

Committee on Committees:

Mehmet Baykara (SOE, Mechanical and Aerospace Engineering)

Dr. Mehmet Z. Baykara is an Associate Professor of Mechanical and Aerospace Engineering at UC Merced, where he leads a research group specializing in atomic force microscopy. He obtained his Ph.D. degree from Yale University. Prior to joining UC Merced, he worked at Bilkent, Columbia and Harvard. He was a Visiting Scholar at Stanford in 2024. Highlights of Dr. Baykara's research include the discovery of structural superlubricity under ambient conditions and the demonstration of true atomic-resolution surface imaging under ambient conditions. He regularly gives invited talks around the world and is the recipient of multiple society awards. Mehmet's Academic Senate service at UC Merced includes memberships in the Committee on Faculty Welfare and Academic Freedom (FWAF) as well as the Committee on Research (COR). He also served as the Graduate Chair and Vice Chair of the MAE department.

Lindsay Crawford (SSHA/Public Health)

Dr. Lindsay Crawford is an Assistant Teaching Professor of Public Health at the University of California, Merced. Combining her training as a memory scientist and educator, Dr. Crawford's research is focused on best practices for teaching and learning in higher education. Dr. Crawford is currently a member of the Undergraduate Council (UGC) and serves as the UGC representative on the Campus Climate of Respect Task Force.

Sora Kim (SNS/Life and Environmental Sciences)

Dr. Sora Kim brings a truly creative spirit to tackling complex questions in environmental and climate sciences. As an Associate Professor within the Life and Environmental Sciences department at the University of California, Merced, she shares her extensive knowledge and specialized expertise of stable isotope ecology in modern and ancient ecosystems. Her academic path is built on a strong foundation, holding a Ph.D. in Earth Sciences from the University of California, Santa Cruz, following her Bachelor of Arts in Earth Sciences and Environmental Studies earned at Dartmouth College. This diverse educational background underpins her unique perspective on the field.

Yanbao Ma (SOE/Mechanical and Aerospace Engineering)

Dr. Yanbao Ma obtained his Ph.D. in Fluid Mechanics from the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA) in 2004. After receiving his Ph.D. in Mechanical Engineering from UCLA, he joined the Micro Systems Lab at UCLA, where he worked on micro-fluidic systems for biological analysis and biomedical diagnosis. In 2009, he joined UC Merced as an Assistant Professor and was promoted to Associate Professor in 2015 and Full Professor in 2021. His broad research interests include additive manufacturing and repair, desalination, thermal management, and non-Fourier heat transfer.

Nestor Oviedo (SNS/ Molecular Cell Biology)

Dr. Nestor Oviedo is a professor in the School of Natural Sciences, Department of Molecular and Cell Biology. Over the years, Dr. Oviedo has shaped policy and direction by leading various Senate committees at UC Merced and system-wide UC committees. At the school level, Dr. Oviedo served two terms on the SNS Executive Committee and as department co-chair. As

founding associate dean for equity, justice, and inclusive excellence, Dr. Oviedo collaborated across campus with administrators, students, and faculty to foster inclusivity and belonging at UC Merced.

Matthew Zawadzki (SSHA/Psychological Sciences)

Dr. Matthew Zawadzki is seeking appointment to the UC Merced Academic Senate Committee on Committees because he values shared governance and the essential role that thoughtful, equitable committee service plays in strengthening our campus. The Committee on Committees performs foundational work for the Senate by ensuring that faculty expertise and perspectives are well-represented across standing and ad hoc committees, and that faculty workload is distributed fairly and transparently. As a faculty member in Psychology, Dr. Matthew Zawadzki's work is collaborative and interdisciplinary, and he regularly partners with colleagues across campus in research, mentoring, and program development. These experiences have reinforced the importance of building institutional capacity through inclusive participation and effective faculty leadership pipelines. Dr. Matthew Zawadzki would bring to the committee a strong commitment to fairness, clear communication, and attention to workload equity, particularly for junior faculty and historically underrepresented groups who often carry disproportionate service burdens. He would be honored to support the Senate by helping identify and encourage faculty participation, matching appointments to interests and expertise, and strengthening the quality and sustainability of faculty governance at UC Merced.

Divisional Council, At-Large:

Estee Beck (SSHA/Global Arts, Media & Writing Studies)

Estee Beck is Director of the Merritt Writing Program and Associate Professor of Writing Studies. Her teaching and research focus on rhetoric, digital literacy, and writing across institutional and public contexts. At UC Merced, she works closely with faculty across disciplines on writing pedagogy, curriculum development, and student success initiatives. Her service includes leadership in first-year writing, writing assessment, and collaborative projects that connect writing instruction with disciplinary expectations. She is particularly interested in how shared governance supports transparent decision-making, equitable policy development, and sustainable academic programs. Through Senate service, she hopes to contribute to thoughtful deliberation on academic policy, support cross-committee collaboration, and strengthen communication between faculty, Senate committees, and campus leadership.

Chih-Chun Chien (SNS/Physics)

Dr. Chih-Chun Chien joined UC Merced in 2014 as a Physics Assistant Professor and was promoted to Associate Professor in 2021. He served on the Undergraduate Council, Periodic Review Oversight Committee, Committee on Academic Planning and Resource Allocation, and Admissions and Financial Aid Committee in the past. He was the Physics Graduate Program Chair from 2020-2023 and Physics Graduate Admissions Chair from 2024-2026. Professor Chien's research is on theoretical physics of atomic and molecular systems, geometric and topological effects in physics, and applying quantum computing and artificial intelligence to physics. Professor Chien was a 2022 American Physical Society Outstanding Referee, a 2023

Kavli Institute of Theoretical Physics Fellow, and a 2023-2024 visiting fellow at the Institute of Theoretical Atomic and Molecular Physics at Harvard University.

Deborah Wiebe (SSHA/Psychological Sciences)

Dr. Deborah Wiebe, Professor of Psychological Sciences, has won national and internal awards for research in health psychology. She brings years of experience serving UC Merced in leadership and governance roles reflecting her commitment to shared governance and institutional service. As Director of the Health Sciences Research Institute for 7 years, she has enhanced multidisciplinary research, strengthened research infrastructure, supported faculty development, and advanced health science priorities on campus. She has served on the SSHA Executive Committee for over 5 years, contributing to academic planning and program development. As Vice Chair of Committee on Research, she helped shape research policy and resource allocation. Serving on Divisional Council allows her to continue supporting campus operations, planning, and shared governance at UC Merced.