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AIARU: Panel 2 - Organization and Structure of the Modern Research University

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**Panel #2: Organization and Structure of the Modern Research
University**

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I'll try to speed through these notes. And I'll probably work through my script just so I don't blow it here.

So our challenge is to seek out support and recognize and reward research and therefore teaching, since this is a UC, that tackles questions and issues that transcend any one discipline. And for the purposes of this discussion, that's how I'm going to define "interdisciplinary."

If other UCs, or research universities in general are any guide, structures of hiring, promotion, and tenure often impede such collaborations. Through existing practices of resource flows and faculty assessment, and they may not be able to respond in a timely manner to emerging scholarly thought and research and especially if they do not work effectively to promote an understanding of the value and necessity of multidisciplinary collaboration and knowledge in general education, in undergraduate education.

Although this may seem counter-intuitive, I would like to argue that the latter, that is, that

undergraduate teaching while perhaps seemingly peripheral to the discussion of structures that are focused on fostering great research, is actually the central problem. The implicit or explicit partitioning off undergraduate education in structure as something separate from research undermines both teaching and research.

Faculties see their roles in each realm as separate and perhaps at odds instead of seeing them as one and the same. In this I am not suggesting that research be led by undergraduate teaching but, instead, the opposite: undergraduate education must be brought more into research to the benefit of both faculty and students. And that requires developing a structure that brings undergraduate education more into research.

Schools, departments, and even graduate groups are the standard currency of UCs when it comes to organization. In a fully integrated research, teaching, and service institution, however, organized research units--ORUs--can't be excluded as meaningful players in structure. They need to be elevated and enhanced in the university structure although with a distinct role. I suggest that ORUs should function almost like traditional colleges, in the college systems such as what we have at UC San Diego. They should be broadly defined and organized around issues that benefit from multiple diverse disciplines. Perhaps with ties to interdisciplinary graduate groups although not necessarily, or perhaps that might not even be achievable in the short term.

They should have specific general education curriculum that are taught by affiliated faculty, that is specific sort of core courses. Sorry, I've got to read my notes here. And they should promote faculty investment in undergraduate teaching because they are able to emphasize their research, that is, faculty research in a cohesive and

meaningful curriculum that speaks across the disciplines.

Unlike colleges, however, as ORUs can serve, ORUs can serve as a center for development and fundraising since they have recognizable and presumably market, they are marketable, they are marketable to some audience. They can facilitate flows of contracts and funding for which schools, departments, and grad groups are unsuited. They can sponsor conferences that dovetail with grad and undergraduate education, and they can be visible and active in and beyond the university.

To be effective, they have to be backed up by resources, perhaps via development, perhaps via allocation and, at least minimally, in some sense have some leverage in the hiring process. I don't think FTEs [Full Time Equivalent] should reside in ORUs since concurrent duplicate structures for FTE probably is not the most efficient means of organization and this might also cause problems with faculty hiring and promotion and tenure. Instead, I envision something like joint appointments, FTE to reside in the school and program of a disciplinary department, but a joint appointment with an ORU. Thus the ORU has input in promotion and tenure that speaks to both research likely inter or multidisciplinary research at the ORU locus, and in teaching, both at the graduate group level and at undergraduate curriculum link through general education.

In this plan, schools still control the FTE but broader schools are probably more desirable than narrow schools. Since programs and ORUs can be that smaller scale in the structure. We need to have an, but to make this work, we need to have an effective mechanism to coordinate resource needs and priorities. We can't wait until CAPRA, that is, the Committee on Academic Personnel and Resource Allocation, for synthesis and assessment, as this is much too far along the process for

meaningful discussion and negotiation amongst the various stakeholders, that is, the programs, the schools, the graduate groups, and the ORUs, and it inhibits discussion and identification of synergy between different schools and between faculty in particular.

We need some kind of bartering or bargaining process in which positions are packaged and all stakeholders have some resources they bring to the table. Programs can bring the disciplinary expertise that speaks to the issue. Schools have the FTE and TA assignments based on the undergraduate enrollment. Graduate groups have the interdisciplinary or multidisciplinary expertise. And the TAs and ORUs have the research funding or endowments of some kind.

I should say I've been using the term, "ORU" here. We could substitute MRU, Multi-campus Resource Unit. And in these times of budgets, that may actually be a better way to go to bring faculty together from different campuses for this kind of vision to work.

And then I'll just mention sort of an aside. When [UC] President [Mark] Yudof said demography is destiny, as a demographer, that warmed my heart. And I think that though he was speaking with respect to enrollment and public support, I think it should also apply equally to our campus community, that is, our faculty, our graduate students, and our undergraduates. And as somebody who studies small scale societies and demography as key to those societies, I think that we need to have some kind of model that, that keeps those communities at a scale that is meaningful to us at for our interaction, for our research, and for our teaching. So demography may be destiny for us as well in terms of how we organize ourselves. Thanks. [*applause*]