

Strategic Planning Steering Committee Meeting

2/13/2020 9-11 am, Hinderaker B154

Meeting Minutes

Attendance

Present: UCR: Tom Smith, Dylan Rodríguez, Christiane Weirauch, Peter Hayashida, Brian Haynes, Chris Lynch, Milly Peña, Yat Sun Poon, Rebekah Richert, Xiaoping Hu, Timothy Lyons, Bruce Link, Gabriela Canalizo, Xuan Liu, Christian Shelton, Gloria Gonzalez-Rivera, Kathryn Uhrich, Ken Baerenklau, Julia McLean
AKA Strategy: Tony Knerr, Belinda Li*

**telepresence*

Absent: UCR: Crystal Petrini, Eddie Comeaux

AKA: John Braunstein

Agenda in Brief

9:00 Welcome & Meeting Goals (*Tom Smith*)

9:05 Approval of January Minutes

9:10 Preliminary Visioning

Thriving Campus Community

Research and Scholarly Distinction

Sustainable Infra, Operations & Finance

Unparalleled Student Experience

Contributions to the Public Good

10:50 Emerging Themes & Cross-Cutting Issues

10:55 Community Forums and Next Steps

11:00 Final Words and Adjournment

Meeting Minutes

Welcome

Tom reviews the agenda. One goal of today's meeting is constructive feedback. We are inviting everyone to get into the space of others' working groups. See if their ideas resonate with you and your group's work. What more do you want to hear from their visioning? We may find that everyone is at different altitudes of visioning, but this will align as we work through – this is an iterative process.

Approval of January Minutes

The January 14th minutes are unanimously approved.

Preliminary Visioning: Reports from Working Groups

A Thriving Campus Community (TCC)

Presentation: Xuan Liu (Chair) Eddie Comeaux (Vice Chair)

Their work thus far has been divided into three subcommittees: UCR Culture, Enhancing Communication, and Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion. They are almost done with data collection and analysis and started a document of key recommendations (in the Shared Drive). Over the next few weeks, each subcommittee will finalize their recommendations. By next month, they will have their recommendations pulled together into a preliminary draft.

In their visioning draft presented today, they discuss forging a thriving campus community through the valuation and respect of all of the UCR community. In addition, they propose access to the tangible and intangible resources needed to learn and participate in the co-creation of knowledge. An essential part of their vision is the breaking down of traditional silos to enhance curricular and co-curricular experiences. Incorporating everyone's perspectives and co-developing university plans will help make UCR a compelling place to be.

Discussion:

Question: Does TCC overlap with or plan to engage the Campus Culture Taskforce? **Response:** TCC has copies of the taskforce’s reports and presentations but they are done collecting data. However, they would like a copy of the taskforce’s final recommendations to review and incorporate.

Comment: It is great to see what TCC is outlining; the same kind of characteristics are coming out of USE’s work. The coalescing of themes is reassuring.

Comment: The 3rd paragraph on the TCC Vision Statement is consistent with CPG’s work.

Question: Does TCC expect major changes to the vision presented today once subcommittees finalize their recommendations? **Response:** Nothing major but they will look over the details and the language.

Question: Can they say more about the curriculum issues mentioned in the 4th paragraph (on handout)?

Response: That comment is about the perceived barriers. The committee will discuss further strategic ways to breakdown those barriers.

Related Comment: Including language about co-curricular experiences is appreciated. Learning happens inside and outside of the classroom; it is important to keep that in mind.

Related Comment: Regarding experiential learning, remember that some students do not want research experience, just experience outside of the classroom.

Question: Can TCC add an element about environmental impact? Would this be too much or could make UCR’s community unique? **Discussion:** Up to the committee but addressing an array of issues is great.

Question: Regarding the collaborative nature of research and “co-creation of knowledge”, TCC should consider what that might look like and what UCR can do differently from others to co-create knowledge.

Comment: Be mindful of language like “citizen leader”; not all members of the community are citizens.

Comment: The handout mentions traditional silos in teaching but perhaps include that there are also silos relating to communities, courses, and research.

Contributions to the Public Good (CPG)

Presentation: Bruce Link (Chair) Gabriela Canalizo (Vice Chair)

In their visioning daft, CPG discusses how UCR should be known for its commitment to and excellence in advancing public good. First, UCR will become skilled at engaging with the community. This involves forging a system of mutually respectful and beneficial connections to identify problems and solutions. Then, UCR will actively reflect on their own community efforts to codify a unique community engagement approach. Finally, the unique UCR approach will be shared with others.

- UCR’s agricultural and environmental history provided a unique position to advance public good
- The UCR student body is a diverse social network with complex varieties of experience and information. That diversity means that UCR can think differently and be challenged differently, allowing it to invent the new and special approach to community
- A commitment from administration and across campus will be necessary.
- The commitment can be public and serve as a point of pride and accountability; it will boost prestige, set UCR apart from other campuses, and increase recruitment/retention

Presented approach for accomplishing the above:

- Recognize when people are doing a good job at serving the public good. If people volunteer, give a lecture, or perform another act of goodwill, the university should strongly reward.
- UCR should summarize and clearly communicate to the public what it is already doing.

- Establish a portal and or a group whose task is to know the university really well and know the community really well. CPG is stunned by what they've found and an infrastructure is needed to continue to grow these connections and support and spotlight the existing work.

Discussion:

Discussion Point: UCR needs to improve its relationship with the public and community. Rather than highlighting some of the intangible issues UCR addresses (i.e. air quality), UCR might consider focusing on grassroots community issues that, if addressed, would bolster community relations. Delivering tangible community services (such as building a science museum) would bolster Town & Gown relations.

Response: TCC's portal idea hopes to increase the convening of community and UCR groups to improve community relations, but the committee will continue to develop other approaches.

Discussion Point: Where is UCR already successful in making these connections? The Center for Healthy Communities, the Medical School, UCR Arts (formerly Arts Block), and the Botanic Gardens. Most people do not know that the Botanic Gardens are UCR and 150,000 people walk through there annually. UCR needs pathways, metaphorically and literally, from campus to the Botanic Gardens.

Comment: This committee must recognize that Riverside and UCR have multiple publics and that some populations are at odds with each other. Some community members might be gentrified out by UCR's efforts, and some of those people might be UCR's own students. UCR must be intentional, rigorous, and explicit about engaging each of the communities. *Example:* Recognizing the 1998 police shooting and memorializing Tyisha Miller, would be meaningful to many of UCR/Riverside's community members.

Related Comment: UCR has good relationships with parts of the community and certain families/donors but UCR needs to create value for and maintain meaningful relationships with the community members, especially integral long-term residents.

Comment: How can UCR convey its value to the community? UCR must address some of the mundane inconveniences that are central issues with the community (ex. lack of parking, traffic). UCR should be able to invite people to campus without these hassles. Better parking, signage, and wayfinding is a start.

Comment: UCR has legacy structures to engage with the community such as its neighborhood association presence, a semi-annual city-university taskforce, and the Citizen's University Committee. These efforts could be more intentional to create space for discussions on barriers and resources.

Comment: The innovation hub in downtown Riverside will not just be a place for economic and research development, it will also be a place for grassroots organizations and community members to convene.

Unparalleled Student Experience (USE)

Presentation: Yat Sun Poon (Chair) Rebekah Richert (Vice Chair)

In the drafted graduate student experience vision state, the keyword is "respect" and it is defined as a matter of culture. UCR must respect graduate students' intellectual curiosity, freedom to explore, and individual career goals. Moreover, faculty must respect graduate students and the UCR administration must respect faculty members' investment in students. UCR must acknowledge the many roles that graduate students play. Also, UCR must not treat the MS degrees as a cash grab. There are two main themes throughout their vision statement draft:

- **Mentorship:** Where/who are the good mentors on campus? Are they PhD advisors? Do students have multiple advisors? Do students have agency to change advisors if they need to? Do students have mentors other than their assigned/chosen advisor?
- **Support:** Since graduate students play a variety of roles, UCR must offer a variety of support.

The undergraduate student experience visioning draft discusses the importance of getting undergraduate students ready for life. This includes giving them the knowledge base and skills they need to success outside of UCR, preparing students to be leaders, critical thinkers, and problem solvers, supporting civic engagement, and promoting individual contributions to the creation of knowledge, art, or technology. This might look like:

- Unifying and coordinating student experience which begins with first contact experiences including international and transfer students, not just first year students.
- Creating scaffolding for critical skills
- Coordinating general education and major curriculums
- Supporting engagement outside of UCR (ex. research, internships, sports, work, etc.)

The undergraduate student experience subcommittee is still meeting and their work will be done by the end of February. Before the March Steering Committee meeting, both USE subcommittees will come together with one coherent statement for their working group.

*USE will work on the term ‘citizen’ in their vision statement per the previous TCC comment (page2)

Discussion:

Discussion Point: Prioritizing mental health, especially for graduate students, and going above and beyond to ensure our mental health services work well is an opportunity for UCR to make our student experience unparalleled. **Response:** Mental health, though not explicit in the vision statement, is part of the “support” theme USE discussed. A culture of respect and multiple networks of support will mean that UCR does take better care of graduate students, resulting in an unparalleled experience.

Discussion Point: Graduate students are concerned about visibility. Is there a better way UCR can show support and pride for graduate work?

Discussion Point: More than 30% of UCR graduate students are international. UCR is a truly global but what support is there for international students?

Discussion Point: USE’s approach suggests a greater focus on each student. Does this strategy prescribe focusing efforts on improving quality of service rather than the quantity of students? **Respond:** Right now, yes. For example, low stipends have significant impact on the quality of life and recruitment issues and result in a lower quality student experience.

Discussion Point: Can USE consider the different types of MS degrees offered by UCR. Some departments need the financial resources provided by MS programs. **Response:** Yes, that flexibility is granted by centralizing respect for the student’s career goals in the vision, including the statement in the MS program goals, “or to synthesize their knowledge to tackle evolving challenges of the world”.

Related Comment: Can USE include professional development tangibles in the graduate goals? It would help the university support and recruit professional development graduate students.

Discussion Point: Is there more UCR can do to help undergraduates of all backgrounds feel like they belong at UCR? **Response:** Undergraduate USE has a goal for the development of a coordinated introduction to the college experience program. This would build on the success of existing 1st year programs and expand them to include transfer and international students. They would also invest in a structure of peer mentorship which would also evolve to become a network of alumni mentors.

Comment: If UCR views graduate students as mentors for undergraduates, graduate programs will expand alongside undergraduate growth, as there will be increased need for their mentorship and work.

Research and Scholarly Distinction (RSD)

Presentation: Xiaoping Hu (Chair) Timothy Lyons (Vice Chair)

RSD does not have a vision statement yet as they are still collecting data. Their survey is nearly complete (presenting preliminary analysis today) and they are planning a forum for the end of February. Their goals are to elevate the overall standing of UCR in research and to target and push forward emerging areas of excellence. Importantly, their resulting recommendations will include deliverables.

The survey had good response from faculty (300+) but not from graduate students*. No grand vision came from the survey but it did find a disconnect between the undergraduate and graduate missions. In order to achieve research excellence, UCR must connect those missions. Also, focusing on attracting and retaining better people will help reach UCR reach a higher level.

Finally, Entomology showed up in a lot of survey responses as a research program that is doing well. They are niche but have done well creating a name for themselves. They are nationally ranked #2 in their field and people think of Entomology when they think UCR. Other amazing programs, such as Air Quality, Engineering, or the Medical School did not come up as much and should work to gain recognition and association.

*John Haberstroh agrees he will re-email graduate students the survey to see if they can get more responses.

Discussion:

Question: Could RSD pitch some big ideas about grand challenges of research goals? **Response:** Yes, that will be accomplished during/after the forums. They will pitch some of their ideas to the community and get feedback before presenting to the Steering Committee.

Discussion Point: Financially, UCR must figure out its priorities. UCR cannot accomplish everything but can do some of the things mentioned if there are priorities made clear by the strategic plan.

Discussion Point: About recruiting good people, UCR needs context on how to find and recruit those people and how to help them grow and get the resources they need. An example of people who knew how to make things work is a grant for the medical school secured by social science and biomedical science but they needed to know about each other to make that happen. Perhaps UCR needs more intellectual density to make more of that happen. How could UCR accomplish that intellectual density?

Sustainable Infrastructure, Operations, and Finance (SIO&F)

Presentation: Christian Shelton (Chair) Gloria Gonzalez-Rivera (Vice Chair)

First, SIOF has financial modeling and numbers and if any working groups need things like that, they can just ask this group. SIOF's drafted vision suggests mainstreaming sustainability and making it part of UCR processes; sustainability should be lauded and rewarded. In addition, the university should prioritize demonstrating sustainability. It is not enough to teach it, UCR must show it through everyday practices such as not having plastic water bottles at events.

Before embarking on projects or growth, resources should be identified, plans should be communicated, and responsibility should be assigned to ensure the plans are maintained. How can UCR ensure that this strategic plan does not get pushed aside in the day-to-day management of operations? The solution is to find concrete ways to incorporate these statements into the university's processes, such as embedding inquiries about sustainability into the budgeting process.

Discussion:

Question: Does this framework keep UCR from taking risks? A certain amount of risk is needed for growth. **Response:** SIOF proposes that people should have a plan and explanation, but the plan can be flexible. However, there is concern about UCR growing with no plan and UCR cannot be sustainable in

hindsight. This plan is based on feedback from campus. It is not to say that UCR shouldn't go after projects with risk, but there should be identified paths and accountability.

Comment: RSD would like to work with SIOF.

Question: Has SIOF spoken with University Advancement about how UCR will grow funding? Specifically, unrestricted funding? **Response:** Yes, they have worked together. Development should be part of the bigger strategic plan but SIOF is still navigating the difference between tactical and strategic plans. One way to increase unrestricted funds is development and another is technology royalties/patents. However, it is worth nothing that fundraising is bringing in twice as much as they were 10 years ago. Other changes must occur for campus to feel the impact of increased funding. Options might include Endowed chairs off-setting salaries or faculty supporting graduate students through their grant money. These options would require cultural shifts and there is divergence even about the examples presented.

Emerging Common Themes and Cross-cutting Issues

- Sustainability: There are already great sustainability programs on campus (CE-CERT) and in Riverside (CARB) but perhaps UCR should have a Sustainability center that will cross-cut colleges and gives high-level attention. A sustainability presence in each college (including in research, or in programming) would be great so students know where to connect.
 - Along with this, all of the UC's are encouraged to be carbon-neutral. How might UCR make that goal part of its signature experience and commitment on this campus?
- RSD/USE/CPG: The community impact of research is scientific but also for the "public good" and something UCR should to capitalize on moving forward. Along the same lines, involving students in research and community engagement/service enhances student experience.

Comments from John Haberstroh, GSA President

There is graduate student involvement on each of the working groups and this is a reminder that graduate students are pulled in many directions, they are both staff and students, so please be mindful of their time commitments. While other members may have similar time commitments, there is only one graduate student per committee, whereas there are multiple faculty. Here is some feedback: Using shared documents, especially to report work completed, can be a shaming experience

- Creating multiple subcommittees creates additional work for the graduate student officers
- Tokenization of their feedback and work creates unnecessary pressure

Options to improve include coordinating meetings to the graduate student's schedule, asking them to nominate a substitute if they are unable to attend, using them as liaisons to get feedback from a larger sample of graduate students, or offering 1:1 "catch-up" meetings if an officer is unable to make a meeting. John can address the need to add more graduate students per committee on an ad-hoc basis.

Finally, know that the graduate student officers are committed and active participants and any efforts to improve the facilitation of efforts will be appreciated.

Final Words and Adjournment (*Tom Smith*)

Thank you everyone, we are excited to see these vision statements formalizing and we are ready to work with you as we move into Spring Quarter. We have some groups who have already scheduled community forums, but we are also open to holding forums with more specific audiences such as graduate student forums, faculty forums, etc. to really get out there and bounce ideas off our community.

We will meet with AKA and provide you with an updated timeline and charge for the next Steering Committee meeting in the next few days.