

DIVISIONAL COUNCIL
Minutes of Meeting
Monday, March 13, 2023

Attendees: Chair Patti LiWang, Christopher Viney, Peggy O’Day, Carrie Menke, Charlie Eaton, Kevin Mitchell, Jason Sexton, Martin Hagger, Michael Scheibner, Holley Moyes, David Jennings, Jeff Butler, Jessica Trounstone, and Shilpa Khatri.

I. Consultation with EVC/Provost Camfield

EVC/Provost Camfield informed Divisional Council that he has consulted with the leadership of all three Schools (deans, graduate chairs, and undergraduate chairs) about the budgetary implications of the settlement with the UAW. If the campus remains on the same model with the same number of graduate students, it will cost the campus an additional \$6 million. EVC/Provost Camfield also explained to the Schools the increased costs of professional researchers and postdocs but the costs are lower compared to graduate students. VPDGE Hratchian and VCR Wilson are assembling a work group to discuss these issues and will contact the Senate. EVC/Provost Camfield acknowledged that different disciplines will have different needs. Boundaries are constrained by finances. However, within those boundaries, there are different levers the campus can pull. He wants to present the Schools with an appropriate set of options to move the university mission forward. One of the things EVC/Provost Camfield mentioned to the Schools is that several Community Colleges are interested in hiring UC Merced graduate students as apprentice teachers for a semester. This is an excellent way for graduate students to grow their teaching portfolios in preparation for careers in academia.

With regards to the campus Budget Call, EVC/Provost Camfield mentioned that there are many different buckets of money. We have minimal campus-generated new funds. But the campus will receive a lot of new funding from UCOP to jumpstart new programs and with those funds, the campus can hire additional faculty and staff.

Issues related to grant reporting and other financial issues: EVC/Provost Camfield stated that the Chancellor has tasked VCR Wilson, Interim VC/CFO Schnier, and CIO Dugan to suggest short, medium, and long-term solutions.

A Divisional Council member asked for clarification on the additional \$6 million and whether that includes grants. EVC/Provost Camfield replied that it does not; it only includes teaching. He added that the first pay increase will be this April so the cost this semester will be small. The next increase will be in October of this year, and it will be large. It will be \$5 million this year and the third year, \$6 million.

A Divisional Council member pointed out that there may be a systemwide working group to address graduate education and the implications of the UAW settlement. He asked how UC Merced’s working group will integrate with the systemwide one. EVC/Provost Camfield responded that it will be an iterative process so suggested solutions from other campuses will benefit everyone. Another Divisional Council member expressed concern that some discussion sections may be dropped due to a lack of TAs to cover them. EVC/Provost Camfield emphasized that the campus needs to collectively have that conversation.

A Divisional Council member mentioned the worsening problems with the campus financial systems. Many staff feel like top-down solutions are being imposed on them. This is not just a systems issue – it is a work culture problem. EVC/Provost Camfield responded that CIO Nick Dugan has joined the Cabinet and his ideas are people-centered. EVC/Provost Camfield added that he understands that many problems are localized at the RA and School levels. The tentative plan is to have “super users” assist users who are experiencing problems.

II. Consultation with Marjorie Zatz, Special Assistant to the Chancellor

A. Establishment of an Office for Faculty Honorifics

Dr. Zatz presented a series of slides with her proposal.

Systematizing nominations of UC Merced faculty for honors would:

- Recognize achievements of our faculty
- Help faculty feel appreciated
- Put faculty on a path for later honors
- Enhance campus and program recognition nationally and internationally

Dr. Zatz also proposed that an office should be charged with responsibility for facilitating nominations. She suggested that this semester, she and an ad-hoc committee could identify key awards/types of awards and compile a list of major, broad (campus wide) awards and specific awards such as those by nationality, along with their website links and usual deadlines. She would also work with deans and department chairs. By summer or fall 2023, she suggested that an office on campus could take over responsibility for maintaining the lists, looking to see who is due for nomination, and checking that nominations are made.

Divisional Council members viewed the overall idea positively and agreed that their colleagues deserve to be recognized for their talents and achievements. However, Divisional Council members pointed out that many of them are currently not having their basic research needs met to conduct their work so the future ad-hoc committee should recognize these disadvantages. The playing field should be level such that all faculty who do outstanding research should be eligible for nominations. Other Divisional Council members pointed out that faculty are fully aware of which awards exist and that their colleagues should qualify for them – the problem is that faculty are currently facing a plethora of challenges and do not have the bandwidth for nominations. Dr. Zatz acknowledged these issues and stated that she plans to retire in about a year and intended to have this process in place before she leaves. However, she offered to begin the process herself and resume the conversation later of who will take over for her upon her retirement.

III. Chair’s Report – Patti LiWang

A. March 9 Meeting with Chancellor Muñoz and EVC/Provost Camfield

The major topics of discussion included the CCGA report on the Gallo pre-proposal, the plan for working groups to address graduate education, and the worsening problems with the campus financial systems and grants accounting.

IV. Consultation with FWAF Member Justin Yeakel

A. Issues about campus financial systems

Prior to this meeting, Professor Yeakel shared with Divisional Council a document containing anonymous anecdotes from faculty and staff about the campus financial systems crisis. Senate Chair LiWang suggested inviting managers to a future meeting under executive session where

conversations are confidential and not recorded in the minutes. Both managers and lower-level staff are very concerned for their jobs and therefore may not feel comfortable talking frankly in open session. A Divisional Council member mentioned that UCSD was experiencing the same problems with Oracle and some issues have been fixed after their faculty continually placed pressure on their administration. Senate Chair LiWang offered to speak with the UCSD Senate Chair. Another Divisional Council member suggested that Council send another memo to the administration to keep pinpointing where weaknesses are and where fixes are possible. It is important to keep the pressure on the administration.

V. Consent Calendar

- A. Today's Agenda
- B. March 6 Draft Minutes
- C. CAPRA Revised Survey Report on Staffing in Departments
CAPRA incorporated Divisional Council's suggested revisions from the March 6 Divisional Council meeting. CAPRA's revised report is available at the above hyperlink. Revisions appear in red font on pages 1 and 7.

Action: The Consent Calendar was approved as presented.

V. Draft Process for Addressing DivCo's COIs – Secretary/Parliamentarian Viney

- A. A proposal was introduced by At-Large Member Butler on November 15 (please see section VI. of the Nov 15 minutes). The proposal was subsequently revised by Secretary/Parliamentarian Viney and was hyperlinked on today's agenda.

At-large Member Butler summarized the proposed process. The main points are that upon request made to the Secretary/Parliamentarian by at least one member, who may remain anonymous, this alternative COI process is invoked. The alternative process can also be invoked directly by the Chair. In this alternative process, each member submits a conflict of interest statement to the Secretary/Parliamentarian, addressing real or plausibly perceived potential conflicts. This can be one sentence, "I have no real or plausibly perceived conflicts of interest." Or, it can be a longer statement.

A Divisional Council member suggested revising the introductory sentence to not quantify the number of Council members but rather "many members" of Divisional Council. CRE Chair and Secretary/Parliamentarian Viney agreed with this revision.

A Divisional Council member stated that if there are a number of members of Divisional Council who have conflicts of interest in a certain issue, then perhaps that issue should be delegated to CRE or another ad-hoc committee.

CRE Chair and Secretary/Parliamentarian Viney pointed out that members of those committees could also have conflicts of interest. Another Divisional Council member asked what would happen if a member submitted their conflict of interest statement but another member disagreed with it? Another Council member suggested drafting a guideline that lists the potential situations in which conflicts of interest may arise, such as proposals for the creation of new departments. A member noted that examples of conflicts of interest are already provided in the existing DivCo recusal policy. It was also pointed out that the result of this policy would not be to exclude or force recusal upon any member, but rather to add information to the transmittal of a vote on the matter.

Action: Due to a lack of consensus, this discussion will be continued at the next Divisional Council meeting.

VI. Assembly of the Academic Senate (Feb. 8) – At-Large Member Trounstine

At-large Member Trounstine gave the following updates:

- Assembly members were introduced to new Provost and Executive Vice President of Academic Affairs, Katherine Newman.
- Discussions on how to think about graduate training following the UAW settlement. Specifically, the conversation is how to delineate between graduate education and graduate employment. CCGA is also holding this discussion.
- Other UC campuses are using bridge funding for faculty to cover the costs of their GSRs and postdocs. At UC Merced, the EVC/Provost is providing that funding only for assistant professors.
- The state’s emergency regulations for COVID will be removed in May 2023. This will require the UC to change its policies. Information is forthcoming to the campuses on how to proceed.
- The UC did receive a 5% budget increase from the legislature.

VII. Recommendation from the New School Process Work Group – Co-Chair Mitchell

CAPRA Chair Mitchell clarified again that the process being proposed will not be retroactively applied to the Gallo School proposal.

Action: Divisional Council endorsed the Work Group’s recommendation.

VIII. Discussion: CCGA Report on the Gallo Pre-proposal

Divisional Council members continued the discussion from the last Council meeting. At-large Member Trounstine, who is working with two other Divisional Council members on a memo regarding what Divisional Council wanted to get from the work groups and mediation surrounding the Gallo School, asked the following questions: how does Divisional Council see itself in this process? Is Divisional Council playing a role in shaping the outcomes of the work groups? The Gallo pre-proposal was not endorsed by Divisional Council. Per the Compendium, the next step is for Divisional Council to ask the proposers to revise. Another Divisional Council member suggested multiple memos: one to the proposers, one to the administration, and one to the campus community that contains an outline of the procedure and a flowchart or roadmap of next steps.

Action: Divisional Council members will continue the discussion over email.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 10:30 am.

Attest: Patti LiWang, Senate Chair