

DIVISIONAL COUNCIL
Minutes of Meeting
Thursday, September 28, 2023

Attendees: Chair Patti LiWang, Matt Hibbing, Christopher Viney, Sean Malloy, Marcos Garcia-Ojeda, Kevin Mitchell, Tao Ye, Sarah Depaoli, Michael Scheibner, Heather Bortfeld, Yanbao Ma, Shilpa Khatri, Muey Saeteurn, Alexander Petersen, and Martin Hagger.

I. Consent Calendar

- A. Today's agenda
- B. September 14 Meeting Minutes

Action: The Consent Calendar was approved as presented.

II. Consultation with Interim EVC/Provost Zatz

Interim EVC/Provost Zatz gave the following updates:

- A federal government shutdown is likely. SPO has been preparing. A communication will be issued to the campus on Monday.
- SSHA Dean Gilger is stepping down in December. Interim EVC/Provost Zatz is currently interviewing interim Dean candidates. The interim Dean will begin in the spring semester.
- VPDUE Frey is stepping down on November 1 as she has accepted the position of Provost at Nevada State University. Interim EVC/Provost Zatz is accepting interim VPDUE applications until October 9. After that time, she will appoint the interim VPDUE and launch a national search for the permanent replacement.
- She gave a presentation in yesterday's CAPRA meeting on the Academic Affairs budget and vacancies. She offered to share the information with Divisional Council if they are interested.

Chair LiWang asked about conversations around graduate education. Interim EVC/Provost Zatz replied that she, VPDGE Hratchian, and VCR Wilson will attend the systemwide Congress on the Future of Graduate Education on October 9. There are conversations across the UC system and nationally about what constitutes graduate student employment versus what constitutes graduate education. Similar conversations are occurring about whether professional development/training counts as work time or as research.

Interim EVC/Provost Zatz is working on opportunities to bring faculty and staff together once a week or every two weeks. Ideas currently being considered are regular faculty/staff lunches and happy hours on campus. She is also encouraging departments to establish awards committees so faculty can nominate their colleagues for discipline-based awards. She also wants to establish a mechanism at the campus level for higher awards. This is good for faculty morale and is beneficial to UC Merced as it showcases the excellence of our faculty research. She encouraged Divisional Council members to send her additional ideas on raising faculty morale.

III. Chair's Report – Patti LiWang

- A. Chair LiWang welcomed new at-large member Kara McCloskey, SSHA Executive Committee Chair Martin Hagger, and SoE Executive Committee Chair Alexander Petersen.
- B. September 27 Academic Council
 - Discussion about whether GSR is considered employment or education.
 - Systemwide congress on graduate education is on October 9. Congress organizers encouraged attendance by Zoom. Senate Chair LiWang and Senate Executive Director Paul are confirming whether all faculty are welcome to attend.
 - Discussion about extending the grade appeal deadline.
 - There is a systemwide working group on workload
 - The administration announced that beginning next year, merit-based scholarships will no longer be subtracted from students' financial aid packages.
- C. Shared Governance Retreat is Friday, September 29.
- D. The Chancellor's State of the Campus speech is October 9 from 9:00 – 11:00 am in the Lakireddy Ballroom. Senate Chair LiWang encourages Divisional Council members to attend.

IV. Consultation with FACS Chair Dawson

FACS Chair Dawson summarized FACS' function and shared the below links.

- FACS membership
<https://sustainability.ucmerced.edu/facs>
- Sustainability Working Group
<https://sustainability.ucmerced.edu/initiatives/sustainability-working-group-swg>
Acts as a clearing house between leadership and faculty, staff, and students so the campus can better coordinate sustainability activities.

FACS Chair Dawson informed Divisional Council that last year, they updated sustainability PLOs. An instructor is working with the Registrar to add these into the syllabi as an option for faculty.

With funds it received from the EVC/Provost FACS aims to recruit two student success interns to focus on biodiversity and natural trails (links below) and to help build pathways to sustainability education and careers.

Biodiversity (SSI project last year)

<https://sustainability.ucmerced.edu/facs/biodiversity>

Natural trails

<https://sustainability.ucmerced.edu/current-projects/natural-trails>

Decarbonization

<https://sustainability.ucmerced.edu/current-projects/decarbonization-0>

FACS goals for the year

- Communications - [listserv](#), update website, monthly feature (Bristin Jones)
- Building community & collaborations, leveraging 'grass roots' interest through faculty-staff-student mini-grants
 - 3 fall, 3 spring around Earth month
 - UCM community feedback form
- Education
 - Sustainability 'PLOS' (Tom Hothem; see below)
 - voluntary adoption/trial with sustainability-oriented depts/programs
 - working with Registrar to put them into Curriculog, so faculty could add them as options if they wanted
 - will seek GE and UGC feedback about more formal implementation.
- Research
 - No COR seed grant supplement for sustainability awards this year due to budget situation (and lots of other funding)
 - Priority to better engage postdocs and non-senate research-series (Sam Markolf, Brandi McKuin)
- Initiatives/capacity building
 - Recruiting two Student Success Interns (SSIs)
 - Biodiversity: mapping restorative sites, nature trails
 - Mapping UCM experiences to career opportunities (with Provost's Office and OS)

FACS Draft Updated Sustainability PLOS, 1 September 2023

1. Describe various drivers, consequences, and trade-offs of environmental dynamics (both locally and globally).
2. Analyze ecological, social, and technological systems in scientific, cultural, and/or historical contexts.
3. Evaluate environmental and economic resource streams, noting relationships among them.
4. Apply appropriate quantitative and qualitative reasoning to the analysis of environmental systems.
5. Promote sustainability by practicing critical inquiry, creative expression, social justice, and community engagement.

FACS Chair Dawson then summarized a communication that will be transmitted to the Chancellor from FACS, ASUCM, and the Chancellor's Advisory Committee on Sustainability. The five recommendations in the communication are:

- the assessment of the campus existing infrastructure to achieve direct emissions reductions through the decarbonization study
- zero out unnecessary waste production, including: balloons at events, plastic bags at the UC Merced bookstore, Pavilion, and other campus services
- develop a biodiversity plan for campus
- at least double the number of green labs and at least double the number of green offices
- support sustainable transportation

FACS Chair Dawson conveyed a general concern that a commitment to sustainability as stated in the campus strategic plan is currently not well supported and there is a need to look for opportunities to better support it.

A Divisional Council member raised the issue of the lack of social space on campus, e.g. when planning events or hosting speakers, attendees have to leave campus for meals which constitutes a carbon cost. It is unclear whether this campus has plans for a mixed-use area or dedicated area for food. He asked whether this issue is on FACS' radar. FACS Chair Dawson responded that he will speak to the decarbonization committee about this.

Senate Chair LiWang asked how all the sustainability-related committees on campus fit together. FACS Chair Dawson replied that there are different constituencies on campus. FACS is the body that works with the Academic Senate to advance sustainability through avenues in research and education. The working group was set up by a former EVC/Provost to provide a venue for each constituency to come together formally to make recommendations to the administration. Senate Chair LiWang stated that Interim EVC/Provost Zatz is a regular visitor at Divisional Council meetings this year so urged Council members continue to raise sustainability issues with her.

V. September 29 Shared Governance Retreat – Chair LiWang and All

The retreat agenda was distributed to attendees.

Senate Chair LiWang asked how to make certain items actionable. CAPRA Chair Mitchell responded that it will be difficult to come up with solutions in one retreat but attendees can establish general concerns and suggest which committees can work on them. EDI Chair Garcia-Ojeda added that faculty also need to be provided with resources to execute the solutions. Senate Vice-Chair Hibbing stated that the retreat discussion should also include short and long-term solutions in light of current budgetary constraints. A Divisional Council member suggested pushing back on the administration with regard to placing burdens on the faculty. It is unrealistic to expect faculty to deliver new and existing programs with fewer resources. Senate Chair LiWang confirmed that this will be discussed under the enrollment growth and faculty hiring topic.

AFAC Chair Eaton informed Divisional Council members that he is a member of an enrollment working group and he and some members of that group agreed that the campus should do budget planning around realistic enrollment numbers. Universities across the country have experienced declining enrollment numbers which is a demography issue. These enrollment plateaus were predicted years ago. The campus needs to develop a realistic enrollment growth that will fundamentally change campus planning. SSHA EC Chair Hagger stated that if the campus wants to grow enrollment by getting students from our competitors, it would be beneficial to see market research that shows how to do that and whether it is realistic. Other Divisional Council members pointed out that other UCs are growing but at Merced's expense, because when they pull from their wait-lists, it impacts our enrollment. It is difficult to attract students here from major metropolitan areas. CAPRA Chair Mitchell stated that the administration is caught between faculty, Regents, and the Legislature and they have had to make promises to the Regents and lawmakers in order to receive resources. It would be helpful if UC Merced enrolled even just 200 more students. Unfortunately, our enrollment numbers have been flat. Senate Chair LiWang stated that this issue should be a priority for Interim EVC/Provost Zatz's consultations with Divisional Council this year and in the standing meetings with her, Senate Vice Chair Hibbing, Interim EVC/Provost Zatz, and the Chancellor.

VI. Other Business

A Divisional Council member expressed frustration about the lack of engagement and support from the administration with regard to space in connection with an infrastructure grant.

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

Attest: Patti LiWang, Senate Chair