

**DIVISIONAL COUNCIL**  
**Minutes of Meeting**  
**Monday, February 26, 2024**

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**Attendees:** Chair Matt Hibbing, Michael Scheibner, Muey Saeturn, Sarah Depaoli, Shilpa Khatri, Marcos Garcia-Ojeda, Christopher Viney, Kara McCloskey, Jayson Beaster-Jones, Sean Malloy, Tao Ye, Alexander Petersen, Emily Jane McTavish

## **I. Interim EVC/Provost Zatz Updates**

- An announcement will be issued to the campus tomorrow, February 27<sup>th</sup>, with the name of the SNS interim dean.
- There were 90 applicants for the position of SSHA dean. Zoom interviews are being held with 12 candidates and on-campus visits will begin March 18<sup>th</sup>.
- There were 74 applicants for the position of VPDUE 74. The search committee identified 12 candidates who will be interviewed via Zoom over the next two weeks. On-campus visits will be scheduled in late March, after the SSHA dean search is completed.
- The SNS dean search begins this week. The campus will use the same search firm that was used for the aforementioned searches.
- The campus budget call process is underway. School requests are due Monday and Interim EVC/Provost Zatz looks forward to CAPRA's input.
- SNS Dean Dumont will shadow Interim EVC/Provost Zatz for the month of March before transitioning into the EVC/Provost role. The interim SNS dean will shadow Dean Dumont in March also. During the transition, SNS Dean Dumont will join Interim EVC/Provost Zatz at CAPRA and Divisional Council meetings.
- With regard to department staffing, SoE should be close to completing all their staff hires. Interim SSHA Dean Bortfeld is trying to fast track the hires in SSHA. The former SSHA dean wanted the school's restructuring to be completed before hiring the new staff. Interim EVC/Provost Zatz is reminding the deans that per the terms of the agreement of the ACE funds, the new staff must be used to relieve the administrative burden on faculty so faculty can do their research. The new staff are there to assist the faculty. Whether or not there will be at least one staff member per department will vary across the schools. Programs may have to share staff members. GC Chair Scheibner suggested that faculty should be made aware of the staff members' role. Senate Chair Hibbing agreed that "training" faculty on how to use the staff would be helpful. At-Large Member McCloskey pointed out that CAPRA was clear about the need for department level staff; however, in SoE, the staff lines were used to hire RAs instead. Interim EVC/Provost Zatz reiterated that deans were told that the staff positions must be used in agreement with the terms of the ACE funds.

## **II. Chair's Report – Matt Hibbing**

### **A. February 12 Meeting with the Chancellor Muñoz and Interim EVC/Provost Zatz**

- The state budget outlook is negative. When faculty see messages about the importance of increasing enrollment, this is the reason. When Senate Chair Hibbing speaks with faculty, he realizes there is a disconnect in the conversations about potential new programs. VPAAS Spitzmueller and other members of the administration have projections and data they utilize when developing new majors but some faculty are unaware of this and assume that the creation

of certain new majors is only based on wishful thinking. Senate Chair Hibbing suggested that VPAAS Spitzmueller share her data with department chairs in order to have a robust dialogue.

- The Chancellor talked about the Opportunity for All campaign which he will speak to Divisional Council about in March. He wants to do more but understands the need to be strategically sound. At the recent Academic Assembly meeting, people raised concerns about running afoul of the law and union regulations.
- Discussed the Regents Policy on Use of Administrative Websites Website policy. This item is on today's Divisional Council agenda.
- Discussed Senate priorities such as keeping the Senate in the loop about the budget, financial management task force, and SSHA restructuring.
- The Board of Regents will come to UC Merced in May.

#### B. February 22 Meeting of the Assembly of the Academic Senate

- The Regents are still interested in online education. Senate Chair Hibbing stated that the UC needs to be mindful and strategic about it, such as implementing targeted pilots. If online education is not done strategically, then UC Merced will suffer, as students may prefer to complete an online degree with another UC as opposed to an in-person degree at Merced. This point was also raised by non-UC Merced representatives at the Assembly meeting. AFAC Chair Eaton suggested that the Merced Division initiate a review of the proposal for the on-campus experience requirement. If Merced does this, we could provide a model for others.
- Proposed revisions to Bylaw 55 to extend voting rights to Teaching Professors. Those opposing the revisions stated that departments already have the ability to grant voting rights if they wish. Others were in favor of the revisions in the interest of equity. Members of the Assembly who were former CAP chairs as well as current members of the various divisional CAPs were almost uniformly in favor of the revisions.

#### C. Draft Agricultural Experiment Station (AES) Mission Statement

CAPRA and CoR reviewed the draft statement. CoR endorsed it and CAPRA endorsed it with a comment.

**Action:** Divisional Council members will send any comments on the draft mission statement in tracked changes by the end of this week. The revised version will be transmitted back to VCR Wilson together with CAPRA and CoR's endorsements.

### III. Consent Calendar

- A. Today's Agenda
- B. February 12 Meeting Minutes

**Action:** The Consent Calendar was approved as presented.

### IV. UCFW Updates – UCFW Representative Beaster-Jones

#### A. Total Remuneration Study

A study will be completed to compare the UC to the eight comparator institutions, four of which are public and four are private. The goal is to reconfigure the UC salary scales rather than continuing to require large off-scale components. UCFW members were advised to tell new faculty if they joined the UC under the 2017 recruitment plan, they should opt into the savings option first, then make a one-time switch to the pension option after they get tenure.

## B. Healthcare

A request for proposals for UC health insurance programs will be issued due to broad dissatisfaction with Anthem. Benefits will likely be reduced but it is unknown which specific ones are affected. The UC health savings plan may likely cease to be offered soon. There is also a strong likelihood that Delta Dental will no longer be offered as many dentists have elected to stop participating in the plan.

FWAF Chair Beaster-Jones also informed Divisional Council members that UCFW is interested in UC Merced's financial management task force. It was made clear that there is no option to drop Oracle. Oracle was created according to spec (though not enough consultation was done with faculty to ascertain their needs), and therefore the UC has no grounds to eliminate it. FWAF Chair Beaster-Jones learned that UC Merced and UC San Diego did not back up their financial information before transferring to Oracle and now both campuses are having to do forensic accounting. CoR Chair Ye added that other campuses who have transitioned to Oracle are having similar problems with generating reliable reporting.

FWAF Chair Beaster-Jones announced that despite the negative budget outlook, the UC is still on track to implement the 4.2% faculty raise. As a final update from UCFW, due to state laws, not only do TAs have to report sick days, but faculty will be required to do the same even though faculty do not accrue sick leave.

## V. Campus Review Items

### A. Proposal for the Establishment of an Aerospace B.S. Degree Program

The proposal was distributed to standing Senate Committees, the SNS and SSHA ECs, and the Administration. UGC reviewed the proposal and associated comments from the Senate and the Administration approved the degree program proposal, effective Fall 2025. UGC's February 16 memo was linked on the agenda together with the proposal.

Comments were received from:

- AFAC
- CAPRA
- GC
- LASC
- SNS EC
- SSHA EC
- ALO
- EVC/P & VPDUE

Divisional Council agreed with UGC's position as stated in their February 16 memo: UGC approved the proposal for an Aerospace B.S. Degree Program, effective Fall 2025, with recommendations for the proposers to consider in their preparations to deliver the program efficiently and effectively. In particular, an early reconciliation of the resource requirements identified by the proposers and by the Dean is strongly recommended.

**Action:** Divisional Council voted to endorse UGC's approval of the establishment of the Aerospace B.S. degree program.

## B. Proposal for the Establishment of a Medical Education Department

The proposal, together with the policy for the Establishment of Academic Units, was linked on today's agenda.

Comments were received from:

- CAP
- CAPRA
- CoR
- CRE
- EDI
- GC
- LASC
- UGC

Most committees who submitted comments agreed that the aim of the proposal is laudable. The proposal is resource neutral since it is a line item in the state budget but Divisional Council members expressed an interest in seeing the specific line item. CAPRA's main concern was the apparent lack of consultation with key stakeholders in SSHA and SoE and other committees wondered what would happen if funding was no longer allocated from the state. The SNS dean's FAQ document referred to an MOU that the proposers are drafting regarding funding, but that MOU was not included in the materials. CAP was concerned about governance issues given that the proposed department will include only Teaching Professors. GC was concerned about the plan to transition the four-year B.S. program to the MD pathway. Even though the proposed department is resource neutral, some committees were concerned about the time and attention the campus would expend on this new endeavor.

EDI Chair Garcia-Ojeda clarified that faculty in bioengineering and health sciences were in fact part of the consultation. He also clarified that the proposed department is planning to hire solely Teaching Professors because faculty in that series have expertise in pedagogy which research faculty may not have. Divisional Council members appreciated this input and wondered why these explanations were not included in the proposal materials.

Divisional Council members then held a brief discussion about whether they should be reviewing the proposal for a new department when the degree program has not yet been reviewed. A Divisional Council member pointed out that the unorthodox sequence of review may be due to the fact that funding has been allocated and the hiring process with UCSF has already started. CAP Chair Malloy suggested that since the curriculum is created by faculty and departments, perhaps it makes sense to form the department first. He asked who approves the curriculum – UC Merced or UCSF? It was clarified that the undergraduate degree will be from Merced and the medical degree will be from UCSF, therefore, the students' degrees will state UCSF. A Divisional Council member suggested asking the proposal authors for a roadmap so that Council is clear on the steps for the proposed department and the degree program.

Senate Chair Hibbing suggested that Divisional Council's memo to the proposal authors will state that while Council members and the various committees found the principle of the proposed department to be positive, there are too many unresolved questions and Divisional Council cannot endorse the proposal at this time.

**Action:** Divisional Council voted against endorsing the proposal for the establishment of the Department of Medical Education in SNS. A memo will be transmitted to the proposal authors – together with the memos from the committees who opined – that will clearly outline the unresolved questions and concerns.

## VI. Systemwide Review Items

### A. Regents Policy on Use of Administrative Websites

Standing Senate Committees, School Executive Committees and Department Chairs were invited to review and comment.

Background: This policy first appeared in another form as Item J3 on the January 24, 2024 agenda of the joint meeting of the Regents Academic and Students Affairs Committee and the Compliance Audit Committee as an action item for adoption by the full Board. The Academic Council expressed concerns about the process leading to this proposed action and requested an opportunity for an expedited Senate review of the policy in time for discussion at the Regents' March 19-20 meeting. Please also see the Academic Council's June 2022 Recommendations for Department Political Statements.

The Academic Council will hold a special meeting on March 11 to discuss this policy and has requested the UC Divisions' comments by March 8, 2024.

Comments were received from:

- AFAC
- CRE
- FWAF
- LASC
- UGC
- SSHA EC (comments will be provided after the February 27 SSHA EC meeting. The review of this item will be finalized via email).

The committees who opined agreed that the policy is vague, unprincipled, unworkable, and unenforceable. Senate Chair Hibbing stated that Academic Council discussed it and drafted a memo strategically based on procedural complaints about the review process rather than the substance of the policy in order to delay the Regents' action on the policy. A Divisional Council member pointed out that there is already a Senate policy on this as developed by UCAF and wondered why that isn't sufficient.

As mentioned above, the SSHA Executive Committee is scheduled to discuss this policy at their February 27 meeting.

**Action:** Divisional Council will finalize the discussion of the policy via email after it receives the SSHA EC comments. Divisional Council's memo will be transmitted to Academic Council by March 8.

### B. Interim Report of the Academic Planning Council (APC) Working Group on the Future of Doctoral Education

This item was distributed to standing Senate Committees, School Executive Committees, Administrative Leads and Department Chairs.

The APC Working Group is a joint administration/Senate working group that was appointed in the summer of 2023 to advise the University community on the future of graduate education. It is co-chaired by UCSB Senate Division Chair Susannah Scott and UCI Dean of Graduate Studies Gillian Hayes. While the letter asks reviewers to submit comments via a Google document, the UCM Senate leadership requested that comments be sent directly to [senatechair@ucmerced.edu](mailto:senatechair@ucmerced.edu). All UCM senate and administrative units' comments will be sent to UCOP in one packet. The letter also notes that comments were due in December, but campuses were granted an extension to the deadline.

Comments were received from:

- CAP
- COR
- EDI
- FWAF
- GC
- LASC
- SSHA EC

**Action:** Due to time constraints, Divisional Council will discuss this item via email. Divisional Council's memo is due to Academic Council by March 11.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 4:30 pm  
Attest: Matt Hibbing, Senate Chair