

Office of the President

TO MEMBERS OF THE COMPLIANCE AND AUDIT COMMITTEE:

DISCUSSION ITEM

For Meeting of July 17, 2019

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA HERBICIDE TASK FORCE UPDATE

In light of various concerns, President Napolitano recently issued a temporary suspension of the use of glyphosate-based herbicides at the University of California, with four explicit exceptions: agricultural operations, fuel-load management programs to reduce wildfire risk, native habitat preservation or restoration activities, and research that requires glyphosate-based herbicides. The temporary suspension became effective on June 1, 2019.

Prior to the President's temporary suspension, several UC locations had already ceased using glyphosate-based herbicides for applications other than agriculture, while some campuses had begun transitioning to alternatives. Some of those alternatives have been student-driven and dependent (*e.g.*, manual weeding by the members of a volleyball team); others have relied on different means of controlling weeds, ranging from new technology that uses non-toxic hot foam to goats grazing in open space areas prone to wildfire. Staff responsible for weed control have begun sharing these alternative approaches with their peers in other UC locations, and the President's actions have accelerated this knowledge-sharing effort.

While scientific disagreement still exists regarding the possible dangers posed by glyphosate-based herbicides, the President believed that it was prudent to move swiftly and decisively. However, the President recognized the need for a longer-term approach that would balance the various factors under consideration and results in a review of UC's pesticide use more broadly. Thus, in tandem with the temporary suspension, the President has also established a task force comprised of experts and stakeholder representatives to review UC's current use of glyphosate-based herbicides for vegetation management purposes.

The UC Herbicide Task Force is comprised of faculty and other expert individuals from across the UC system, including the following constituencies: faculty (toxicology, reproductive health, plant sciences, and environmental law); students; Agriculture and Natural Resources; facilities maintenance; groundskeeping; sustainability; environment, health and safety; and the Office of the General Counsel. Both the Academic Senate and union leadership were consulted and provided nominees who have agreed to serve on the task force.

The President has charged the task force with several responsibilities, including:

- Evaluating current toxicological research and relevant legal considerations;

- Compiling a summary of glyphosate-based herbicide use by UC locations and documenting the justifications for such use, possible alternatives, and the estimated fiscal impact of various scenarios for discontinuing use;
- Recommending a longer-term approach to these herbicides; and
- Suggesting a strategy for evaluating the sustainable use of pesticides generally.

The President has requested that the task force provide its recommendations by November 1, 2019. The task force met for the first time on June 18, 2019, and plans to meet roughly every two weeks in order to provide its recommendations to the President within the timeframe outlined above. The task force anticipates tackling the issue of pesticides holistically and comprehensively, pursuant to the President's directive, while remaining sensitive to the necessity of allowing for locally relevant approaches, given the differences among the various UC locations' needs. In response to questions from UC locations, the task force also plans to issue clarifying guidance related to the President's temporary suspension of glyphosate use.

The President and task force recognize the significant internal and external interest in the issue of pesticide use and the concerns prompted by recent jury decisions related to glyphosate. The President and task force are committed to examining and addressing this issue in a meaningful and holistic fashion, with the objective of both protecting the University's students, staff, faculty, and visitors and acting based on scientific principles.