

Overview

I. Academic Senate

The system of shared governance ¹ gives University faculty, operating through the Academic Senate, a voice in the operation of the University. The Academic Senate is the conduit through which faculty share in the operation and management of the University of California. As mandated by the University's governing body, the Board of Regents, the faculty is empowered to determine academic policy; set conditions for admissions; authorize and supervise courses and curricula; and advise the administration on faculty appointments, promotions, space and budget planning. [Board of Regents Bylaw 40.2](#) codifies the organization of the Academic Senate. The Merced Division of the Academic Senate derives its authority from [Board of Regents Bylaw 40.1](#). Among its responsibilities, the Academic Senate:

- Determines the conditions for admissions, certificates, and degrees;
- Authorizes and supervises all courses and curricula (except courses in the Hastings College of the Law, San Francisco Art Institute, in professional schools offering work at the graduate level only, or over non-degree courses in the University Extension.);
- Determines the membership of several faculty and councils;
- Selects a committee or committees to advise the Chancellor concerning the campus budget, or the President concerning the University budget;
- Has the right to lay before the Board of Regents views on matters of conduct and welfare of the University;
- Advises the Chancellor or the President concerning the administration of libraries;
- Is authorized to select a committee or committees to approve the publication of manuscripts by the University of California Press.

The Undergraduate Council makes policy for undergraduate education at UC Merced. Senate [Bylaw II. IV. 2](#) establishes the membership and duties of the Undergraduate Council.

II. Undergraduate Council

A. Membership

The Undergraduate Council consists of at least ten members of the Merced Division and one student member (non-voting). The Vice Chancellor of Student Affairs and the Vice Provost and Dean for Undergraduate Education serve as *ex officio* members (non-voting). The Council has two officers (Chair and Vice Chair); a Board of Admissions and Relations with Schools (BOARS) representative; a University Committee on Educational Policy (UCEP) representative. The Chair and Vice Chair of UGC typically serve as the Merced representatives for these two

¹ <https://senate.universityofcalifornia.edu/files/resources/SHRDGOV09Revision.pdf>

systemwide committees. In addition, UGC members serve as representatives to the University Committee on International Education (UCIE) and the University Committee on Preparatory Education (UCOPE), the UCM Library and Scholarly Communication Committee (LASC), and on the Periodic Review Oversight Committee (PROC).

B. UGC Duties

- Establishes policy for undergraduate education.
- Advises the Chancellor or Chancellor's designee on all matters pertaining to undergraduate education.
- Considers matters involving undergraduate admission and enrollment at UC Merced.
- Reviews, coordinates and takes final action on all matters relating to courses of undergraduate instruction, including approval of new courses and modification, withdrawal, conduct, credit valuation and classification of existing courses.
- Approves or declines to approve, in terms of academic merit, the establishment, discontinuation or modification of undergraduate programs, majors, minors and certificates; and reports its conclusions to the Division Council.
- Acts on behalf of the Division in reviewing recommendations from the Colleges and Schools concerning the award of undergraduate degrees, certificates and honors.
- Defines the goals and establishes criteria for use in reviewing the quality and effectiveness of undergraduate teaching programs and/or majors and is responsible for undergraduate program review.
- Establishes policy and exercises authority on academic disqualifications and/or dismissals as well as overall undergraduate academic transcript notations.
- Initiates, receives and funds proposals for undergraduate instructional improvement and development.
- Considers and reports on matters referred to it by the Chancellor or Chancellor's designee, the Chair of the Division, the Division Assembly or any other standing committee of the Merced division, or by the faculty of any College or School located wholly or in part on the Merced campus.
- Initiates appropriate studies and reports thereon to the Chancellor or the Chancellor's designee and/or to the Division Assembly as it may deem appropriate upon local matters of a fundamental character involving questions of undergraduate educational policy.
- Exercises in the Division responsibilities regarding preparatory education that are assigned by the systemwide Senate Committee on Preparatory Education and by the division.
- Recommends to the Chancellor policies related to the awarding of all undergraduate financial aid on the Merced campus.
- Provides guidance, advice and supervision regarding all academic matters related to the Education Abroad Program, the University of California Washington, D.C.,

(UCDC) and UC Center Sacramento programs, including student selection, selection of study center directors and reviews of study centers.

- Identifies candidates, normally one of its members, to be nominated by the Committee on Committees to serve as the Merced campus representative to the University Board of Admissions and Relations with Schools, to the University Committee on Educational Policy, to the University Committee on International Education and to the University Committee on Preparatory Education.
- Nominates faculty members to receive undergraduate Distinguished Teaching awards and other awards as appropriate.
- Recommends to the President, through the Chancellor, awards of such undergraduate scholarships as are restricted to students on the Merced campus.
- Advises on undergraduate matters of university extension.

C. UGC Subcommittees

The Undergraduate Council has two main subcommittees:

i. Admissions and Financial Aid

The Admissions and Financial Aid Subcommittee:

- Considers matters related to admissions such as eligibility requirements, enrollment, financial aid, relations with schools, and sets campus admissions policy;
- Considers the weighting of academic and non-academic criteria for the admissions process and appeals to eligibility, admissions, and financial aid decisions;
- Determines criteria for undergraduate admissions;
- Advises the Undergraduate Council, the Merced Division and the administration regarding policy and practices related to admissions, access, enrollment, and outreach;
- Requests the development of and analyzes institutional data needed to fully inform decisions;
- Maintains liaison with the Campus Enrollment Management Council (or equivalent) and administrative units which implement and manage admissions-related policies;
- Reports at least monthly to the Undergraduate Council on matters under consideration.

ii. Courses and Policies

The Courses and Policies Subcommittee:

- Analyzes trends at other UC campuses and reports findings to UGC;
- Reviews and comments on policies related to undergraduate education;
- Makes recommendations to UGC on the approval of new and/or revised courses.

iii. The Awards Subcommittees for the Senate and Non-Senate Faculty Distinguished Undergraduate Teaching Awards

These two subcommittees of UGC are responsible for reviewing and selecting recipients of the Distinguished Undergraduate Teaching Awards.

III. Roles

A. Chair

The Chair of the Undergraduate Council is appointed by the Committee on Committees. The Chair's responsibilities include conducting the meetings, writing correspondence on behalf of the Council, representing the Council on the Merced Divisional Council (DivCo) and the meetings of the Division (held twice a year), and serving as the Merced representative to the Board of Admissions and Relations with Schools (BOARS) **or** the University Committee on Educational Policy (UCEP).

B. Vice Chair

The Vice Chair of the Undergraduate Council is appointed by the Committee on Committees. In the absence of the UGC Chair, the Vice Chair will preside. The Vice Chair (or alternate) also serves as a member of the Periodic Review Oversight Committee (PROC) and as the Merced representative to the Board of Admissions and Relations with Schools (BOARS) **or** the University Committee on Educational Policy (UCEP).

IV. Committee Consultants and Guests

Consultants and guests have specialization in areas that can enrich and inform Undergraduate Council routine activities and duties. Roles may include advising members on policy considerations and special projects².

A. Consultants

An email or memo requesting the service of a proposed consultant (one per school) is made to the relevant school curriculum/executive committee and is approved by the UGC Chair. Consultants provide Senate committees with specific data sets upon request by the Council Chair and/or Senate analyst. Consultants attend meetings-for the relevant part of the agendas and are responsible for following up on items that are related to their respective school.

The Undergraduate Council Chair-and the Senate analyst propose specific school staff members as consultants, typically a school instructional manager from each School, a Library Representative, and a Registrar Office representative. In most cases, consultants do not change

² For more information about guest and consultant Senate policy, please see: <https://senate.universityofcalifornia.edu/files/resources/2011-12RolesofAcademicSenateAnalystsandConsultants.pdf>

from year-to-year, but new ones are occasionally added as the need arises (based on the above appointment process).

B. Guests

Authority for inviting guests ultimately lies with the UGC Chair. A common role for a guest is to provide an update on a special and related project, for the relevant agenda item and specified time.

V. Confidentiality

UGC meeting agendas and correspondence are not to be distributed beyond the membership of the Council. Redacted agendas will be routinely published on the Senate website. Committee discussions are meant to encourage open dialogue to inform recommendations and decisions. Part of how committee discussions function effectively is by assuming that the specifics of conversation stay in the room. It is important, then, to treat all discussions as in progress and specific to committee activity; unless an update or information share is part of a designated activity. Similarly, committee documents circulated are considered confidential in nature or still in draft form; they are not to be shared with campus constituents or anyone outside the meeting. If meeting participants are unclear as to the nature of a discussion or a document, they should be reminded to seek clarification from the Chair and the UGC Analyst.

VI. Quorum

A majority of voting members must be present to constitute a quorum. A quorum must be present at each meeting in order for the Undergraduate Council to conduct its business. In the absence of quorum, members may discuss items but cannot vote.

VII. Executive Session

Executive Sessions will be scheduled at the Chair's discretion, either as regularly scheduled segments or on a needs-only basis, as closed sessions for voting members only. The most common reasons for executive session in UGC are to discuss program review cases or student petitions. Non-voting members, consultants, and guests may participate in an executive session only by the express invitation of the Council Chair and committee. Proceedings of these sessions are not recorded or included in the minutes³.

³ For more information about Senate guidelines for executive sessions, please see:
<https://senate.universityofcalifornia.edu/files/resources/committee-guidelines.pdf>(systemwide)
<https://senate.ucmerced.edu/committees/about-committees/guided-membership-executive-session> (UC Merced)

VIII. Conflict of Interest ⁴

In the university, the term “conflict of interest” refers to financial or other personal considerations that may compromise a faculty member’s professional judgment in administration, management, instruction, research, or other professional activities. Conflicts of interest have the potential to bias, directly or indirectly, important aspects of the Council’s work, including their recommendations about academic degree programs, courses and other areas of shared governance.

A. Recusal Policy

If a member of the Undergraduate Council has a personal affiliation with a School or a program or an individual bringing business before the Council, this should be brought to the attention of the Council. The Undergraduate Council at that time will vote (1) to allow or disallow the member from participating in the discussion of the item of business in question or (2) to allow or disallow the member from voting on a motion(s) related to the item of business in question. Undergraduate Council members must recuse themselves in the following circumstances:

1. The member has, or has had, a family relationship with another member of the Council.
2. The Council member has a personal interest in the outcome of an action item.
3. The Council member believes that his/her recusal is necessary to preserve the integrity of the review process. Upon joining the Council, each member will be informed of this recusal policy and will be expected to abide by it.

Grey Areas

In “grey areas” where a UGC member is uncertain regarding recusal, the member may disclose the potential grounds for recusal to the UGC Chair. The Chair may then determine whether the member should recuse himself or herself, or the Chair may seek the advice of other Council members in making this determination. The Chair or members may suggest that a member abstain from voting when a conflict of interest exists. The Chair should consult the whole Council regarding potential grounds for his/her own recusal. In making its determination regarding recusal in grey areas, the Council will take into account the fact that, by design, each member brings valuable and unique expertise to the Council as a whole.

IX. Recognition of Strong Service

The Undergraduate Council Chair is encouraged to recognize strong committee participation by writing letters of commendation for members who have served faithfully. Letters may be addressed to the member with a copy to the UGC Analyst, the Chair of the Academic Senate, and to the relevant Dean(s).

⁴ https://senate.ucmerced.edu/sites/senate.ucmerced.edu/files/documents/undergraduate_council_recusal_policy_11.8.18.pdf