

Committee on Research 2019-2020 Annual Report to the Senate

I'm Brett Oppegaard from the School of Communications and chair of the COR committee this spring.

Vice Chair was David Sanders, from the Department of Physics & Astronomy.

The Fall Chair of COR was Christine Farrar, from the UH Cancer Center.

Our SEC liaison was Jim Potemra. Thank you to them for their work and to all of the COR members.

This report provides highlights of issues COR covered this year but also projects issues that we think COR should address next year.

In 2019-2020, COR met monthly primarily served in an advocacy role for better support of research and creative activity at UH, across campus and across disciplines.

We met, for example, with administrators such as Vassilis Syrmos, Vice President for Research and Innovation, Velma Kameoka, Vice Chancellor for Research, Lenny Gouveia, ORS Director, Victoria Rivera, Director of Research Compliance, and in an effort to spread the good word about research and creative activity further, we also met with the Director of Communication, Dan Meisenzahl.

We discussed and debated many issues with them and among ourselves, involving reorganization concerns, faculty reclassification concerns, and improving equality among researchers, artists, and other types of community-engaged creators throughout our campus community.

But I'd like to spend the rest of my short time projecting out issues that COR might wish to address next year, and other members of the faculty community might want to consider:

What will the long-term impacts of Covid-19 be on Research and Creative Activity at UH? In the coming days, budget cuts will be proposed and prime targets will be identified within the greater research endeavor. RTRF, for example, could be swept away and applied elsewhere. Research positions could go unfilled or unfunded. Support of research could shrink, such as funds typically used to support research dissemination, research initiatives, and research assistants. Tenure cases will be judged. Cost-cutting decisions that seem prudent in this moment could be catastrophic from the long view. So how can we keep our core values, and our primary objectives as the state's only Tier 1 research institution intact?

While all aspects of a university are important, COR considers the creation of new knowledge as a distinguishing enterprise and a foundational source of value. We therefore challenge UH to look at the pandemic as an opportunity to increase our community value through more research and creative activity, not less, as we are the ones, through research and development, creating new cures, new economies, and new careers.