



UCR 2020 Academic Excellence Survey Results
Final Report

March 15, 2010

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Academic Excellence Survey Administration Details

The UCR Academic Excellence Survey was designed to capture faculty perceptions of academic excellence on the UCR campus.

The survey was launched on January 11, 2010.

UCR faculty were emailed (two email lists were provided by C&C).
Valid email addresses:

- 692 full time faculty (410 starts, 292 completes)
- 161 emeriti (32 starts, 17 completes)

Email reminders were sent on January 14, January 18 and January 21. The survey was closed on January 22, 2010.

Survey Response Rate Was Excellent!

A total of 309 UCR faculty completed the survey.

Full time:

- 59% (410/692) of full time faculty started the survey
- **71% (292/410) of those who started the survey completed it**

Emeriti:

- 20% (32/161) of emeriti started the survey
- **53% (17/32) of those who started the survey completed it**

Data were combined for all analyses to preserve anonymity

Survey Invitation Came From Chancellor White and Voluntary Nature of Survey Was Stressed



UCR 2020: Strategic Planning Committee Survey on Academic Excellence

Dear Colleagues:

This fall our campus launched "UCR 2020," a strategic planning process with strong faculty involvement in the overall effort and on each subcommittee. The Academic Excellence Committee, in consultation with the chairs of the other committees, seeks your perceptions regarding academic excellence at the University of California, Riverside in the areas of research, creative activity, and graduate programs.

The information obtained from this survey, together with recent graduate program reviews, national comparison data, strategic planning discussion forums, input from the 2020 website, and interviews with campus colleagues and members of the larger UCR community will provide insights for our campus strategic planning. Think of this survey as another vector to help provide insight into areas of current and potential academic excellence.

The usefulness of this survey will depend on a robust and representative sample, so I trust that you will take ten to fifteen minutes out of your day (or night!) to complete this survey, which is designed to be brief.

Your participation is voluntary and you can withdraw at any point during the survey or skip any questions without penalty, nor will it affect your standing at UCR.

With many thanks for your help,

Tim White
Chancellor

The survey will begin after the next screen which describes how this survey protects your privacy. Please click on the Proceed button to indicate your consent to participate in this study and to go on to the next page.

Respondent Anonymity Was Guaranteed



In this brief survey we will ask you several questions about academic excellence on the UCR campus. **Your responses are not linked in any way to individually identifiable information.** Only anonymous data are being collected and only aggregate results will be reported. Only three faculty members of the Academic Excellence Subcommittee will have access to the raw data. Data will be analyzed by the Academic Excellence Subcommittee and the aggregate results will be shared with other UCR 2020 subcommittees. The Steering Committee will post aggregate results of the survey as soon as these results are available in final form.

We feel so strongly about your privacy that we submitted this survey to the HRRB for review of our research protocols to assure you that the practices employed in the data collection and analysis of this survey meet the highest standards of research excellence and that your anonymity is guaranteed. This survey was approved under HRRB # 09-141.

We hope you will take a few moments to respond to the items on the following 6 screens. We estimate this survey will take approximately 10-15 minutes to complete.

Please click on the Proceed button when you are ready to begin.

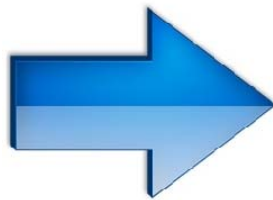
Survey Items

- Survey described AAU criteria and then asked respondents their opinions about current academic excellence at UCR in the context of research collaborations, research centers and graduate programs.
- This was followed by items regarding their opinions about the opportunities for excellence in the future with respect to these three contexts.
- Respondents had the opportunity to give their **candid opinions about academic excellence at UCR**.
- Respondents had the option of indicating their primary school/college and rank.

RESPONDENT DEMOGRAPHICS






Your Primary College/School

#	Answer	Response	%
1	BCOE	22	7%
2	CHASS	123	41%
3	CNAS (including Biomedical Sciences)	119	40%
4	GSOE	10	3%
5	SoBA	6	2%
6	Prefer not to say	19	6%
	Total	299	100%



Note: Total Ns vary from question to question because respondents were not required to answer each question and could skip questions as desired. Respondents were also not required to complete the survey. (442 respondents started the survey; 309 completed)

Your Rank

#	Answer		Response	%
1	Assistant		50	17%
2	Associate		50	17%
3	Full		156	52%
4	Emeritus		14	5%
5	Prefer not to say		28	9%
	Total		298	100%

CURRENT ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE

Current Research Collaborations

1. Are you currently involved in research collaboration with other faculty members at UCR?

#	Answer	Response	%
1	Yes	233	66%
2	No	119	34%
	Total	352	100%

2. . Do any of these existing collaborations currently produce work that would be considered in the top 10 percent of research produced nationally in the field?

#	Answer		Response	%
1	Yes		161	55%
2	No		131	45%
	Total		292	100%

3. If you answered no above, what would be required for the research from those collaborations to be in the top 10 percent of research? Please check all that apply.

#	Answer	Response	%
1	Stronger collaborator(s)	43	30%
2	Stronger doctoral/post-doctoral program	61	43%
3	Better administrative support	39	27%
4	Larger research budget	76	53%
5	Better research infrastructure	51	36%
6	Other	45	31%

More money and better doctoral programs are seen as the most important requirements for collaborations

3. What would be required...Other

N=143 responses

Key themes:

✓ **Critical mass of faculty working in the area**

✓ **More graduate students**

✓ **Reward system that emphasizes research as opposed to teaching and service**

✓ **Better funding**

✓ **Better research management**

Other
Critical mass of faculty/More collaborators in the area/More faculty with similar research interests
better rewarding system for collaborative research
cooperative and supportive faculty colleagues
More support for CHASS faculty and admin from central admin
reduced teaching load
It's not 'better' administrative support that is required, so much as 'stable' administrative support - retention of the same experience staff in the same units, to work with the same faculty
more relevant research interests
Competitions for RAships among faculty projects
support for faculty to apply for funding
Awarding research especially in AGSM
More time for research. Too many committees and teaching load is heavy for a research institution.
more graduate students
cutting-the-edge research projects
there is no longer significant intramural seed funding
need visionary and ambitious people conducting the research management at UCR
Better library resources
more opportunities to replace teaching and institutional service obligations with periods of pure research

4. Regardless of your own affiliations, please list up to **three existing clusters of collaborating researchers** that currently rank or have the potential to rank in the top 10 percent of comparable national clusters of collaborating researchers. If you are not aware of any existing research collaborations that meet this requirement, just skip this question.

School/College	Number Respondents	Minimum Mentions Needed for Inclusion (10%+)
BCOE	22	2
CHASS	123	12
CNAS (includes BIOMED)	119	12
GSOE	10	1
SOBA	6	1
Prefer not to say	19	NA

Current Research Collaborations Mentioned That Met the 10% Inclusion Rule

Current Research Collaboration	School/ College	Mentions (#)
Nanotechnology (incl. New Materials, Graphene, Spintronics)	BCOE	21
Environment and Climate Change, Sustainability, Energy	CNAS	24
Plant and Cell Biology	CNAS	22
Pest Control/Pest Invasions	CNAS	13
Genomics	CNAS	13
Higher Education	GSOE	4
Behavioral Marketing	SOBA	3
Global economy/Supply Chain	SOBA	2

CHASS and CNAS Current Research Collaborations Mentioned < 10%

CHASS

Early Modern Group (7 mentions)

Creative Writing (5 mentions)

Diversity & Race (4 mentions)

CNAS

Conservation Biology & Ecosystems (11 mentions)

Evolutionary Biology (9 mentions)

Vector Biology & Disease (7 mentions)

Earthquake-related (4 mentions)

Water (4 mentions)

Existing Research Centers

5. Research centers are organized units which typically occupy a physical space and seek grants to support the work of affiliated researchers. Are you currently affiliated with a research center?

#	Answer	Response	%
1	Yes	134	39%
2	No	206	61%
	Total	340	100%

6. Does this existing research center currently produce work that would be considered in the top 10 percent of research produced nationally in the field?

#	Answer	Response	%
1	Yes	98	54%
2	No	84	46%
	Total	182	100%

7. If you answered no above, what would be required for the research center to reach that level of productivity? Please check all that apply.

#	Answer	Response	%
1	Stronger collaborator(s)	44	38%
2	Stronger doctoral/post-doctoral program	46	40%
3	Better administrative support	48	41%
4	Larger research budget	69	59%
5	Better research infrastructure	62	53%
6	Other	35	30%

More money and better research infrastructure are seen as the most important requirements for centers

7. What would be required...Other

N=116 responses

Key themes:

✓ Critical mass of faculty working on center research areas

✓ Clear goals/focus for center

✓ More support

✓ Does not apply to humanities

Other
Faculty recruitment/more faculty/targeted faculty hires/critical mass
cooperative and supportive faculty colleagues
Objectives/goals that are more focused
It would need to be restored to full health following the cutting of almost all of its money by various levels of the administration
Release from course or committee work to manage a larger collaboration
Time and encouragement to work outside of departmental affiliations
The center is relatively new (1 year)/we are just starting one such center
increased budget for visiting speakers etc
better director, the present director has the center focus exclusively on their own research interests and work, which contradicts the purpose of the center
Programs for visiting scientists
the center has no physical presence and does not fund research
More leadership
does not apply -- this is the humanities, populated by packs of lone wolves/largely inapplicable to humanities
Continued support needed
Shift of resource allocations and change of directorship to match the name "XXXX" to the actual area of focus

8. Regardless of your own affiliations, please list up to **three existing research centers** that currently do or have the potential to reach national or international prominence. If you are not aware of any research centers that meet this requirement, just skip this question.

School/College	Number Respondents	Minimum Mentions Needed for Inclusion (10%+)
BCOE	22	2
CHASS	123	12
CNAS (includes BIOMED)	119	12
GSOE	10	1
SOBA	6	1
Prefer not to say	19	NA

Existing Research Centers Mentioned That Met the 10% Inclusion Rule

Existing Research Centers	School/ College	Mentions (#)
Center for Environmental Research & Technology (CERT)	BCOE	22
Center for Nanoscale Science & Engineering (CNSE)	BCOE	16
Stem Cell Research Center	BCOE/CNAS	3
Center for Ideas & Society (CIS)	CHASS	29
Institute for Integrative Genome Biology (IIGB)	CNAS	23
Center for Conservation Biology	CNAS	18
Center for Plant and Cell Biology (CEPCEB)	CNAS	17
Center for Invasive Species Research (CISR)	CNAS	12
Sloan Center for Internet Retailing	SOBA	2

CHASS and CNAS Existing Research Centers Mentioned < 10%

CHASS

California Center for Native Nations (6 mentions)

Blakeley Center on Sustainable Suburban Development (CSSD) (5 mentions)

Presley Center for Crime and Justice Studies (3 mentions)

Institute for World Systems Research (3 mentions)

CNAS

Center for Disease Vector Research (CDVR) (11 mentions)

Water Science & Policy Center (5 mentions)

Air Pollution Research Center (5 mentions)

Agricultural Experiment Station (3 mentions)

Current Graduate Programs

9. Regardless of your own affiliations, please list up to **three graduate programs** that currently rank or have the potential to rank in the top 10 percent of comparable graduate programs nationwide. If you are not aware of any graduate programs that meet this requirement, just skip this question.

School/College	Number Respondents	Minimum Mentions Needed for Inclusion (10%+)
BCOE	22	2
CHASS	123	12
CNAS (includes BIOMED)	119	12
GSOE	10	1
SOBA	6	1
Prefer not to say	19	NA

Current Graduate Programs Mentioned That Met the 10% Inclusion Rule

Current Graduate Programs	School/ College	Mentions (#)
Chemical and Environmental Engineering	BCOE	13
Computer Science & Engineering	BCOE	8
Materials Science & Engineering	BCOE	4
Electrical Engineering	BCOE	4
Philosophy	CHASS	22
Dance	CHASS	20
English	CHASS	18
Psychology	CHASS	14
Creative Writing	CHASS	14
Entomology	CNAS	41
Plant Sciences (Botany, Plant Biology, Plant Pathology)	CNAS	38
Chemistry	CNAS	22
Evolution, Ecology, and Organismal Biology	CNAS	22
Environmental Science	CNAS	14
Special Education	GSOE	4
Higher Education	GSOE	3
Marketing/Management (recently approved)	SOBA	1

CNAS Current Graduate Program Mentioned < 10%

CNAS

Genetics, Genomics and Bioinformatics (10 mentions)

FUTURE ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE

Developing Research Collaborations

10. Please list up to **three developing research collaborations** that have the potential to rank in the top 10 percent of comparable national research collaborations. If you are not aware of any developing research collaborations that meet this requirement, just skip this question.

School/College	Number Respondents	Minimum Mentions Needed for Inclusion (10%+)
BCOE	22	2
CHASS	123	12
CNAS (includes BIOMED)	119	12
GSOE	10	1
SOBA	6	1
Prefer not to say	19	NA

Developing Research Collaborations Mentioned That Met the 10% Inclusion Rule

Developing Collaborations	School/ College	Mentions (#)
New Materials	BCOE	5
Higher Education/Education-related	GSOE	5
Health-Related	MED?	4
Supply chain	SOBA	3
Sloan Center for Internet Retailing	SOBA	1
Accounting	SOBA	1

CNAS Developing Research Collaborations Mentioned < 10%

CNAS

Evolution and Ecosystems (8 mentions)

Global Climate Change/Ecosystems (7 mentions)

Plant Sciences (6 mentions)

Energy, Environment and Sustainability (4 mentions)

Evolution (4 mentions)

Bioinformatics (3 mentions)

For the **three developing research collaborations** you listed above, please rate each collaborating group according to the relevance of the following principles.

2.

Statistic	Program integrates existing faculty strengths across different colleges/schools	Program addresses challenges facing the Inland Southern California region	Program has the potential to become revenue-generating or self-supporting	No similar program is offered in the region
Mean	4.59	4.11	4.08	4.32
Variance	0.53	1.21	1.02	1.06
Standard Deviation	0.72	1.10	1.01	1.03
Total Responses	37	37	37	37

Integrating existing faculty strengths across disciplines is important to developing research collaborations.

1.

Statistic	Program integrates existing faculty strengths across different colleges/schools	Program addresses challenges facing the Inland Southern California region	Program has the potential to become revenue-generating or self-supporting	No similar program is offered in the region
Mean	4.58	4.00	4.16	4.03
Variance	0.85	1.74	1.46	1.77
Standard Deviation	0.92	1.32	1.21	1.33
Total Responses	93	92	92	92

3.

Statistic	Program integrates existing faculty strengths across different colleges/schools	Program addresses challenges facing the Inland Southern California region	Program has the potential to become revenue-generating or self-supporting	No similar program is offered in the region
Mean	4.50	4.50	4.41	4.32
Variance	0.83	0.55	1.11	0.99
Standard Deviation	0.91	0.74	1.05	0.99
Total Responses	22	22	22	22

New Research Centers

11. Please list up to **three research centers that UCR *might develop over the next five years*** that would have the potential to reach national or international prominence. If you are not aware of any possible research centers that meet this requirement, just skip this question.

School/College	Number Respondents	Minimum Mentions Needed for Inclusion (10%+)
BCOE	22	2
CHASS	123	12
CNAS (includes BIOMED)	119	12
GSOE	10	1
SOBA	6	1
Prefer not to say	19	NA

Future Research Centers Mentioned That Met the 10% Inclusion Rule

Future Research Centers	School/ College	Mentions (#)
Materials (Nanotechnology, New Materials)	BCOE	8
Carbon-Based/3D Electronics	BCOE	5
Materials (Nanotechnology, New Materials)	BCOE	8
Climate and Ecological Systems Change	CNAS	18
Genomics related (incl. epigenetic)	CNAS	13
Higher Education/Education-related	GSOE	4
Health-related	MED?	12
Behavioral Decision Research	SOBA	4
Finance (Entrepreneurship/Empirical)	SOBA	2
Supply Chain	SOBA	2

CHASS and CNAS Future Research Centers Mentioned < 10%

CHASS

Urban Studies (6 mentions)

Migration, Immigration, Ethnicity/Race (incl. Demography) (5 mentions)

South/Southeast Asia (4 mentions)

Body, Performance, and Dance (3 mentions)

Public Policy (3 mentions)

CNAS

Sustainability/Energy-related (9 mentions)

Advanced Imaging (4 mentions)

Plant science (4 mentions)

Water (4 mentions)

Bioinformatics (3 mentions)

Neuroscience (3 mentions)

For the **three developing research centers** you listed above, please rate each research center according to the relevance of the following principles.

2.

Statistic	• Program integrates existing faculty strengths across different colleges/schools	• Program addresses challenges facing the Inland Southern California region	• Program has the potential to become revenue-generating or self-supporting	• No similar program is offered in the region
Mean	4.70	4.23	4.34	4.33
Variance	0.35	1.48	1.02	0.84
Standard Deviation	0.59	1.22	1.01	0.92
Total Responses	44	44	44	43

1.

Statistic	• Program integrates existing faculty strengths across different colleges/schools	• Program addresses challenges facing the Inland Southern California region	• Program has the potential to become revenue-generating or self-supporting	• No similar program is offered in the region
Mean	4.50	3.98	4.20	4.26
Variance	0.95	1.78	1.06	1.16
Standard Deviation	0.98	1.33	1.03	1.08
Total Responses	124	123	123	123

3.

Statistic	• Program integrates existing faculty strengths across different colleges/schools	• Program addresses challenges facing the Inland Southern California region	• Program has the potential to become revenue-generating or self-supporting	• No similar program is offered in the region
Mean	4.76	4.29	4.24	4.43
Variance	0.39	1.41	0.99	0.66
Standard Deviation	0.62	1.19	1.00	0.81
Total Responses	21	21	21	21

Integrating existing faculty strengths, revenue generation and uniqueness are important for developing research centers.

New Graduate Programs & Schools

12. Please list us to **three graduate programs and new schools that UCR might develop over the next five years** that have the potential to rank in the top ten 10 percent of comparable graduate programs and schools nationwide. If you are not aware of any graduate programs or schools that meet this requirement, just skip this question.

School/College	Number Respondents	Minimum Mentions Needed for Inclusion (10%+)
BCOE	22	2
CHASS	123	12
CNAS (includes BIOMED)	119	12
GSOE	10	1
SOBA	6	1
Prefer not to say	19	NA

New Schools and Programs Mentioned That Met the 10% Inclusion Rule

New Schools and Programs	School/College	Mentions (#)
Materials Science & Engineering	BCOE	2
Public Policy	CHASS	15
Medical School	MED	7
Business School	SOBA	4

CHASS and CNAS New Schools and Programs Mentioned < 10%

CHASS

Global Health and Health Policy (9 mentions)

Gender and Sexuality (5 mentions)

Ethnic Studies (4 mentions)

CNAS

Ecosystems and Ecology (8 mentions)

Microbiology (5 mentions)

Astronomy-related (4 mentions)

Water (4 mentions)

Global Climate Change (3 mentions)

For the **three potential graduate programs and schools** you listed above, please rate each program according to the relevance of the following principles.

2.

Statistic	• Program integrates existing faculty strengths across different colleges/schools	• Program addresses challenges facing the Inland Southern California region	• Program has the potential to become revenue-generating or self-supporting	• No similar program is offered in the region
Mean	4.32	4.56	4.12	4.44
Variance	1.48	0.76	1.19	0.84
Standard Deviation	1.22	0.87	1.09	0.92
Total Responses	25	25	25	25

1.

Statistic	• Program integrates existing faculty strengths across different colleges/schools	• Program addresses challenges facing the Inland Southern California region	• Program has the potential to become revenue-generating or self-supporting	• No similar program is offered in the region
Mean	4.53	4.52	4.18	4.41
Variance	0.91	0.80	1.45	1.13
Standard Deviation	0.95	0.90	1.20	1.06
Total Responses	92	92	92	91

3.

Statistic	• Program integrates existing faculty strengths across different colleges/schools	• Program addresses challenges facing the Inland Southern California region	• Program has the potential to become revenue-generating or self-supporting	• No similar program is offered in the region
Mean	4.56	4.78	4.56	4.67
Variance	0.53	0.19	1.03	0.50
Standard Deviation	0.73	0.44	1.01	0.71
Total Responses	9	9	9	9

Integrating existing faculty strengths, addressing the challenges of the region and uniqueness are important for potential new programs.

OPEN-ENDED FACULTY FEEDBACK

Your Candid Opinions

Please use the box below to give us any feedback you would care to on UCR's opportunities to raise academic excellence. You may wish to discuss fields in which UCR has a comparative advantage due to the eminence of current faculty, UCR's location, its demographic composition, or other factors. You may wish to discuss the feasibility of entirely new structural arrangements for supporting academic excellence on campus. Or you may wish to discuss programs that would require substantial improvements to perform at the level expected in a top-ranked research university. These are only suggestions: please write about any topic on your mind related to the theme of how UCR can raise academic excellence.

Please note: **Your responses are not linked in any way to individually identifiable information. Only anonymous data are being collected and only aggregate results will be reported.**

61% of the Faculty Voiced Their (Strong) Opinions

Of the 309 faculty that completed the survey, **61% (190/309) took the time to voice their opinions on the state of academic excellence at UCR.** Many of these 190 responses were quite lengthy (no word limit was placed on the response).

We **independently** read and coded each response as follows:

- ✓ Up to **three themes** for each response (e.g. admit better qualified undergraduates).
- ✓ The **valence** of the response (e.g. angry, frustrated, fearful, etc.)
- ✓ Whether any part of the response should be **excerpted** for the Strategic Planning Report

We then discussed our independently derived coding schemes to arrive at consensus. Our separate coding schemes were in near perfect agreement.

Nearly all responses were thoughtful and carefully considered. A variety of different perspectives emerged about how UCR can achieve academic excellence.

Five distinct themes along with a “super-theme” emerged. A third independent coder reviewed the initial coding schemes and distinct themes. The third coder concurred with the two independently coded and derived consensus themes.

Faculty Academic Excellence Themes Derived From An Analysis of the Candid Comments

Super-Theme

UCR needs to improve its standing and gain respect. The campus has enormous potential and shows great promise, but we need to do more to reach and maximize our potential. In order to live the promise, we must direct most of our efforts toward enhancing academic excellence UCR. This will involve raising the standards so that UCR takes its place as a UC and can meet the standards of a UC. This theme cuts across all other themes.

Academic Excellence Improvement Themes

- ✓ **Improve the research infrastructure.**
- ✓ **Improve the personnel process**
- ✓ **Improve student quality.**
- ✓ **Improve leadership.**
- ✓ **Build on existing strengths and have fewer but larger programs.**

Improve the Research Infrastructure

To become a top-ranking *research* university, we need a forward-looking vision for research at UCR that promotes the growth of high caliber research centers and fosters high impact collaborations.

In addition, we need a system that is highly receptive to faculty needs and that facilitates rather than hinders the research proposal process, eliminating its most burdensome administrative aspects.



Improve the Research Infrastructure

To become a prominent research university, UCR needs to have a MUCH better infrastructure. ORA is utterly dysfunctional, I seriously believe that the only way to turn it around is to force a complete change of leadership, down to several levels below. Research support throughout UCR is spotty at best, and mostly relying on great work from selected (and few) individuals, rather than from a consistent attitude of service to the faculty research needs. Until this infrastructure is greatly improved, our chance of achieving excellence is greatly diminished (and, even if we achieve it, under some perverse measure of excellence), UCR still will be a place where inefficiencies will take too great a bite out of the pleasure of academic/research life. Sorry to be so frank, but I have been a faculty member at another public university, and I know things should/must be better.

Research productivity would be greatly enhanced by a well-functioning ORA.

We need a research office where the stated philosophy is that the staff are there to facilitate the production and processing of a proposal (and the work once awarded).



Improve the Research Infrastructure

Support grants acquisition meaningfully. Consider substantial grant acquisition as a criterion meriting any sort of reward. For every proposal to write, you have to fight it through the office of research, where the staff know very little about UCR's realities. I do not know how many memos I and the staff in my department had to write to convince ORA that UCR does not provide office materials for graduate students and postdocs and that this is a valid item for NSF. Removal of ORA and authority to sign off proposals at the Department level would be one option.

Starkly different from top-tier institutions is the level of staff and administrative support. I found that I have to constantly "nag", urge and supervise various staff (both within the department and at the office of research) to, e.g. finish budget preparation for proposals, manage the sub-awards, bill the accounting office, etc etc. This makes it hard for me to focus on research, and I know for certain that other top-tier institutions do not function like this. So I would really appreciate if we hire more and better staff, not to police our work, but to *help* the faculty members to secure and manage external grants.

Improve the Personnel Process

To become a top ranking UC, we must depoliticize the personnel process and create a fair merit and promotion process that promotes quality as measured through impact and productivity and follows accepted research standards for advancement.

Both junior and senior faculty must be supported by recognizing those who excel in their fields and through better administrative support.

Faculty recruiting and retention efforts must emphasize faculty that meet the highest and most rigorous standards of excellence. UCR must invest in high quality faculty.



Improve the Personnel Process

Tenure and promotion decisions should put due stress on "high-impact" papers. The current promotion system counts papers as "beans," and insignificant, un-cited journals are cultivated by junior and senior faculty alike to get "easy" papers for promotion. Clear guidelines to chairs and in the APM should be instituted. A number of unproductive senior faculty members step up the promotion ladder with very little true national recognition, mentoring, grant support and research excellence. Retirements and higher standards for promotions are needed. Strength does not always lie in numbers and size, in fact strength lies in quality.

The campus should be structured so that high quality research is awarded and recognized.

Increase emphasis on publications in high impact journals

Frankly we need to hire based first, on research productivity, rather than on criteria of diversity. Faculty need to be evaluated and rewarded based on the visibility/prestige of their publication record.



Improve the Personnel Process

Determination to improve and bring the campus to the level of top ranking departments in the country seems to be missing on this campus. The quality of work is often ignored against the quantity, especially from the committees dealing with personnel cases. There is too much concentration on service and teaching. People with superb research are lost in favor of people playing the game of mixed strategies, good teaching and high quantity of noisy research with low quality.

Many UCR faculty members are more interested in campus politics than academic excellence. The UCR Academic Senate leadership is a barrier to academic excellence, as is the merit and promotion process as currently implemented by CAP, which in many ways resembles a system of political patronage more than an objective assessment of academic impact.

Improve Student Quality

Students, both undergraduate and graduate alike, are an integral part of the UCR success equation.

UCR must invest in students of the highest caliber, while supporting student diversity and upholding high standards of quality.

Just like our faculty, students have equal need for resources and quality administrative support to enrich their learning experiences. We need to nurture our budding scholars who will in the future act as representatives of our university.



Improve Student Quality

One strong limitation to maintaining a high level of competitiveness is the academic preparation of students being admitted to our campus. According to public national rankings, at least in the last 3 years which I have followed, UCR has admitted students to its undergraduate programs with the lowest SAT scores in a list of 100 top public universities. In correlation with this, and at least in the life sciences, admissions to the graduate programs (masters and PhD) require relatively low GPA and GRE scores in comparison with top universities nationwide. My hope is that UCR will raise the academic expectations and requisites for admission into its undergraduate and graduate programs.



Improve Student Quality

Recruiting of graduate students to new or existing is difficult because of the environment. It is almost impossible to recruit students from other UC campuses because of the reputation of UCR. Although I agree with the idea that success breeds success, the campus does a terrible job of nurturing that first round of success on which to build.

The main problem is the quality of the graduate students and their preparation/interest in research. By comparison to past experience, it is simply impossible for me to do work at the level required by the scholarly community I inhabit using UCR grad students.

Improve Leadership

We need forward-looking innovative leaders who will foster an administrative environment free of politicization, and who are committed to academic excellence. This includes supporting a personnel process focused on intellectual merit.



Improve Leadership

While I remain optimistic about the prospects for academic excellence at UCR, I am very discouraged. Most of the top leadership positions on campus have turned over in the relatively short time I have been here, and the outcome has not been positive. This is in stark conflict with UCR's reputation as the most diverse campus in the UC system. UCR needs new outside blood in all of these important positions, not homogeneous faculty who have been on campus for decades. Why no one with experience at an external top university? Why no women in these roles? Where are the social sciences, arts, or professional schools in campus leadership? UCR needs to reward quality rather than equality. Campus administration should understand that the majority of UCR faculty are interested in academic excellence, not personal political gain. I would like to see the UCR administration stand up to the academic senate when the senate is not acting in the campus' best interest.



Improve Leadership

There is a need to break the stranglehold of the "old UCR" on Campus. There is a serious need to reform the composition and operation of the Academic Senate. It is slow and highly resistant to change; it protects existing vested interests that are not necessarily consistent with a first tier, land grant, research university. Faculty governance is important but the way of governance should not be confused with governance. The Senate needs to be more broadly representative of faculty, more nimble, and more forward thinking. There is also a very real lack of appreciation for administration as a profession requiring training, experience, education and specific tools. Not everyone is qualified to be an administrator and there is a need to develop succession plans that focus on building experienced and well trained administrators.

Significant resistance and roadblocks to change are thrown up by long-time faculty motivated to maintain the status quo. This resistance is institutionalized by the Senate "leadership." I hope that the new Chancellor will dig in and fight this battle. The first step would be to hire a new EVC who is **not** a long-time UCR insider.



Improve Leadership

For an institution that aspires to go up significantly and quickly, we need strong leadership that is willing to make hard decisions that may not necessarily be popular to some. Also for a growing institution, we need to have a nimble, lean, flat administrative structure. We need a certain size to be competitive, but we need to be mindful that numbers do not necessarily translate into quality.

UCR has to break free of its "small campus" mind-set and develop a select number of prominent programs instead of continuing to try to be all things to all people. Strategic planning is sadly overdue and a chance to turn the campus in a new direction was blown over the past decade. Decisions must be made that will inevitably make some people very angry -- past administrators avoided this responsibility but the time has come.

Build on Existing Strengths and Have Fewer But Larger Programs

UCR must carefully evaluate its organizational structure and focus on directing resources into our current strengths and deserving programs that could be further developed but which may otherwise be languishing.

In a time of limited resources and economic uncertainty, we must develop an innovative way of thinking (perhaps by having a regional focus and tapping local resources) that is inclusive of and values equally both the sciences and the arts.

At the same time, UCR must have the courage to eliminate ineffective programs.



Build on Existing Strengths and Have Fewer But Larger Programs

UCR has many outstanding individuals, but it has been hampered by trying to do too much. The campus cannot excel in all areas. Programs with under 50 majors should be consolidated or eliminated. This is particularly true if the scholarship produced by faculty members is not cited and does not lead to other forms of scholarly recognition (e.g. grants). Some programs are fine in terms of scholarship, but are too small. These could be consolidated. Centers that are not producing scholarly work and grants should be closed, and others with better current potential should be opened with seed money. These decisions should be based on empirical data about scholarly contributions, not on the preferences of a few vocal or well-connected people on campus. Many of the top contributors on campus say little and just do their work. Some of those who contribute little to scholarship have a disproportionate influence because they speak to a political constituency. This is a big problem for the university, but one that can be overcome if our administrative leaders act on what they know about the academic contributions of the faculty.



Build on Existing Strengths and Have Fewer But Larger Programs

Compared with other UC's/tier 1 research universities, there is a dearth of functionally effective research institutes on this campus, leading to a comparatively low level in intellectual vitality. This campus, under current financial conditions, should not be developing, let alone starting, new graduate programs (with the possible exception of public policy). Likewise, UCR should not be pursuing ill-defined (including interdisciplinary) academic programs that are likely to cannibalize or divert scarce resources from existing ones. Such programs should be embodied in research institutes sufficiently defined to promote intellectual coherence and visibility, while sufficiently broad to avoid being captured by individual faculty or small groups incapable of scaling up.



Build on Existing Strengths and Have Fewer But Larger Programs

I think we have to make the School of Medicine a high priority. The infrastructure, research facilities, revenue streams, and high quality medical research faculty that will develop around the SOM could be good for all schools and colleges on the campus if done right. It is imperative that the SOM be integrated with and provide new opportunities to all existing schools and colleges and not developed at the expense of the existing campus. This will take a careful, thoughtful strategic plan that fosters enthusiasm and excitement for the vision and continued identification and nurturing of collaborative activities that generate exciting new opportunities and new revenue for existing units as we move towards it. Money allocated for the development of the SOM, taken from other campus units/activities should have an identifiable realistic return to the campus within a specific time frame. Can the campus take on and safely manage more debt, enough debt to advance the goal of the SOM significantly?



Build on Existing Strengths and Have Fewer But Larger Programs

UCR should take bold steps in establishing new research programs that increase our visibility. In the past, too many programs have been established in isolation. In the sciences, individual faculty are recognized experts in their research areas but we have been particularly lacking in establishing areas of concentration in which we are recognized as being excellent. We are also "stuck" in our historical roots. I fear that we are likely to adopt a path of least resistance by concentrating on "more of the same" rather than looking ahead. To achieve this goal we should seriously discuss reorganizing academic units (departments and centers) consistent with our vision as a major research university. Research programs, as much as possible, should be organized horizontally (i.e, across disciplines) whereas departments should be organized vertically to address teaching at the undergraduate level. We could greatly reduce the number of departments in colleges which could have the side effect of promoting more cross-disciplinary interactions. For instance, just four or five departments in CNAS (instead of the current 13) with names such as Biology, Chemistry, Physics & Astronomy, Earth and Environmental Science, and Basic & Applied Mathematics. Similarly for CHASS departments.



Build on Existing Strengths and Have Fewer But Larger Programs

One approach to planning further growth is by identifying departments or programs that are excellent *relative to their size*. Growing that way is more likely to nurture and propagate cultures of excellence. Changing the culture in legacy programs at UCR (those that have been here for a long time) is a much more difficult proposition. It would be beneficial to enhance the reward structure at UCR for faculty and academic units for undertaking entrepreneurial and innovative initiatives. This also requires decentralization, so that the colleges assume more responsibility for their budgets and growth. As has become clear recently, many academic units reflexively look to the campus for funding rather than make adjustments internally (such as increasing teaching loads, leveraging existing funds to generate more, changing curricula in innovative ways, and so on).

UCR | Strategic Planning Committee
Survey on Academic Excellence