

**DIVISIONAL COUNCIL**  
**Minutes of Meeting**  
**Monday, February 12, 2024**

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**Attendees:** Chair Matt Hibbing, Vice Chair Kevin Mitchell, Michael Scheibner, Michael Findlater, 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**

Interim EVC/Provost Zatz reported on the various searches:

- SSHA Dean. 90 applications were received and are being reviewed by the search firm and search committee.
- CREATES Director. Applications are being reviewed.
- SNS interim Dean. 4 applications were received and the first round of interviews were completed.

SNS Dean Dumont will transition into her EVC/Provost role by working with Interim EVC/Provost Zatz throughout the month of March.

Interim EVC/Provost Zatz shared that a campus announcement is forthcoming about faculty socials in Elizabeth's Garden. If there is good attendance at these events, that could inform future decisions on creating a possible faculty lounge.

The state budget does not look positive for the UC. Next year, the university expects to be in deficit. The state is proposing to not give the UC the usual amount of funding under the Compact, but next year, they will provide double the funding. However, there is uncertainty about this plan. Questions across the system include, should the UC system borrow money or use the short-term investment money? Or should individual campuses borrow money? CAPRA Chair Findlater shared that at the recent UCPB meeting, it was mentioned that the Governor apparently wants to include language in the budget that states that for next year, the UC will get funding before anyone else. However, it is unknown if the Legislature will approve this.

Interim EVC/Provost Zatz reported that student application rates look good, but FAFSA is problematic. It is very difficult for students from mixed-status families if they did not file taxes as FAFSA pulls money from taxes. There will be extensions for students and the VCs for Student Affairs across the UC system are formulating messaging to students about this.

FSAF Chair Beaster-Jones asked about the 4.2% on scale faculty salary increase. Interim EVC/Provost Zatz answered that that should still be coming through.

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

### **A. January 31 Academic Council Meeting**

- Area H discussion. There was broad agreement on BOARS about the curriculum; but the controversy surrounds the issue of access and whether high schools could deliver the curriculum that is

- required by state law. Academic Council voted in favor of sending the Area H issue back to the campuses to discuss the access component. Ultimately, the issue will return to BOARS.
- Recent UC Regents meeting. The pending policy about university websites was tabled after Academic Council objected on a procedural point.
  - Online degree programs were also discussed at the Regents meeting. There is concern about outcomes and graduation rates from these programs. At the Academic Council meeting, a member suggested creating a policy that would trigger a review of an online degree program in which graduation rates fell below a certain threshold. This way, faculty can convey to the Regents that they are open to online degree programs as long as they are of UC quality and if the Senate can provide meaningful oversight. EDI Chair Garcia-Ojeda asked about the impact of online degree programs on the enrollment of campuses that offer the same degrees but in person. AFAC Chair Eaton stated a task force is being formulated and he believes UC Merced Sociology professor Laura Hamilton is a member. Professor Hamilton has authored many studies of online degree programs. AFAC Chair Eaton pointed out that most online degree programs do not make that much money; in fact, one well known company is on the verge of bankruptcy. CAP Chair Malloy stated that the Regents rescheduled their discussion on this topic for their February 14 off-cycle meeting and it is hoped they do not take action on it until the task force has opined.
  - Discussion about a potential settlement about U grades for graduate students during the strikes.
  - Ongoing discussion about Math fellows and issues related to communications between unions.
  - Senate Chair Hibbing met with the Chancellor today and one of the topics was the UC Opportunity for All plan that would remove hiring restrictions for all UC students, regardless of immigration status. The plan has not yet been implemented by the UC to the consternation of many. The Chancellor is deeply committed and wants to do as much as he can given current constraints.

#### B. MacKenzie Scott Funds

Upon further review of the Senate's expenditure of its \$1 million portion (previously allocated by the Chancellor) of the campus's \$20 million gift from donor MacKenzie Scott, it was confirmed that most of the money has been spent or committed (faculty grants programs, professional development program, and student fellowships). Therefore, Senate Chair Hibbing asked Divisional Council members to disregard previous discussions on the possible creation of an endowment.

### III. Consent Calendar

- A. Today's Agenda
- B. January 22 Meeting Minutes

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

### IV. Update on the TAS Work Groups – Senate Vice Chair Mitchell

Senate Vice Chair Mitchell shared a series of slides that included the memberships of the two TAS work groups and the overarching goal. The goal for both groups is to generate a fiscally sustainable TAS budget model that enables the achievement of the campus's student success goals. One TAS work group ("size of

the pie”) keeps in mind the campus’s broader fiscal landscape and current divisional budget allocations. The other TAS work group (“pie allocation”) focuses on developing recommendations on how to revise the methodology for allocating TAS funding to each existing School and future Schools while keeping in mind that the allocation of funds *within* Schools is the responsibility of the School Deans.

Senate Vice Chair Mitchell stated that he has begun to draft a formula to present to one of the work groups that takes into account both student credit hours and the nature of the courses. Increasing the TAS budget means decreasing the campus budget elsewhere. He added that there is pressure on the academic affairs side of the campus to accommodate the increase in graduate student funding but efforts need to be made across campus. The goal for the TAS work group is to have recommendations in place that could impact spring 2025. They will submit an interim report in mid-March and a final report in mid-April. Any model the TAS work groups propose will have to be tested to see if it’s feasible.

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

Co-Chair Khatri shared with Divisional Council that all three work groups under the task force (payroll, reporting, and inflow) will present their plans at a task force meeting on February 26. Each work group was asked to articulate challenges in their processes and identify three short-term and long-term problems that can be fixed. The rationale is that the task force will focus on fixing the short-term problems as soon as possible. The task force has been mentioned at UCFW and that committee has requested more information. Co-Chair Khatri has spoken with FWAFF Chair (and UCFW representative) Beaster-Jones. Other UCs are experiencing significant problems when they transitioned to Oracle. Co-Chair Khatri added that VCR Wilson is proposing to the Chancellor the hiring of a project manager who will sustain the work of the task force in the future once the task force disbands.

#### VI. Requests from the Graduate Council – GC Chair Scheibner

##### A. Recommendations for Mitigating Graduate Students’ and Postdoctoral Researchers’ Delays on Research and Time to Degree

GC Chair Scheibner summarized GC’s memo and recommendations that GC developed with the Associate Graduate Dean. The recommendations fall under three categories: financial, administrative, and professional preparation.

Divisional Council members supported GC’s memo and recommendations. FWAFF Chair Beaster-Jones pointed out there is no discussion of mental health which is a significant concern raised by many graduate students. Even if this topic did not arise in the survey, it would be beneficial to include it in the memo. GC Chair Scheibner and other Divisional Council members agreed.

CRE Chair and Parliamentarian Viney suggested, with regard to students meeting with their advisors, replacing “regular” with “frequent”. GC Chair Scheibner and Divisional Council members agreed with this revision.

**Action:** Divisional Council endorsed GC’s memo with a request that GC include language about mental health. The revised memo will be distributed to Divisional Council and a final memo will be transmitted to the Chancellor, Interim EVC/Provost, VPAP, VPDUE, and the VPDGE.

**B. SJV PRIME+: Analysis and Recommendations for Vetting as a Degree Program**

GC Chair Scheibner summarized GC's memo and recommendations and Divisional Council members supported them. Senate oversight by the appropriate parties is needed for the dual degree program. SNS Dean Dumont and Medical Education Director Vener are working on a proposal. Senate Vice Chair Mitchell asked if GC's memo will be distributed to Senate committees for review. GC Chair Scheibner clarified that the memo is meant as guidance for SNS Dean Dumont and Medical Education Director Vener. Senate Executive Director Paul explained that the memo is in response to the CCGA chair's original request. She added that Dumont and Vener are supposed to be sending a formal document to the Senate.

**Action:** Divisional Council endorsed GC's memo. The memo will be transmitted to SNS Dean Dumont and Medical Education Director Vener with a copy to the Interim EVC/P and the CCGA Chair.

**VII. Campus Review Item - Proposed Bylaws for the Division of Undergraduate Education Executive Committee – CRE Chair Viney**

In September 2023, former VPDUE Sarah Frey submitted to the Academic Senate a proposal to consolidate the General Education Executive Committee (GEEC) and the Honors Program Executive Committee into a new Division of Undergraduate Education Executive Committee (DUEEC). Falling under College One, the DUEEC would provide faculty governance for both the General Education and UC Merced Honors programs.

CRE opined and endorsed the proposal and recommended amending the current General Education Bylaws to reflect the proposed governance structure. The proposed Bylaws were discussed during the December 12, 2023, Meeting of the Merced Division.

CRE Chair and Parliamentarian Viney briefly summarized the feedback received from GC, UGC, the SNS Executive Committee, and the SoE Executive Committee. No feedback was received from the SSHA Executive Committee.

Senate Executive Director Paul confirmed that the survey questions will be formulated by the GEEC and the Honors Program Executive Committee and the survey will be administered by the Senate Office.

**Action:** Divisional Council members endorsed the comments/recommendations being transmitted to Interim VPDUE Utter and Honors Program Director Moyes. The final version will be voted on by the faculty.

**VIII. UCFW Updates – UCFW Representative Beaster-Jones**

FWAF Chair and UCFW representative Jayson Beaster-Jones was scheduled to provide an update on the total remuneration study and healthcare.

**Action:** Due to time constraints, this item was abled until the next meeting.

**IX. Systemwide Review Item**

- A. Revised Presidential Policy BFB-BUS-46 Use of Vehicles and Driver Authorization (was Use of University Vehicles)

Comments were received from CRE.

**Action:** Due to time constraints, this item will be discussed via email. Divisional Council's memo will be transmitted to the Academic Council by February 21, 2024.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 4:30 pm

Attest: Matt Hibbing, Senate Chair