

**UNDERGRADUATE COUNCIL (UGC)
ANNUAL REPORT
2015-2016**

To The Merced Division of the Academic Senate:

The Undergraduate Council (UGC) and its standing subcommittees held a total of 15 regularly scheduled in person meetings and conducted some business via email with respect to its duties as outlined in UC Merced's Senate Bylaw II.IV.2. Many of the Council's agenda items were delegated for preliminary review by the appropriate subcommittee(s), followed by full Council review. The structure of UGC and the issues that the Council considered this year are described briefly below.

Undergraduate Council Organization

The Undergraduate Council designated several subcommittees that met separately throughout the year:

- General Education (GESC), chaired by Dr. Virginia Adan-Lifante
- Admissions and Financial Aid, chaired by UGC Chair and BOARS Representative Christopher Viney
- Undergraduate Academic Programs/Policies/Courses, chaired by UGC Vice Chair and UCEP Representative Anne Zanzucchi

In addition, ad-hoc subcommittees were formed for the reviews of nominations for the Undergraduate Distinguished Teaching Awards for Faculty and for Non-Senate Lecturers, and for the review of the Catalog.

UGC received regular updates on systemwide committees' activities from UC Merced representatives on the Board of Admissions and Relations with Schools (BOARS), the University Committee on Educational Policy (UCEP), the University Committee on International Education (UCIE), and the University Committee on Preparatory Education (UCOPE). All these systemwide committees are represented by UGC members. UGC and GESC representative Kelvin Lwin and UGC Vice Chair and PROC representative Anne Zanzucchi provided regular reports on General Education and on the Periodic Review and Oversight Committee (PROC) activities. Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs Charles Nies, Vice Provost for Undergraduate Education Whitt, and Director of Admissions Ruiz were also invited to update UGC regularly on enrollment, admissions, the Transfer Pathway Initiative, and activities related to undergraduate education.

Admissions

At sister campuses, the BOARS representative sits on his/her campus's admissions committee. In an effort to align UCM with other campuses in the UC system and reinforce the delegated role of faculty in the admissions process, UGC approved a [charge and membership](#) for a UCM Admissions Subcommittee. The Subcommittee is chaired by the UC Merced representative on

BOARS. The Subcommittee's membership includes representatives from Student Affairs, the Office of Financial Aid and Scholarships and an undergraduate student, appointed by the Associated Students of UCM. The Subcommittee convened once a month.

Parental Alumni Status on the UC Application

UCOP leaders proposed the inclusion of a question in the UC application form about the UC alumni status of the applicant's parents. The Senate's general concern was (and is) that this change may be perceived as "legacy" admissions and could discourage some students from applying to UC. It was decided to delay the implementation of this proposal. At its October 2016 meeting, BOARS was informed by Provost Dorr that, based on feedback from BOARS, Regents, and other constituencies, the UC President agreed that the application form should include the new request for parents' names, address, and email, but should not include the proposed new questions about parents' college of graduation.

Compare Favorably

Data show that Merced is in good standing (regardless of whether or not the non-resident students are disaggregated into out-of-state and international designations). As the smallest UC campus, Merced has a smaller proportion of non-resident students in comparison to other students. The identification and adoption of systemwide, robust, clearly articulated compare favorable standards for nonresident admission is a continuing project for BOARS, at the request of President Napolitano.

General Education

In light of ongoing General Education program review activities, the Undergraduate Council and the General Education Subcommittee (GESC) prioritized campus efforts towards the revision and sustainability of a General Education program that is comprehensive. Towards this end, the GESC engaged in several activities (including two retreats) to incorporate external feedback processes and learn more about the GE program. The GESC also collaborated with campus constituents to explore and receive feedback on current GE design, mission statement, outcomes, and the guiding principles of General Education. On November 19, 2015, the General Education Subcommittee submitted a memo to UGC and the Periodic Review Oversight Committee (PROC), in response to the external review team report. The response included an action plan and a proposed template for a GE program at UC Merced. This effort will continue through AY 16-17.

On April 26, the GESC unanimously approved GE Program Learning Outcomes. GESC Chair Adán-Lifante and Vice Chair Amussen provided an update on the subcommittee's work and presented the PLOs and Hallmarks of GE at the May 5 UGC meeting.

Budget Framework Implementation (BFI)

The Academic Senate is engaged in the development and implementation of 14 programmatic initiatives, also known as the Budget Framework Implementation included in the agreement between the UC and Governor Brown. The goal of this initiative is to improve efficiency, access, and student outcomes. Some of these programmatic initiatives, such as the Transfer Pathway are directly connected to undergraduate education. The Office of the President organized a series of meetings in October that brought together faculty across the system whose goal was to identify a common set of lower-division courses to prepare Community College students for transfer to any UC undergraduate campus in an additional 11 of the University's most popular majors (systemwide transfer pathways for ten such majors having already been agreed to in June 2015).

Course Withdraw Policy

“After the third week of instruction and until the end of the tenth week of instruction, a student may withdraw from a course for emergency reasons or for good cause with the signed approval of the instructor of record and confirmed by the dean of the School with which the student is affiliated [...].”

It was brought to the attention of UGC that there were concerns among Senate faculty about the implementation of this policy, specifically, how in some cases withdraw requests were approved by assistant deans, which in effect overruled an instructor's role in the assignment of grades. Without formal consultation and a signature, there were risks that the withdraw requests would not otherwise be approved by relevant faculty. While some routine administrative decisions are the responsibility of the relevant School staff, the actual authority for all aspects of courses, particularly implementation of grades, falls under the purview of Senate faculty; therefore, UGC recommended to the Deans that procedures for handling withdraw requests receive attention to ensure that the instructor of record signature is the only basis for implementation of this grade.

Proposal for a Major in Global Arts Studies

This proposal was initially reviewed in academic year 2014-2015 by the Academic Senate and the Administration. UGC (GC and CAPRA) expressed concerns about the resources required to deliver the major and demand for the major. The recommendations of the Academic Senate were sent to SSHA on May 6, 2015.

In academic year 2015-2016, a revised proposal was submitted to the Senate. UGC reviewed the proposal over the course of several meetings and requested some clarification regarding enrollment projections. In November 2015, UGC received a revised proposal which included UC enrollment data for similar programs across the nation. On November 24, 2015, UGC recommended approval of the GASP major, effective fall 2016.

UGC opined on the **Process for Establishing Concentrations and Designated Emphasis within Graduate Programs**, proposed by the Graduate Council. The policy initially was

developed in response to a need within one graduate group to recognize disciplinary strengths within its interdisciplinary curriculum. The intent of the policy was to support interdisciplinary education in a way that allowed extrinsic groups to recognize that interdisciplinarity is built on expertise in disciplines and consequently to (1) aid recruitment, (2) help students develop foci that improve their courses of study, and (3) increase opportunities for subsequent employment/study by making clear to potential employers/researchers that our graduates have specialist knowledge in addition to interdisciplinary breadth.

Academic Degree Programs Policy

The revisions to the Academic Degree Programs Policy were proposed by the joint Senate-Administration Academic Degree Programs Working Group. This working group was established at the request of Provost/EVC Peterson. On November 24, 2015 UGC established a subcommittee/working group composed of three UGC members representing the three schools, the VPDUE, and the Director of Institutional Assessment (now named the Office of Periodic Review, Assessment and Accreditation Support). The UGC working group's task was to review the undergraduate and WSCUC (WASC) components of the policy by, at the same time, integrating the existing UGC policy, [drafted in 2009](#). This task was carried over to AY 16-17.

Revised Proposal for a Bylaw Unit in Public Health (discussed in November 2015 and February 2016)

UGC's initial concern in November was related to the potential impact the implementation of this unit may have on the Psychology major. In February, UGC conducted a second review of the proposal, following revisions by SSHA, and voted in favor of the establishment of this unit. UGC also encouraged i) the proposers to involve the relevant SOE faculty (Bioengineering, Environmental Engineering) to reinforce the multidisciplinary foundation of this unit; and ii) the Senate leadership to formally require letters from the Deans when Bylaw Unit proposals are submitted for review.

Proposal for an Honors Program at UC Merced

In December 2014, the Provost asked VPDUE Whitt and Special Assistant to the Chancellor Lawrence to co-chair a task force charged with developing an institution-wide Honors program. The task force membership included Senate faculty representatives Jack Vevea and Mario Sifuentez and undergraduate students. The task force came to the conclusion that it should recommend a university Honors program. A Faculty Advisory Board composed of faculty from the three schools will oversee the program creation and development. This group will make decisions about admissions, policies, curricula, and other required specifics. The Honors program was to be launched in fall 2017 and implementation had to be delayed due to institutional context. When implemented, the program will provide for incoming first-year, transfer, and continuing students. With 10,000 students, there would be about 450 students in the University Honors program.

UGC voted in favor of postponing the establishment of this program until identification of faculty and diversity resources.

UCM Chorale

In January 2016, the UCM Chorale and some other Arts-based courses -- looked after by the VPDUE's office as an interim arrangement put in place by former Provost Keith Alley -- was turned into a student club. UGC recommended that SSHA go through the normal process of requesting discontinuances of the relevant ARTS courses: ARTS 2A, 2B, and 190. The Senate Office will follow-up on this request during AY 16-17.

Proposed Revisions to the Undergraduate Program Review Policy

The revisions were proposed by the joint GC-UGC-PROC Policy Subcommittee, co-chaired by UGC Chair Viney and GC Chair Dawson. UGC's comments were related to the role of the Senate liaison to the external review team; the decoupling of the roles of senate committee vice chairs and associated service on PROC; and faculty workload in general.

Entry Level Writing Requirement (ELWR)

In April 2016, UGC reviewed Entry Level Writing Requirement petitions. During its May 5 meeting, UGC considered a long-term framework for an ELWR petition policy, which defines appropriate cases for UGC review and provides a process with timeline. After the UGC discussion and following consultation with the petition committee, the framework was updated to reflect recommendations. A set of criteria and guidelines for reviewing ELWR petitions was adopted by UGC in June, 2016.

Proposal for a Masters in Management of Innovation, Sustainability and Technology (MIST)

Undergraduate Council sent comments to the Graduate Council. The proposal will be revised by the authors and revisited in AY 16-17.

Proposal for World Heritage Minor

After thoughtful deliberation, the Undergraduate Council unanimously voted in favor of approving the World Heritage Minor, effective fall 2016.

UGC provided comments to Vice Provost for the Faculty Gregg Camfield on **chapter 5 of the Merced Academic Personnel Policies and Procedures manual (MAPP)**.

Chemical Sciences Program Review

UGC discussed the academic program review of the Chemical Sciences major and recommended that the review of the program be closed.

Policy for Review and Approval of New and Revised Courses

The UGC policy/CRFs subcommittee proposed revisions to the policy for reviewing and approving new and revised courses. This item will carry over to next year's UGC.

Associated Students of UC Merced (ASUCM) Proposal

UGC discussed a proposal from ASUCM representative Andre Frise to consider the possibility of UCM providing Scantron and exam booklets to students, and to discuss the sustainability of the ASUCM budget vis-à-vis Scantron services given the growing student population.

While there was much sympathy for the request, it was recommended that the ASUCM report its concerns to Student Affairs as these issues are not within the purview of UGC.

UGC reviewed and made recommendations on 131 courses request forms.

Systemwide Review Items discussed by UGC this year included:

- **Proposed revisions to Bylaw 140 (governing UCAAD)**
UGC considered UCAAD's (University Committee on Affirmative Action and Diversity) proposal to amend Bylaw 140 to include the word "equity" in its title. UGC recommended a more succinct and functional title for the committee: "University Committee on Equity" since the inclusion of "Equity" should render "Affirmative Action" and "Diversity" unnecessary.
- **Proposed Modifications to Senate Regulations 417 and 621**
These regulations address applicants who complete coursework at a college while enrolled in high school, and the standardized examination credit that students may present to the University.
UGC unanimously endorsed the proposed changes to these regulations.
- **UCEP Enhanced Use of Advanced Placement, the College Board's College-Level Examination Program (CLEP)** – As the UCEP representative, Vice Chair Zanzucchi provided regular reports on this topic.

Carry-Over Business

- UGC's recommendations on the CSE and the General Education program review will be conveyed to the program leads in AY 16-17.
- Revisions to the policy for review/approval of undergraduate courses.
- Revisions to the Academic Degree Programs Policy and the policy for review and approval of undergraduate majors and minors.
- Review of Course Management Software options to integrate undergraduate and graduate CRFs.

Respectfully Submitted,

Voting Members:

Christopher Viney, Chair
Anne Zanzucchi, Vice Chair
Laura Beaster-Jones
YangQuan Chen
Marcos Garcia-Ojeda
Paul Gibbons
Nigel Hatton
Kelvin Lwin
Sholeh Quinn
Linda-Anne Rebhun
Mario Sifuentez

Ex-officio, non-voting:

Andre Frise, Undergraduate Student Representative
Charles Nies, Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs
Elizabeth Whitt, Vice Provost and Dean for Undergraduate Education
Cristián Ricci, Senate Chair
Joshua Viers, Senate Vice Chair

Unit 18 Lecturer Representatives:

Mark Harris, Management
Nathan Perry, Merritt Writing Program
Iris Ruiz, Merritt Writing Program

Staff

Fatima Paul, Associate Director, Office of the Academic Senate