

GCR Update

February 10, 2025

Washington DC

EXECUTIVE ORDERS

With numerous, quickly evolving federal policy shifts underway, the University of California is working diligently to monitor these developments and seek clarity on a range of issues. The Office of UC Federal Government Relations (FGR) has set up a microsite to keep our UC community informed of executive orders and administrative actions: <https://www.universityofcalifornia.edu/federal-updates>.

UC supports legal action against misguided plan to cut vital NIH research funds

Today, February 10th, Attorney General Bonta announced filing a lawsuit – as part of a coalition of 22 attorneys general – against the federal government’s recent order to cut critical research funding. You can read the AG’s press release here: <https://oag.ca.gov/news/press-releases/attorney-general-bonta-sues-trump-administration-over-unlawful-nih-funding-cuts>

A federal judge on Monday afternoon, temporarily blocked the National Institutes of Health from implementing steep cuts to how medical research grants are funded, after 22 states sued to stop the change.

The [ruling](#) by District Judge Angel Kelley, who was nominated by President Biden in 2021, halts the policy pending further court arguments from states and the Trump administration. A hearing is scheduled for Friday, Feb. 21.

In an effort to block deep cuts to institutions that perform lifesaving biomedical research on behalf of all Americans, the University of California today (February 10) submitted a declaration in support of the California Attorney General’s suit against the federal government in response to new guidance issued by the National Institutes of Health (NIH).

The new NIH guidance purports to lower the facilities and administration (F&A) cost rate for all NIH-funded grants to 15 percent, effective today. The NIH is the largest funder of UC research, funding that totaled \$2.6 billion in the last academic year. As proposed, this will gut UC funding by hundreds of millions of dollars annually.

Background: On February 8, the National Institutes of Health (NIH) issued a guide notice announcing a cap 15 percent cap on for “indirect costs,” defined as “facilities” and “administration” otherwise referred to as F&A: <https://grants.nih.gov/grants/guide/notice-files/NOT-OD-25-068.html>.

UC along with national organizations such as the Association of American Universities and Association (AAU) of Public Land-grant Universities (APLU) are taking a significant leading role in crafting responses to the Guide Notice and are communicating with other close, historic partners on F&A such as AAMC. Here is a helpful fact sheet and resources explaining F&A: <https://www.aau.edu/key-issues/facilities-administrative-fa-costs-research>

Talking Points:

The recent actions by the White House and federal agencies and departments to implement a pause in research funding has been disruptive and created significant uncertainty across the research community. Recognizing the impacts these administrative and agency actions are having on the campuses, engagement with congressional stakeholders today and the future will be important to inform them of the challenges is critical.

Importance of University Research

- UC research stimulates the economy through the development of new technologies, leads to the creation of new jobs, companies and industries, and advances scientific breakthroughs that benefit the world.
- UC serves as an essential partner to federal agencies, helping ensure that the U.S. remains at the forefront of scientific and technological advancements.
- Robust and sustained investments in our research agencies are critical to ensuring that our nation’s research enterprise can continue to lead the way for generations to come.

Administration Actions and Impact

- Recent executive orders and agency guidance to pause certain grants have created uncertainty and significant disruption around federal research funding.
- While pauses are normal for any change in administration, the uncertainty and lack of information to the campus researchers has created significant disruption. [Cite specific examples]
- Not only is some research delayed, but important panels and meetings to help establish future research efforts are also postponed. When such panels and workshops are cancelled, agencies fall behind plans to execute new and important research funding opportunities. [Cite specific examples]
- The actions have also resulted in the closure of some agencies’ portals, inhibiting researcher’s ability to secure obligated funding to cover their costs for scientific infrastructure as well as, in some cases, postdoctoral grants and fellowships. These postdocs rely on this funding for their food, housing and healthcare.

- These actions could cause the United States to lose ground with our foreign competitors

Sacramento

On Jan.10, 2025, Gov. Gavin Newsom introduced his 2025-26 state budget. Gov. Newsom is proposing a 7.95% cut to the University's base budget and the deferral of our 2025-26 compact funding.

UC advocates' voices are incredibly powerful, and we're going to need everyone's help contacting state lawmakers over the next several months to ensure that higher education remains a state budget priority! For the first state budget campaign, we are asking advocates to email their legislators urging them to protect UC's funding.

You can find the campaign online at: <https://www.universityofcalifornia.edu/get-involved/advocate/state-budget?p2asource=janbudget25TK1>

On Thursday, February 6, the Legislative Analyst's Office (LAO) released its report on "The 2025-26 Budget: Higher Education Overview." The report is available [here](#)

Advocacy Efforts

February 3-5 Chris Lynch, Dean of BCOE and Amit Roy-Chowdhury, Director of RAISE were in DC to advocate for support of federal funding and OASIS, RAISE and broader engineering initiatives.

February 24-27 Peter Atkinson, Dean of CNAS, Patty Springer, Ag Dean will be conducting Hill meetings requesting continued federal support from Congress for agriculture research.