" the concept of valuing risky research as even within our large University we do not have the depth to determine whether a concept is "risky smart." Page 11: "Create a culture of research Excellence." To a great degree, UC Davis already has a culture of research excellence. In this section you have mixed recommendations on how people should behave (1), how the Deans and Chancellor should prioritize hiring (2, 3), how administrative training should be structured (4,5) and other actions. This section devalues the already successful efforts of UCD research faculty who know they are excellent but are hindered by external forces such as administrative super-compliance with agency rules. I suggest a) modifying this section such that it does not imply a lack of existing excellence among the faculty, b) separate the sub-recommendations into reorganization/training and hiring actions. As noted above, identification of who must perform the work would be appropriate. Strategic hiring of senior researchers could be a shortcut to greater prominence for UCD. An important consideration, however, is that if the newly hired faculty are compensated at a much higher scale than longer-term employees, then the pay scale inversion will harm overall morale and drive currently successful faculty to leave UCD. Page 11ff: "Align UC Davis..." While it is useful to know what the goals of a funding agency are, you are not... Page 12ff: "Incentivize research and researcher excellence" The bridge funds discussion is appropriate and falls under the overarching goal of reorganizing the OVCR. The recommendation to return 10% of the ICR back to the PI as un-restricted funds and another 10% back to the supporting units is an excellent suggestion. This clearly provides incentive to all PIs. The recommendation to return 10% of the ICR from large collaborative grants to the head PI for use as un-restricted funds is a bad suggestion, since it does not provide incentive for the majority of the other PIs (who are possibly doing the majority of the work). I strongly recommend that large collaborative grants follow the same model as individual grants so that 10% of the ICR flows back to the PIs actually doing the work. They can choose to give these funds to the head PI if they so wish. Page 13ff: "Build on existing strengths..." This is an important recommendation. While not explicitly mentioned, the UC Davis Graduate Groups are a key part of our campus’ reputation for collaboration. Strengthening these groups would greatly improve the research environment for the affected students. I suggest an... Page 13: "Optimize function of Centers and ORUs" Inefficiency in an ORU or Center is, of course, inappropriate. However, their efficiency is a pale issue compared to the fact that the OVCR has not properly reviewed or set policies for elimination of financial support for ORU’s. I would suggest that the ORU and Center policy be revised with very strong sunset clauses in their financial relationship with the OVCR. CORP strongly recommends that all Centers be required to achieve "revenue neutrality" within a set period (perhaps 3 years) so that the total amount of ICR generated each year is greater than or equal to the amount of central support that they are provided. Centers that fail to achieve revenue neutrality before their scheduled review should lose financial support from the OVCR. If the center is dis-established the former center director should be returned to a salary appropriate for his/her rank. Page 14: "Encourage "large" grants..." This is attractive on the face of it, however, there is much more money in assisting... The CORP recommends that special incentives for large grant holders be carefully crafted so as to reduce the chance that those PIs will be seen as a specially favored class by the remainder of the faculty. It is important to
support our rainmakers, but we also cannot function as a collegial faculty if resentments grow. The recommendation that PI's carrying large research loads be excused from other service commitments is excellent. The recommendation that PI's carrying large research loads be excused from teaching commitments is poor. UC Davis is a public research university with an implied commitment to education at the graduate and undergraduate level. The University should be run by Professors, and Professors teach. Page 15: "Facilitate Knowledge Transfer." This is a laudable goal and supported by CORP, however, the recommendations should clearly define how knowledge transfer affects merit and promotion actions. Page 15: "Expand resources for research and researcher support." This is a laudable goal and is supported by CORP. A specific concern, however, is what is meant by, "Perform a formal cost-benefit analysis of the MD-PhD and DVM-PhD programs." It is hard to imagine how we can be leaders in clinical medical research if we do not have training programs for clinical researchers. Perhaps a review of how these programs are funded and seeking endowment support from donors would be an appropriate idea. Page 16: "Remove administrative barriers and increase transparency." This is strongly supported by CORP. Number 18, "Remove barriers to collaboration between School of Medicine and the rest of campus," will require very special consideration by the Dean of the Medical School. A primary barrier to collaboration is a lack of protected research time for the MD investigator. Protection of their research time is as essential as protecting the time of the large grant "rainmakers" discussed above since clinical investigators have access to large research projects related to clinical trials and basic science translation to medical practice. External review by true experts must remain the primary tool for assessment of the faculty’s research performance and ideas. leading research if you are following their goals. I want UC Davis to be a leader. In order to do this, we must, of course, know agency goals and target funding to support our program. More importantly, however, we need to bend the agencies’ goals to the real needs of society as our research determines. We are excellent in many areas and can lead those areas if a strategic effort of the OVCR and Chancellor assists the appropriate faculty into proper relationships with the political groups determining funding priorities. explicit recommendation that the Graduate Groups be strengthened by giving them additional financial support and enhanced control over course assignment. This will improve the standing of the Graduate Groups and enhance interdisciplinary interchange within the structure. every faculty to have a grant. There are many non-medical, non-technical faculty that could receive grant funding if these mechanisms were well supported by the OVCR. The OVCR can improve broad success at the University by increasing their expertise with respect to programs aimed at the humanities and social sciences. There are many smaller agencies (e.g. Spencer, Guggenheim, Wenner-Gren, American Philosophical Society) that give out prestigious awards, but are not always tapped because the research branch of the administration does not know about them. 