

**UNDERGRADUATE COUNCIL (UGC)**  
**ANNUAL REPORT**  
**AY 2024-2025**

**To the Merced Division of the Academic Senate:**

The Undergraduate Council (UGC) held a total of 16 regularly scheduled meetings — 5 in person and 11 via Zoom — and conducted some business via email with respect to its duties as outlined in UC Merced’s [Senate Bylaw II.IV.6](#). The Chair of UGC attended Divisional Council meetings and provided regular updates at each UGC meeting.

The structure of UGC and the issues that the Council considered this year are described below.

**Undergraduate Council Organization and Representation on Systemwide Committees**

- Divisional Council: UGC Chair Jay Sharping (SSHA)
- University Committee on Educational Policy: UGC Chair Jay Sharping (SSHA)
- University Committee on Preparatory Education: UGC member Susan Varnot (SSHA)
- University Committee on International Education: UGC member Greg Wright (SSHA)
- Periodic Review and Oversight Committee Representative: UGC member Catherine Keske (SoE)
- CRF Subcommittee: UGC members Santosh Chandrasekhar (SoE), Haiyan Lu (SSHA), and Maria Zogbhi (SNS).
- Policy Subcommittee: UGC members Aurora Pribram-Jones (SNS) and Susan Varnot (SSHA)

Ad-hoc subcommittees were formed for the reviews of nominations for the Undergraduate Distinguished Teaching Awards for Senate and for Non-Senate Faculty, and for the review of the AY 25-26 Catalog. The names of the Awards recipients are available [here](#).

UGC received regular updates on relevant systemwide activities from UC Merced faculty serving on the University Committee on Educational Policy (UCEP), the University Committee on International Education (UCIE), and the University Committee on Preparatory Education (UCOPE).

Another important function of the Undergraduate Council is to review and comment on all issues relevant to undergraduate education and occasionally on issues with a more general nature. Topics discussed and/or acted upon by the Council in consultation with other Senate committees, School leads, and/or the Administration throughout the year have included:

**AY 25-26 Catalog and Course Proposals**

- The SOE, SNS, and SSHA substantive changes to the Catalog were approved by UGC in December 2024 and March 2025.
- UGC reviewed and approved 211 courses (new and revised) in Curriculog.
- UGC approved 113 requests for an exception to UGC’s curricular deadlines and to course delivery modalities.

**Campus and Systemwide Review Items**

UGC offered comments and/or acted on the following items:

- Anthropology & Heritage Studies Graduate Program Proposal (9/25).
- Proposed Revisions to Senate Regulation 479 (Cal-GETC) (10/16)\*

- Proposed New Senate Regulation 627 (Posthumous Awarding of Degrees) (10/16)\*
- SSHA Reorganization Proposal (11/4)
- Interim Policy on Expressive Activities and Assembly: Protests, Demonstrations, Non-University Speakers and Signage on Campus and in University Facilities (11/12)
- School of Engineering Electrical Engineering Minor (12/13)
- Presidential Policy on the Use of Animals in Research, Teaching, and Testing (1/23)\*
- Non-Degree Certificate Proposals (1/31)
- UCM Interim Policy on Consensual Relationships (2/20)
- Proposal for a Dual Degree Program Leading to a Bachelor of Science (B.S.) Degree from UCM and Doctor of Medicine Degree from UCSF (3/6)
- Proposed Amendments to Systemwide Senate Bylaw 170 and Rescission of Systemwide Senate Bylaw 192 (3/6)\*
- Policy on Assurance of Safety Standards (3/20)
- Systemwide Academic Calendar Workgroup Draft Report (4/14)\*
- Accounting B.S. and Minor Proposal (4/25)
- Business Administration B.A. and Minor Proposal (4/25)
- SOE Proposal to Change the Name of the Mechanical Engineering Department to Mechanical & Aerospace Engineering Department (6/6).

\*Systemwide review items

*Other:*

- UGC offered comments on the Revised Faculty Instructional Accommodations Due to Disability Policy (9/25).
- UGC transmitted a memo to PROC re: Review of Campus Policies for Minors and Double Majors (9/25).
- UGC transmitted a memo to CRE conveying their approval of the proposed amendments to Senate Regulation II.3.A (Academic Probation) (10/16).
- UGC responded to the Committee for Equity, Diversity and Inclusion's proposal regarding hate speech and bias in student evaluations. (11/18).
- UGC provided feedback to Senate Executive Director Fatima Paul regarding AI-related initiatives (12/6).
- Offered comments on systemwide Academic Council's request to the Divisions regarding Implementation of Public Law 117-328 (Incomplete Grading Policy) (12/17).
- UGC transmitted a collective response with GC to Divisional Council regarding the Office of the Registrar's request related to in-person exam sessions for online courses (4/4).
- UGC transmitted a memo to CRE requesting a ruling for non-Senate member voting rights on Academic Senate committees (4/11)
- UGC transmitted a memo to Divisional Council regarding proposed amendments to the Campus-wide Policy for Minors in response to a request from PROC to revisit UC Merced's policies to ensure that there are no unnecessary obstacles that might make completing a minor or double major more difficult for UC Merced students than students at other institutions (4/24).
- UGC offered comments on the draft Missed Class Policy (4/25).
- UGC offered comments on GC's request to form a Joint Work Group on Senate Oversight of PACE Programs (5/29).
- UGC offered approval of the proposed Accounting B.S. and Minor and a Business Administration B.A. and Minor degree programs following the faculty and SSHA Dean Arriola's responses to their concerns (6/4).
- UGC offered approval of the proposed Liberal Studies B.A. degree program following the faculty and SSHA Dean Arriola's responses to their concerns (6/5).

### **Petitions**

- UGC reviewed 22 Entry Level Writing Requirement (ELWR) petitions and 2 Petitions of Academic Policy for an exception to the transfer unit requirement.

### **Guest Consultations**

- On September 27, 2024, UGC was joined by University Extension Dean Annette Roberts Webb and Director of Degree Completion Michael Pierick to provide an update on University Extension initiatives.
- On September 27, 2024, UGC was joined by Medical Education Director Margo Vener and Bioengineering Professor Joel Spencer to provide an update on Medical Education.
- On October 11, 2024, UGC was joined by Associate Dean of Students Le'Trice Curl to discuss academic integrity.
- On November 22, 2024, UGC was joined by Associate Vice Chancellor Zulema Valdez to discuss UC Academic Congress on Hispanic-Serving Research Institutions (HSRI).
- On December 6, 2024, UGC was joined by SSHA Associate Dean Anne Zanzucchi and Executive Director of Degree Completion Catherine Koehler to present a proposal for a Campus Policy on Undergraduate Certificate Programs.
- On May 1, 2025, UGC was joined by University Committee on Academic Computing and Communications (UCACC) member Lisa Yeo who provided an overview of the UC Merced's AI Workgroup's activities and initiatives.

Respectfully Submitted:

#### ***UGC Members:***

Jay Sharping, Chair, School of Natural Sciences, UCEP representative  
Alejandro Gutierrez, Vice-Chair, School of Engineering  
Santosh Chandrasekhar, School of Engineering  
Lindsay Crawford, School of Social Sciences, Humanities and Arts  
Catherine Keske, School of Engineering, PROC representative  
Bin Liu, School of Natural Sciences  
Haiyan Liu, School of Social Sciences, Humanities and Arts  
Aurora Pribram-Jones, School of Natural Sciences  
Susan Varnot, School of Social Sciences, Humanities and Arts, UCOPE representative  
Greg Wright, School of Social Sciences, Humanities and Arts  
Maria-Elena Zogbhi, School of Natural Sciences  
Greg Wright, School of Social Sciences, Humanities and Arts, UCIE representative

#### ***Ex-Officio:***

Amy Bergerson, Vice Provost and Dean for Undergraduate Education  
Brian O'Bruba, Interim Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs (Fall 2024)  
Tonantzin Oseguera, Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs and Engagement (Spring 2025)

#### ***Staff:***

Melanie Snyder, Senate Senior Analyst