

DIVISIONAL COUNCIL
Minutes of Meeting
Thursday, November 30, 2023

Attendees: Chair Patti LiWang, Vice Chair Matt Hibbing, Christopher Viney, Sean Malloy, Kevin Mitchell, Jeanette Cobian, Michael Scheibner, Sarah Depaoli, Heather Bortfeld, Jayson Beaster-Jones, Shilpa Khatri, Kara McCloskey, Alexander Petersen, Charlie Eaton, Emily Jane McTavish.

I. Consent Calendar

- A. Today's agenda
- B. November 9 Meeting Minutes

Action: The Consent Calendar was approved as presented.

II. Consultation with Interim EVC/Provost Zatz

The Temporary Academic Staffing (TAS) Task Force is establishing two committees.

Committee 1: will consider the size of the TAS budget in the context of the whole campus budget and will be co-chaired by Interim VC/CFO Schnier. A Senate representative is needed as the other co-chair.

Committee 2: will consider how to allocate the TAS budget to the schools and will be co-chaired by VPAAS Spitzmueller and CAPRA Chair Mitchell. VPAAS Spitzmueller will serve on both committees as their functions will overlap. The task force is currently drafting the committees' charges.

Interim EVC/Provost Zatz will send a request to the Senate to appoint faculty representatives to the two committees.

GC Chair Scheibner inquired whether either of the two committees will interact with the systemwide work group that is examining the future of graduate education. Interim EVC/Provost Zatz replied that they should interact and suggested that GC make a recommendation on the committee memberships to ensure appropriate representations. Interim EVC/Provost Zatz also recommended engaging with undergraduate education.

Interim EVC/Provost Zatz recommended that the Divisional Council review the presentation that VPAAS Spitzmueller gave to representatives from the Legislative Analyst's Office (LAO) during their recent campus visit. VPAAS Spitzmueller previously shared the presentation with CAPRA.

III. Consultation with Chancellor Muñoz

Prior to this meeting, the Chancellor was provided with a list of issues that Divisional Council requested he address today.

- In light of the surge in anti-Muslim and anti-Palestinian rhetoric and violence, including the recent shooting of three Palestinian students in Vermont, what does UCM plan to do to ensure the safety and security of our Arab and Muslim students, faculty, and staff?

The Chancellor stated that the campus has issued two statements condemning acts of violence and the messages offered campus resources to those feeling targeted and harassed. There have been four community reflection circles and a series on anti-semitism. Faculty are working on a teach in on the recent violence in the Middle East. The Protest Oversight Group is also monitoring the situation. The Chancellor acknowledged the various global conflicts and stated that the university tries to formally comment on the conflicts that have implications for the campus. The campus is formulating guidelines to help decide when to comment and when to remain neutral. The Chancellor's Chief of Staff will share these guidelines with Divisional Council.

- Are there any updates on President Drake's plan for campus education on the Middle East issue and campus climate/free speech?

The Chancellor stated that President Drake spoke to the Regents about making funding available to the campuses for educational purposes such as inviting speakers. The Chancellor plans to ask President Drake how that funding will be allocated. FWAf Chair Beaster-Jones asked the Chancellor if President Drake could be made aware that there is no neutral point of view. The Chancellor acknowledged the FWAf Chair's point.

- Please clarify how new majors will be advertised and supported. In particular, will there be funds for websites that will be up and running for the application cycle previous to the official start of the major? Is there advertising where teenagers spend their time, such as on social media? Is UC Merced working with any social media influencers? Are these new majors the focus of any outreach efforts?

The Chancellor stated that all majors are marketed to first-year and transfer students. The campus employs two marketing firms who use every means at their disposal. Director of Enrollment Management Marketing & Communications Amy Lozano-Smith recently gave a presentation at the Deans' Council about the various kinds of media her department is using. The Chancellor recommended that Divisional Council invite Director Smith to a Council meeting. Her unit focuses on marketing for new applications and now has a budget of \$600,000 which includes funding for retention. The campus is participating in college fairs, radio advertisements, billboards, Spotify, and social media outlets. The College Tours docuseries was on campus and interviewed students. There are positive indicators that the marketing is working but these need to be converted into enrolled students. Over the summer, the Chancellor will ask VC of External Relations Ed Klotzbier how much it would cost to refresh and update campus websites. Undergraduate applications close tomorrow but the campus will likely extend the deadline. As of November 28th, the first-year applications were up by 8%. Out-of-state applications increased by 15% and international applications increased by 45%. The Chancellor suggested that the increase in international interest may partly be due to UC Merced's rise in the rankings and the positive media coverage surrounding it. New billboards are also in the pipeline.

- What is your perspective on the Senate/Administration Financial Task force? Divisional Council would like to update you with the perspective of the Senate members on the task force.

The Chancellor met with VCR Wilson and CIO Dugan this week. He understands that the task force will have various subcommittees and they have meetings planned throughout December. The Chancellor emphasized that the underlying Oracle system works. The problem is the many hours the RAs spend to generate reports. Another problem is staffing. The campus has lost staff and is hiring more in the schools. Staff are being trained as quickly as possible. In the interim, the campus will do some triage until we have a critical mass of trained staff. The co-chair of the Financial Management and Reporting task force stated that there have been challenges in communication and she is meeting with VCR Wilson today to address them. The campus made mistakes in the past in rushing to implement systems without faculty

input or proper testing and we want to avoid that in the future. The Chancellor expressed his appreciation for the task force's work. He pointed out that another challenge is the campus's lack of a data warehouse.

The Chancellor informed Divisional Council that he presented the final budget for the medical education building construction plan (which will include labs for chemical engineering) to President Drake yesterday. The next Regents meeting is in January. President Drake was very supportive and encouraging.

The Chancellor reminded Divisional Council that the Board of Presidents of the California Collegiate Athletic Association (one of the country's top NCAA Division II conferences) voted unanimously to admit UC Merced.

The Chancellor ended his comments by suggesting that Divisional Council invite the ASUCM president to a meeting.

IV. Chair's Report – Patti LiWang

A. November 15 Meeting with Professor Bales

Professor Bales would like Divisional Council's assistance with communication and engagement on climate issues, developing climate champions on campus, and living labs for climate change. Senate Vice Chair Hibbing suggested that Divisional Council invite Professor Bales back to a Council meeting to get more specific information on what he would like Divisional Council to do.

B. November 20 Academic Council Meeting

- President Drake is releasing funds for campus education on campus climate, specifically regarding the violence in the Middle East. He anticipates it will be viewpoint-neutral, but faculty have pointed out there is no such thing. Faculty will be involved in campus education efforts.
- Ongoing conversations between Anthem and the UC (this pertains to those with the UC Care health insurance plan).

C. Deans Council meeting

- The original plan was that Evergreen consultants were going to help provide support to the schools in financial tasks. At the Deans Council meeting, the EVC/Provost's office staff reported that RAs have recommended delaying this plan. The RAs have reported that the problem is that they are spending too much time doing lower-level work. More staff are needed for those tasks to free up the RAs to perform their intended functions.
- Campus Counsel discussed campus safety. Senate Chair LiWang stated that there needs to be a balance between safety and academic freedom.

V. Proposal for SSHA Organizational Change

SSHA Dean Gilger attended today's meeting to provide updates. His pre-proposal for SSHA's restructuring was linked on the agenda.

Dean Gilger explained that he was unable to finalize the restructuring plan before he retires at the end of this semester. He asked for the Divisional Council's comments on the pre-proposal before he sends it to the future interim Dean of SSHA, faculty, and staff for review. He reiterated that the plan is still in the pre-proposal stage. The plan will be reviewed and voted on by SSHA faculty and staff before being issued to the Senate for a campus review.

The pre-proposal includes a restructuring of SSHA into three divisions. One of the divisions will comprise the departments that may move into the Gallo School if that School is established. That division's leadership and staff would then be transitioned to the Gallo School.

A Divisional Council member suggested that SSHA may have the expertise to launch a few of the new potential majors the campus is considering to boost enrollment. Dean Gilger agreed about SSHA having expertise, but staffing is currently too low. Another Divisional Council member stated that she has requested a meeting with VPAAS Spitzmueller to see the list of potential new majors the campus is considering. Dean Gilger pointed out that while SSHA and other schools were provided with staff positions, hiring and training staff takes time. SSHA is working with HR to hire more staff as soon as possible.

VI. Area H Ethnic Studies Admission Requirement – AFAC Chair Eaton

The relevant background materials were linked on today’s agenda.

In a memo dated November 22, AFAC expressed its continuous support of making Area H Ethnic Studies an admission requirement rather than a recommendation. AFAC is seeking DivCo’s endorsement of its memo.

AFAC Chair Eaton gave a summary of the issue. In 2021, BOARS voted to establish the ethnic studies admissions requirement. Criteria were developed and circulated for Senate review and all campuses were generally supportive. In 2022, the Academic Council asked BOARS to revise the criteria to ensure it aligned with a state law passed in 2021 making ethnic studies a high school graduation requirement. At a subsequent BOARS meeting, members were asked to decide whether ethnic studies was a recommendation or a requirement. This contradicts what Academic Council asked BOARS to do (discuss and revise the criteria). BOARS members are confused and concerned by this irregular process. BOARS meets tomorrow and members were given no updates or information on what to expect concerning this issue.

AFAC Chair Eaton clarified funding is provided to school districts. New courses do not have to be created – schools can just make revisions to courses that already satisfy the A or G admissions requirements. Schools have until 2030 for the admitting class, so revisions should be in place by 2026. If the ethnic studies requirement is proposed, it would require a full systemwide and Regental review.

Action: Divisional Council members voted to endorse AFAC’s November 22 memo to BOARS.

VII. CoR Items – CoR Vice Chair Cobian

- A. Revised policy for the establishment and review of Centers
- B. Proposed charge for the Faculty Advisory Committee for Information Technology

Action: Due to time constraints, these items were tabled for the next meeting.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 10:40 am.

Attest: Patti LiWang, Senate Chair