

DIVISIONAL COUNCIL
Minutes of Meeting
Thursday, March 10, 2022

Attendees: Chair LeRoy Westerling, Vice Chair Patti LiWang, Christopher Viney, Ramesh Balasubramaniam, Kevin Mitchell, Erin Hestir, Holley Moyes, Jason Sexton, Jesus Sandoval-Hernandez, David Jennings, Martin Hagger, Min Hwan Lee, Justin Yeakel, Jeff Butler

I. Chair’s Report – LeRoy Westerling

A. C19 Updates (Feb. 28)

Chair Westerling stated that the future of the mask mandate is unclear. He suggested that Divisional Council ask EVC/Provost Camfield to clarify the campus’s plans when he joins today’s meeting later in the agenda.

B. Meeting with EVC/Provost Camfield (March 7)

The BSP building is still under temporary occupancy permits. There are issues with regard to decision-making from the state fire marshal. Campus leadership is pursuing ways to rectify the issues.

C. Academic Council Updates

Chair Westerling spoke with UC Regent Pérez on campus yesterday. He informed Regent Pérez of two proposals from other UC campuses to establish fully online undergraduate degrees. If the systemwide Senate were to approve one of these proposals, then the system would no longer have a say in future online program proposals; the approval process would stop at the campus level. If another UC campus were to offer an online degree that was indistinguishable from an in-person degree, it would hinder UC Merced’s ability to admit students and would be financially harmful to us. UC Regent Pérez was unaware of the pending proposals from the other campuses and indicated to Chair Westerling that the idea of fully online degrees does not have significant support from the Regents.

Chair Westerling also asked Regent Pérez what he believes is compelling about the UC Merced experience. Regent Pérez particularly appreciated UC Merced’s undergraduate research experiences and the successful moving of a large demographic of students from undergraduate studies to graduate studies.

II. Consent Calendar

A. The Agenda

B. February 24 Meeting Minutes

Action: the Consent Calendar was approved as presented.

III. GC and UGC Updates – GC Chair Hestir and UGC Chair Moyes

A. Mask Mandate

GC Chair Hestir stated that GC, UGC, and the VPDGE and VPDUE expect reluctance from students and faculty about removing their masks in classrooms after the mask mandate is lifted. Enforcement will also be challenging if some individuals remove their masks and others do not.

GC Chair Hestir agreed with Chair Westerling's suggestion that Divisional Council ask EVC/Provost Camfield about this when he joins the meeting later in the agenda.

B. Remote Accommodations Beyond Spring 2022

In the fall semester, the Senate approved the extension of the policy to allow remote instruction as a reasonable accommodation for instructors who are immuno-compromised or have an immuno-compromised individual in their household. That extension is set to expire. Consultations with Counsel have revealed that remote instruction is not a reasonable accommodation under the ADA. During the pandemic, however, the campus granted the accommodation requests. The number of instructors on campus utilizing this accommodation is about 30. GC Chair Hestir added that HR and Disability Services have been allowing instructors to make these accommodations when it is actually under the Senate's purview to approve the modality of courses.

GC Chair Hestir clarified that the assignment of instructional duties to a course is the departments' purview, not the Senate's. The Senate's responsibility is the modality and pedagogy of the courses, not the details surrounding the personal accommodations of instructors. Senate Chair Westerling stated that the campus needs a policy that protects the integrity of the curriculum and the student experience and agreed that it is not the Senate's purview to investigate the accommodation needs of individual instructors. UGC Chair Moyes stated that the Senate is not advocating for a blanket accommodation policy but rather accommodation requests on an individual basis. AFAC Chair Ghassemi confirmed that BOARS is holding a discussion about these issues and ADA compliance.

GC Chair Hestir asked for a decision from Divisional Council, as the schedule of courses for fall 2022 will go live soon. Chair Westerling suggested the chairs of GC and UGC draft a memo about accommodations for remote instruction.

Action: GC Chair Hestir and UGC Chair Moyes will consult with school Deans and then draft a memo for Divisional Council's review.

UGC Chair Moyes shared with Divisional Council that she and GC Chair Hestir continue to work on online education issues. They issued a message to chairs recently after meeting with curriculum managers, lead advisors, and the Registrar. When faculty request to teach an online course, they must complete a supplemental form and must submit a planning document that indicates where the course fits in to the overall planning for their program or department. The issue is not just the percentage of online courses, it is also about the distribution of the online courses to ensure that students do not accidentally end up with an online degree.

Divisional Council then discussed UGC's role with regard to online education oversight. UGC should have some oversight so it can determine where the bottlenecks are. GC Chair Hestir stated that there is program-level tracking of how students are progressing, but no campus-level tracking. That is concerning, because tracking is needed for lower division and service courses. The Senate needs to work with the programs and Schools on campus-wide coordination as we consider the delivery of online courses and their impact on the students.

With regard to summer instruction, Chair Westerling stated that EVC/Provost Camfield suggested that summer courses be designated with an “S”. GC Chair Hestir responded that VPDUE Frey recommended against that idea, as a summer designation may give the wrong impression to review committees who are evaluating student transcripts. Those review committees may incorrectly downplay summer courses.

IV. **MacKenzie Scott Gift Spending Plan – CoR Chair Sexton**

Prior to this meeting, Divisional Council received the updated version of the draft MacKenzie Scott gift spending plan which was revised by the Divisional Council subcommittee (the chairs of CoR, CAPRA, GC, and UGC, and the Senate Chair).

CoR Chair Sexton stated that the only component of the spending plan that still needs to be finalized is the logistics of the various award competitions. For example, should the management of such competitions be divided among Senate committees, e.g. should FWAF review requests for funds for faculty trainings and workshops? CoR Chair Sexton asked Divisional Council members to review that section of the plan and provide input. The remaining parts of the plan – research funding for faculty and funding for student support – were already discussed and approved by Divisional Council in previous meetings.

Chair Westerling informed Divisional Council that he added a note in the plan about professional development opportunities for Senate office staff, which was suggested by the Senate Director. He is unclear whether \$3,000 is an appropriate amount for faculty and staff professional development funding. CoR Chair Sexton stated that that amount is a placeholder that could be revised if the Senate receives matching funds. Chair Westerling suggested removing the dollar amount cap for professional development for this year so that next year’s Senate leadership can reevaluate the amount. He also pointed out that next year’s Senate committees may decide to reallocate the funding across the various categories in a different manner from the current Divisional Council.

Action: The specific dollar amount for faculty and staff professional development will be removed from the MacKenzie Scott gift spending plan. Divisional Council members will review the plan and provide their feedback.

V. **Campus Review Item – *Justin Yeakel***

- A. Proposed UCM Policy on Use of the UC and UCM Names, Network, Electronic and Online Sites, Accounts, and Responses to Media Inquiries

Today’s agenda included links to the following items: proposed policy, FAQs, and comments from Senate committees.

Divisional Council member Yeakel summarized the proposed policy and Senate committee comments. Senate committees found much to criticize in the policy. Divisional Council members agreed with the Senate committees’ negative feedback.

Chair Westerling suggested that Divisional Council’s memo to the administration state that the Senate finds the proposed policy to be unworkable, disadvantageous to the campus, infringes on

the civil rights of faculty, and that Divisional Council does not support the policy. One Divisional Council member disagreed with the reference to “civil rights” and elected to abstain from the vote.

Action: Divisional Council voted to approve the transmittal of a memo to the administration stating the Council’s disapproval of the policy. One Council member abstained from the vote.

VI. Update on Medical Education - SNS Dean Dumont and Director of Medical Education Hurd

Director Hurd informed Divisional Council that three of the medical education workstreams have been operationalized and ongoing for several months. The following outreach activities developed by AVC Orcutt and one of the workstreams are pending final vetting and approval: admissions criteria, supplemental application, review committee, and interview committee membership. AVC Orcutt also did modeling to estimate the applicant pool. She anticipates that the outreach population will be comprised of 4,000 people. Of that 4,000, 160 people will be identified as qualified applicants. The modeling also showed that making 80 offers will lead to 12 enrolled and 50 waitlisted. This has implications for a parallel track of candidates that Director Hurd and Dean Dumont are working on and previously informed Divisional Council about. This backup pool consists of people who would have been successful candidates for the program but could not join due to the limitations of class size. This backup pool will be used in the case of student attrition. The probability of student attrition is probably 1. Director Hurd stated that once admissions criteria are finalized, it will undergo Senate and institutional review.

Director Hurd stated that she and Dean Dumont recently learned that Divisional Council heard a presentation in February from a member of AFAC who also serves as the faculty representative on the admissions workstream of the SJV PRIME+ Program. Director Hurd and Dean Dumont are unaware of the content of that presentation; furthermore, they are unaware of which questions Divisional Council had, so Director Hurd and Dean Dumont cannot address those questions today. This is a communications breakdown that Director Hurd and Dean Dumont are addressing. Senate Executive Director Paul clarified that EVC/Provost Camfield had requested information from AFAC and that the Senate transmitted a memo to the EVC/Provost on February 24 that contained AFAC’s comments and questions. Senate Executive Director Paul added that she will forward a copy of the memo to Director Hurd and Dean Dumont. Dean Dumont responded that she will speak with EVC/Provost Camfield and will work to answer Divisional Council’s questions.

Director Hurd stated that UC Merced continues to partner with UCSF on the BSMD program. The admissions workstream is developing the secondary application, admissions criteria, identifying members of the admissions committee, and developing interview questions and the rubric.

Dean Dumont informed Divisional Council that the baccalaureate work stream is focusing on 1) the development of extracurricular and co-curricular activities that support BSMD students and other students on campus such as a learning community, medical education seminars, and community building events and 2) looking at what students are doing during the course of the bachelor’s degree and mapping it into graduation milestones at the UCSF School of Medicine. Part of this mapping is understanding their assessment language even though there are no substantive changes.

Senate Chair Westerling informed Director Hurd and Dean Dumont that he received a communication from the SSHA executive committee chair detailing concerns about medical education. He offered to speak with Director Hurd and Dean Dumont offline. Essentially, there are concerns about the proposed change in the name of the new campus building and that all the planning done by SSHA faculty to move their labs to that new building was wasted. Chair Westerling asked EVC/Provost Camfield to speak to

the faculty and clear up the misconceptions. He added that a communication needs to be sent to the campus that clarifies that a lot of faculty have been engaged in the development of medical education and that the faculty have been partnering with the administration. Dean Dumont offered to speak with Chair Westerling about a campus communication strategy.

Director Hurd stated that she attended a meeting with SSHA faculty approximately three weeks ago where the aforementioned concerns were raised. She provided them with updates and assured them that plans have not changed. She will also give them a formal presentation sometime in the next two weeks that will be similar to the presentations she did in early 2021. SSHA faculty collaboration is critical so Director Hurd wants to ensure that their concerns are addressed.

UGC Chair Moyes inquired about a timeline for the official BSMD degree proposal. Dean Dumont replied that there is no new BS degree; rather, it is a series of existing courses that already fit into a number of degree programs. She and Director Hurd previously discussed this with Divisional Council. Dean Dumont added that medical education is a large project that will be difficult to divide into pieces, however, if Divisional Council wants specific updates on BSMD, she could present a robust plan by September of this year on baccalaureate activities. She could present Divisional Council with a plan as soon as next month, but it will not be complete.

CAPRA Chair Mitchell stated that he assumes CAPRA will be asked to review the resource implications of the BSMD program and asked whether Dean Dumont has an idea of what the resource requests are. Dean Dumont responded that she can develop a summary of which resources are forthcoming from external sources. She will speak with the EVC/Provost and Senate Chair Westerling further.

Senate Chair Westerling stated that it would be beneficial if Director Hurd and Dean Dumont were to submit a preliminary plan for undergraduate education and resources this semester. His rationale is that the current Divisional Council membership is calibrated to medical education updates; next year's Divisional Council members will not be. He recommended that Director Hurd and Dean Dumont submit a preliminary framework about the bachelor's program and resources so that they have a record of Senate consultation.

Action: Dean Dumont and Director Hurd will submit a preliminary plan on the baccalaureate program and resources to Divisional Council.

VII. Consultation with EVC/Provost Camfield

Chair Westerling informed EVC/Provost Camfield that he requested that Director Hurd and Dean Dumont submit a preliminary plan for the medical education program for the Senate's review with the understanding that this is not the final plan.

Chair Westerling asked EVC/Provost Camfield about the campus mask mandate. EVC/Provost Camfield replied that a proposal was submitted to Cabinet on Tuesday to make masks voluntary after spring break. A decision has not yet been made. There was a small uptick in COVID infections on campus last week that were discovered through asymptomatic testing. A Divisional Council member asked if faculty can require students to use masks in the classroom after the mandate is lifted. EVC/Provost Camfield responded that students cannot be forced to wear the masks if the campus has deemed the masks optional, but faculty can ask students to wear them. He stated that he has modeling from UC San Diego that revealed that even when only half the individuals in a classroom were masked, the transmissibility of the virus was low.

EVC/Provost Camfield informed Divisional Council that Assembly Member Adam Gray has co-authored Assembly Bill 2046 entitled “University of California: Inland Rising Fund” that proposes the allocation of about \$1.5 billion to be divided between UC Merced and UC Riverside for a variety of initiatives. UCOP is in support of this bill. EVC/Provost Camfield stated that if approved, the funding would be a game-changer for UC Merced, as the campus would be able to build additional buildings, increase staffing, and implement many other initiatives. If the funding is approved, it would go under this year’s state budget and therefore would alter UC Merced’s budget call. However, he cautioned Divisional Council that as public employees, they are prohibited from lobbying for legislation; they can only do so as private citizens. He added that UC Provost Brown believes it is very important that UC Merced is resourced fairly. UC President Drake informed EVC/Provost Camfield that the UC is the only public higher education system in the country with over 60% Pell eligible students and over a 60% graduation rate.

EVC/Provost Camfield ended his consultation by expressing concern that last year’s first-year students – this year’s sophomores – are disconnected from the campus, having spent their entire freshmen year online. Faculty are concerned about student absenteeism from classes and from campus events. He is working with Student Affairs to create student events to encourage a sense of belonging. He asked UGC to advise him on ways that faculty can help make students feel connected to the campus.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 10:00 am.

Attest: LeRoy Westerling, Senate Chair