

What is the Role of the Faculty in the Management of the National Laboratories?

Academic Council Subcommittee on the National Laboratories (ACSCONL)

White Paper VIII – April 2004

President's Council on the National Laboratories

The membership of the President's Council on the National Laboratories reports to the President of UC as an advisory and oversight body. UC faculty constitute 20% of its membership. Seven UC faculty members currently serve on the President's Council including the vice chair, current chair and former chair of the Academic Senate, and the chair of the University Committee on Research Policy (UCORP). The Council advises the President on all matters related to the management and operation of the labs. It meets three times a year, once at each of the laboratories. The Council conducts much of its work through its five Panels, which also have faculty representation. Two of the Panels address the programmatic missions of the laboratories and the other three review the functional aspects of laboratory operations. The Panels are advisory to the Council and are chaired by a member of the Council. Although a board of directors is slated to replace the current President's Council as the University's oversight body, the panel structure will be retained and the Senate will be similarly represented on the new board.

Recent Academic Senate Activities Related to UC's Relationship with the DOE Labs:

University Committee on Research Policy (UCORP)

In October of 2000, when the DOE announced its intention to begin negotiations with UC to extend the contracts of the Los Alamos and Livermore National Labs, the Academic Council asked the Senate's lead committee on the DOE Labs, the University Committee on Research Policy (UCORP), to assess the pros and cons of the proposed contract extension. Since it was DOE's stated intention to complete negotiations with UC by the end of that calendar year, the Council requested that UCORP complete its report by December. In view of the limited response time available, UCORP members decided to focus their report on those issues directly related to DOE's proposed modifications to the existing contract, and highlight their larger concerns in preparation for future negotiations that would take place in three years when the current contracts expired. UCORP also concluded that some mechanism should be developed whereby issues such as the direction the labs are taking and the advantages/disadvantages to UC's engagement with the DOE could be properly vetted with interested faculty before the next contracts were negotiated in 2005. In December 2000, UCORP submitted a report to the Academic Council acquiescing to the extension of the contracts, conditional upon the formation of a Task Force which, "by evaluating the pros and cons of UC management, would provide the basis for informed faculty input during the subsequent round of contract negotiations." The UCORP report is available at: <http://bartok.ucsc.edu/peter/labs/DOE.html>

UCORP's Subcommittee on the UC-DOE Labs

In response to the UCORP report, in the spring of 2001 the Academic Council constituted a UCORP subcommittee on the National Labs that would undertake the task of evaluating the costs and benefits to UC, to the labs, and to the national mission of the labs, of UC's management of the DOE labs. The subcommittee would report to UCORP and through it to the Academic Council, but include some faculty members from outside of the committee. Its

essential charge was to examine the benefits and costs to the University of California and to the nation of UC's management and oversight of the three national labs, and evaluate the university's ability to manage these important national resources in the context of recent changes in UC's relationship with DOE. Over a two year period the subcommittee consulted widely, meeting with administrators from the Office of the President and Office of Lab Management, all nine of the Academic Senate Campus Executive Committees, and with the lab managers and technical staff of the National Labs through visits to all the laboratories. A primary interest of the subcommittee was to explore possible long-term modes of interaction between the campus faculty and laboratory technical staffs that would enhance the mission goals of both the campuses and the laboratories. The subcommittee's interim report was received by the Academic Council in the fall of 2003 and is posted at:

<http://www.universityofcalifornia.edu/senate/committees/ucorp/doesubcommittee.pdf>

Academic Council Special Committee on the DOE Labs (ACSCONL)

The Academic Council received the subcommittee's report just as the Secretary of Energy announced his intention to open the LANL contract to competitive bidding due to a series of widely publicized lapses in security and accounting. Because of the complex and timely issues surrounding these events, the Academic Council felt that the faculty should take a more active role in shaping the future direction of the University's relationship with the labs. To achieve this goal, in May 2003 the Council reconstituted the UCORP subcommittee as a Special Committee of the Academic Council on the National Labs (ACSCONL), and included in its membership both the Chair and Vice Chair of the Academic Senate. ACSCONL was charged to begin a dialogue with the Office of the President and Office of Lab Management on issues that the University would have to face prior to any decision about the competition. Two additional important tasks were to inform the faculty about the labs, and to solicit the views of the Senate about whether or not UC should compete for the LLNL and LANL contracts. (Since the research occurring at LBNL is all unclassified and closely connected to research taking place at UC Berkeley, it was decided that there was no serious controversy about submitting a bid to continue the management of LBNL.) In addition to the foregoing charge, the ACSCONL Chair was asked to file a monthly report on the committee's activities with the Academic Council.

To keep abreast of events as they occur, ACSCONL holds regular meetings with administrators from the Office of the President and Office of Lab management, and will soon have visited both LANL and LLNL to hear the views of the lab management personnel and technical staff. Based in part on the information it has gathered, ACSCONL has drafted a series of white papers, including this one, covering a wide range of lab related topics, which are intended to inform the faculty on all of the issues. The white papers are posted on the ACSCONL webpage (<http://www.universityofcalifornia.edu/senate/committees/council/acscconl/reports.html>), and broadly distributed to interested faculty. In addition, several campuses plan to hold town hall meetings to discuss UC's relationship with LLNL and LANL, and whether the University should compete for continued management. Members of ACSCONL will attend to answer questions. These efforts are in preparation for ACSCONL's electronic survey of Senate faculty, which is scheduled to take place during the first week of May 2004. Senate members will be polled about their concerns and opinions regarding UC's management of the DOE Labs. When an analysis of the survey is completed, the results will be communicated to UC President Dynes, the Board of Regents, and to the public.