UCAR President’s Advisory Committee of University Relations (PACUR)

May 12, 2016
Howard University
2201 Georgia Ave NW

Meeting Notes

The following people were present for all or a portion of the meeting:

PACUR Members
Yvette Richardson, Penn State University – Chair
Terri Adams, Howard University
Kristie Boering, University of California, Berkeley (Trustee Liaison)
Simona Bordoni, Caltech
John Braun, UCP
Dan Czizco, Massachusetts Institute of Technology
Jennifer Griswold, University of Hawaii
Katherine Hayhoe, Texas Tech University
Eric Hoffman, Plymouth State University
Tracie Holloway, University of Wisconsin, Madison
Rachael Pinker, University of Maryland
Allison Steiner, University of Michigan
Mike Wiltberg, NCAR

UCAR, NCAR, UCP and Other Attendees
Phil Bye, Federal Science Partners
Tony Busalacchi, UCAR Trustee (Univ of Maryland) and incoming UCAR President
Susan Chavez, NCAR Directorate
Rachael Drummond, UCAR Communications Director
Aneka Finley, UCAR Governance & University Relations
Rebecca Haacker, SOARS and Advanced Studies Program Director
Jim Hurrell, NCAR Director
Melissa Klos, UCAR Governance
Bill Kuo, Interim UCP Director
Meg McClellan, UCAR General Council
Michael Thompson, UCAR Interim President

1. PACUR Chair Yvette Richardson called the meeting to order, and thanked Terri Adams and the administration at Howard University for hosting this PACUR meeting.

2. Phil Bye led a discussion about the visit to Capital day the previous day. Bye thanked everyone for their participation in the visits and reminded everyone to send their thank you notes. He also reminded them to use key words from their visits in the emails so in the future, when staffers are looking for specific information emails can easily be found with a key work search. Bye also
emphasized the importance of following up with delegations state offices because he said when Representatives and Senators come home they are always looking for events and photo ops.

3. UCP Director, Bill Kuo provided PACUR with an update on UCP activities. Kuo gave an overview highlighting UCP’s portfolio of services. He reported that Unidata was working on moving data and tools into the Cloud in partnership with Amazon Web Services. COMET is developing courses with Member Institutions including the University of Oklahoma and the University of Arizona. SOARS is celebrating its 20th anniversary and has submitted it renewal grant to NSF for 2017-2021 and it developing satellites SOARS programs at universities. Kuo also talked about UCP’s goals for the near future which include the completion of the COSMIC-2 constellation that will be launched in the spring of 2017, partnering with NOAA and the universities on the development of a Space Weather Testbed, developing a pilot project to support university modeling research in the cloud and supporting UCAR’s competition for the management of NCAR.

4. NCAR Director Jim Hurrell and SOARS/ASP Director Rebecca Haacker updated PACUR on the NCAR Diversity, Education and Outreach (DEO) Strategic Plan. Hurrell first explained that the development of this plan was part of the current cooperative agreement and reminded PACUR that a survey about the needs the universities have regarding diversity, education and outreach last October. Haacker explained that the DEO plan fit into NCAR’s 6th IMPERATIVE to Educate and train a talented and diverse group of student and early career professionals. The goals of the strategic plan include workforce development, supporting university faculty, diversity, equity and inclusion, K-12 and public outreach with partners, evaluation and integration. A draft of the strategic plan was shared with PACUR and Haacker invited comments before June 1, she reported that the next version of the plan would be released later in the summer.

5. Interim UCAR President, Michael Thompson provided PACUR with a brief update on the recompete, which included key milestone in the process starting in 2015 though the award of the cooperative agreement in October 2018. Thompson highlighted the overarching goal which is to win the recompete to manage NCAR and the objective to position the organization as a leader in managing research and facilities for Earth System Science over the next 18-months. Thompson outlined the strategies moving forward which include, hiring a proposal manager, analyzing the 2011 SVT recommendations, taking lessons learned from the NEON and USGSRP losses, gathering intelligence from the 2016 SVT reports, engaging the UCAR community for input and support and identifying community advocates. During the discussion, Thompson was asked what he wanted to get out of the sessions at the Members Meeting and it was suggested that UCAR does some “consumer testing” with the Members Reps on some portions of the proposal. It was also suggested that UCAR host two breakout sessions during the Members Meeting and ask the Member Reps How UCAR has supported their activities and What the universities would like to see more of from UCAR in the future. There was general agreement around these questions and it was suggested that the questions be asked as part of a poll so the participants answer during the session with clickers so all the participants can see the responses in real time.
6. NCAR Non-NSF Proposal Review Panel (PRP) member Allison Steiner provided PACUR with the FY15 PRP report. Steiner reported that the PRP had reviewed fifty of the ninety-three proposals that met the review criteria. She reminded PACUR that only non-NSF proposals in excess of $300,000 are considered for review, proposals can have a maximum total co-sponsorship from NCAR of 30% or less and the proposals may or may not have been funded. The PRP concluded that no proposals were deemed to be unfair, but did provide NCAR with four recommendations: 1) the decrease in university collaboration should be discussed with the NCAR Executive Committee and the PRP will continue to monitor to determine if the decreased collaborations is a trend or not. 2) The panel commended NCAR Staff for seeking creative pathways for developing and improving modeling and other software capabilities that benefit the scientific community. The PRP encourages investigators to be specific in their proposals regarding pathways for future access to middles and software and to describe how improvements in model physics will be transferred into the modeling suite. 3) Some of the large international projects conducted by RAL appear to be based on longstanding relationships with the sponsors, such that they might be approaching sole-source status. The PRP would like proposals that are sole-sources and/or based on sponsors requesting proposals from NCAR be identified as a separate category. Additionally, the NCAR Executive Committee should be aware that some UCAR Members are becoming increasing interested in this area. 4) Regarding the 15% maximum FTE co-sponsorship from FY 16 might have been justified in the past as similar to a university scientists’ ability to provide co-sponsorship, but the latter is so variable that this comparison is no longer valid, so the PRP would like for the 15% to be described as the maximum level of NCAR’s base funding that can be applied to a project having clear benefits for both the sponsor and the NCAR rather than as a university standard.

7. With Yvette Richardson’s second term on PACUR up in October, Michael Thompson led a brief discussion about a new PACUR Chair. He asked each PACUR member to email him with suggestions for a new Chair.

~End of Notes~