

DIVISIONAL COUNCIL
Minutes of Meeting
Thursday, December 14, 2023

Attendees: Chair Patti LiWang, Vice Chair Matt Hibbing, Christopher Viney, Sean Malloy, Kevin Mitchell, Tao Ye, Michael Scheibner, Sarah Depaoli, Martin Hagger, Heather Bortfeld, Jayson Beaster-Jones, Marcos Garcia-Ojeda, Shilpa Khatri, Kara McCloskey, Alexander Petersen, Charlie Eaton, Muey Saeteurn.

I. Consent Calendar

- A. Today's agenda
- B. November 30 Minutes (*forthcoming*)

Action: The Consent Calendar was approved as presented.

II. Consultation with Interim EVC/Provost Zatz

Interim EVC/Provost Zatz asked for input on how her discussions with Divisional Council and CAPRA should best be communicated to the faculty as she wants to be transparent. Divisional Council members pointed out that School Executive Committee Chairs attend Council meetings and can share updates with their Schools. Other Council members stated that their departmental meetings include timeslots for the Executive Committee representative to share information.

Senate Chair LiWang pointed out that the Senate Office issues a weekly Digest of informational items and pending campus and systemwide review items. CAPRA Chair Mitchell suggested a shorter version using a similar template to that of former VPDUE Frey. Senate Vice Chair Hibbing agreed and will forward the template to the Senate Executive Director.

Interim EVC/Provost Zatz then discussed a faculty head count spreadsheet that included faculty hires and departures from 2020 to the current academic year. (This spreadsheet was shared with CAPRA at their December 12 meeting.) Senate Executive Director Paul forwarded the spreadsheet Divisional Council members during the meeting. Interim EVC/Provost Zatz stated that she asked APO to gather the data contained in the spreadsheet. She pointed out that the campus has not always hired faculty in areas where there was tremendous need. The campus therefore needs to be much more thoughtful about this going forward. At CAPRA's December 12 meeting, she asked for the committee's input on guidelines for hiring Presidential Postdoctoral Fellows (PPF) and where there is need in addition to diversity.

Interim EVC/Provost Zatz informed Divisional Council that the campus is over budget on faculty hires (there are 16 more faculty members than the campus has funding for) which are being funded by salary savings. A Divisional Council member pointed out that in several departments, faculty who have left the university have not been replaced. The campus is growing majors, but it will be difficult to continue delivering courses with an insufficient number of faculty. Interim EVC/Provost Zatz stated that the applications look promising (although it is unknown if these will translate into enrollment) and ACE funding from UCOP to start new programs will also be helpful. A Divisional Council member asked for the approximate lag time between an enrollment increase (assuming there is one) and hiring more faculty. Interim EVC/Provost Zatz responded that the campus will not know enrollment numbers until late spring but the increase in applications is promising.

III. Chair's Report – Patti LiWang**A. December 7 Meeting of the Assembly**

- Discussions about GSRs and syllabi for 299 or 295 courses over the summer.
- GSRs and TAs are now part of the same union.
- Academic Council will send revisions to Senate Bylaw 15 to the Assembly.
- Discussion about statements from departments specifically in the context of the current Middle East conflict. It is a balance between free speech and Title VI.
- The proposed revisions to Senate Bylaw 55 to grant Teaching Professors voting rights in the department as Senate members were approved by Academic Council by a narrow margin.

B. December 11 Meeting with Chancellor Muñoz and Interim EVC/Provost Zatz

FWAF previously issued a memo to the Chancellor and Interim EVC/Provost on three major faculty welfare issues: Oracle, lack of sufficient staff, and health care. The administration is working on the financial issues and the Chancellor reiterated that he previously approved several staff positions for the Schools. A Divisional Council member pointed out that when SSHA Dean Gilger attended a recent Council meeting, he stated that staff hires take time given the training and the current restructuring that is occurring in the School. The CAPRA Chair stated that CAPRA has strongly advocated for department-level staff. This was CAPRA's recommendation in the report they issued to faculty and the administration (after Divisional Council's endorsement) that analyzed the results of the survey the committee conducted of department chairs. CAPRA recently asked each School Dean to share their staffing plans. SNS plans to institute department-level staff but SSHA and SoE do not. A Divisional Council member stated that staffing is the most important issue to solve if campus leadership wants the Gallo proposal to move forward. It would be very difficult to build confidence among SSHA faculty unless they see that the staffing situation won't get worse if a Gallo School is approved.

Senate Vice Chair Hibbing stated that he will raise the staffing issue at a Deans' Council meeting. FWAF Chair Beaster-Jones requested that he also advocate for the staffing needs of graduate groups.

IV. CoR Items – CoR Chair Ye

The items listed below were included in the November 30 agenda but could not be addressed due to time constraints.

A. Policy for the Establishment and Review of Centers

CoR Chair Ye provided a summary of the proposed edits at the November 9 Divisional Council meeting. On November 17, the policy and a memo from CoR were shared with DivCo members and School Executive Committee Chairs in anticipation of today's discussion.

Linked on today's agenda were the following:

- CoR's memo
- Proposed policy (tracked changes copy)
- Proposed policy PDF (clean copy)
- Proposed policy MS Word (clean copy)

After a brief summary by CoR Chair Ye, Divisional Council members expressed their support of the revised Centers Policy.

Action: Divisional Council members endorsed the proposed Centers Policy.

B. Proposed Charge for the Faculty Advisory Committee for Information Technology (FACIT)

A Divisional Council member asked if the proposed committee would have a link to the Committee on Research Computing. CoR Chair Ye stated that he will look into this. Another Divisional Council member suggested that the charge should be expanded to include other issues such as any future platform that affect faculty research and teaching.

Action: Divisional Council members endorsed the proposed FACIT Charge.

V. Proposal for a B.A. Degree Program in Biology¹ – Vice Chair Hibbing & UGC Chair Bortfeld

UGC unanimously approved the proposal and stated in its memo (linked on today’s agenda): “Considering that the issues identified by UGC are non-substantial, and combined with demonstrable support from campus and SNS administration, UGC unanimously approves the proposal for a Biology B.A. Degree Program, effective Fall 2025, with recommendations outlined above for the proposers to consider in their preparations to deliver the program efficiently and effectively.”

UGC Chair Bortfeld briefly summarized the proposal and mentioned that Senate committees were generally supportive. AFAC Chair Eaton expressed concern that the proposal claims to be resource-neutral with no need for new faculty lines but the proposed enrollment is 400 students. AFAC’s memo recommended that the proposal leads state how many faculty lines they will need to support 400 students and obtain a memo from the Interim EVC/Provost on whether those new faculty lines are forthcoming. AFAC is inviting the Interim EVC/Provost to a meeting in January to discuss such issues. AFAC Chair Eaton stated that the campus needs more concerted planning and coordination with the Interim EVC/Provost about how much faculty support can be counted on for new majors. CAPRA Chair Mitchell pointed out that proposals will state they are resource-neutral but this only refers to the establishment of the program. They understand that resources will be needed when they begin to grow. GC Chair Scheibner suggested that proposals need to include an impact statement on what resources they need from the campus, e.g. the library. Senate Vice Chair Hibbing stated that he will work with the Interim EVC/Provost on this.

Action: Divisional Council endorsed UGC’s approval of the proposal, effective Fall 2025. Divisional Council’s decision will be transmitted to Interim VPDUE Utter.

VI. Update on the BOARS Area H Requirement – AFAC Chair/BOARS Rep. Eaton

This was discussed at the November 30 Divisional Council meeting and at the BOARS December 1 meeting. AFAC’s November 30 memo to BOARS was linked on today’s agenda.

Action: Due to time constraints, this item was tabled for a future meeting.

¹ Recusals: Senate Chair LiWang and EDI Chair Garcia-Ojeda

VII. Update on the Financial Management and Reporting Task Force – Co-Chair Khatri

Task Force Co-Chair Khatri reported that at a systemwide meeting, other campuses reported experiencing serious challenges.

VIII. Consultation with LASC Chair Christopher Ojeda

LASC Chair Ojeda shared his presentation prior to today's meeting. He began with open access and articulated several reasons to publish in open access journals and the various pathways to open access the UC is exploring, including institution-led open access publishing, repository-based open access, and publisher-based open access. Transformative agreements with publishers convert subscription fees and article processing charges into an open access model and create a single financial flow, expand access, and cap overall costs. LASC runs an "Ambassador Program," in which members of LASC promote open access publishing and the use of these resources by presenting at faculty meetings.

LASC Chair Ojeda then summarized LASC's White Paper. He pointed out how library services and activities are mapped to the campus's strategic planning goals. The White Paper highlights several of these activities to illustrate: 1) how the library sustains and promotes the university's missions of research, teaching, and service and advance the UC Merced Strategic Plan; 2) highlights opportunities that could further promote the Strategic Plan; and 3) Breaks down the necessary resource allocations for the library to support and promote growth and the attainment of the Strategic Plan goals. LASC

Chair Ojeda then shared with Divisional Council the library's overall budget including staffing, information resources, and operations. The library's budget concerns continue: they recently cut \$25,000 from collections, affecting Chemistry, Civil & Mechanical Engineering, and Public Health, and will likely cut more before the academic year ends. The library does not engage in deficit spending, so it is often forced to make difficult choices and engages in various cost-saving practices.

Senate Chair LiWang stated that she once asked the library for assistance with paying for her publication and was told it was not possible due to lack of funding. LASC Chair Ojeda pointed out that the transformative agreements he mentioned earlier do not cover every journal. A list of journals that have open access agreements are listed on UCOLASC's website.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 10:40 am.
Attest: Matt Hibbing, Chair, Divisional Council