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# Academic Senate

May 2020 Newsletter | [senate.ucmerced.edu](https://senate.ucmerced.edu)

## Division News:

**From the Senate Chair:** With the end of the semester upon us, I welcome you to the penultimate newsletter of the academic year. My hope is that you are well. These are challenging times, with everyone needing to adjust to remote teaching and learning.

One of the major impacts of COVID-19 is the effect it is having on our graduating class of 2020. There are plans for a virtual commencement ceremony on May 16, with an in-person ceremony in the future.

On April 20, 2020, UGC issued a policy on final exams. You may find the policy on the Academic Senate Educational Continuity [webpage](#).

The Assembly of the Academic Senate has approved a recommendation from the Board of Admissions and Relations with Schools (BOARS) regarding the SAT Essay/ACT Writing Test, as well as the set of recommendations concerning standardized testing originating from the Academic Council's [Standardized Testing Task Force](#) (STTF). Systemwide Academic Senate Chair Bhavnani's letter regarding this topic may be found [here](#).

Academic Council and UCEP are working on emergency changes to instruction policies. UCEP temporarily suspended the requirement that Writing 1 must be passed with a grade of C or higher. That requirement was causing complications in UC Merced's emergency course continuity policy with regard to the Pass/No Pass component. UCEP praised UC Merced's policy and hailed it as a model for others to emulate.

**A friendly reminder that the annual spring Meeting of the Division will take place next week on Thursday, May 7, 2020 from 3:00 p.m. - 4:30 p.m. via Zoom. Please RSVP [here](#) if you plan to attend.**

At this meeting, Senate members will be invited to vote on the:

- [Proposed amendments to Senate Bylaw I.III.5-Divisional Representatives](#)
- [Proposed Bylaws for the Admissions and Financial Aid Committee](#)
- [Resolution to Address Climate Change](#).

Next academic year's Senate Chair, Vice Chair, and Parliamentarian will be announced at the meeting. The meeting will conclude with the annual presentation of the Academic Senate Awards. We regret not being able to hold our usual reception in honor of the recipients at this time, but we do plan to schedule the event at a later date, when it is deemed safe for us to gather in person.

Lastly, I would like to thank our faculty, students, Senate Office staff, and administration for their resilience and hard-work during these challenging times.

- Tom Hansford

## **Committee Highlights**

[The Committee on Academic Personnel](#) (CAP) continues to conduct business as usual.

[The Committee on Academic Planning and Resource Allocation](#) (CAPRA) regularly consults with the EVC/Provost on the impacts of COVID-19 on the university budget and with the APAPB on academic planning. The committee issued a joint memo with the EVC/Provost to deans and division leads about the goals that were submitted for Phase I and the goals' alignment to the Academic Planning Working Group criteria and indices. CAPRA is consulting with the APAPB on guidelines and a timeline for Phase II.

[The Committee on Faculty Welfare and Academic Freedom](#) (FWAF) consulted with VPF Matlock and AVPF Valdez on flexibility related to the stop the clock policy in the APM during the COVID-19 emergency, and on the availability of various support groups for faculty during the COVID-19 emergency. FWAF has also finalized the faculty survey on co-working space, which will be launched on April 27, 2020.

[The Committee on Research](#) (COR) is revising both its ORU policy and its two-part initiative for restructuring and enriching campus-wide research support in response to comments received from Division Council, Senate committees, School Executive committees, and other campus stakeholders. The committee regularly consults with the VCORED on the impacts of COVID-19 on the campus research mission.

[The Graduate Council](#) (GC) issued two new policies addressing graduate education during emergency, on S/U grading and on relaxing graduate program requirements. GC continues to work on streamlining the CRF process, and also consulted with the Vice Chancellor of Research and interested parties, and subsequently with CRE Chair, on expanding Cooperative Extension Specialists' engagement in graduate education.

[The Committee on Rules and Elections](#) (CRE) is conducting business via email.

[The Committee on Diversity and Equity](#) (D&E) consulted with VC/CDO Matos and AVPF Valdez on the administration's initiatives during the COVID-19 emergency, and issued a memo on April 20, 2020, to Department Chairs about equity concerns during the Educational Continuity period, using faculty feedback gathered by D&E and the VC/CDO. D&E also issued a memo to PROC on April 13, 2020, requesting that a set amount of time be allocated specifically and solely for the discussion of diversity, equity, and inclusion during external review team visits.

[The Committee on Committees](#) (CoC) is finalizing next year's slate of Senate committee

memberships and will provide an announcement on next year's Senate leadership at the May 7 Meeting of the Division.

[The Committee on Library and Scholarly Communications](#) (LASC) Chair DePrano attended the April 27 DivCo meeting to update DivCo regarding LASC activities during Spring 2020 and to discuss a memo regarding Library consultations of new programs.

[The Undergraduate Council](#) (UGC) discussed a proposal for a pre-major in Biology, approved four CRFs, and heard an update from AVPPB Schnier of first year and transfer retention models. Council members are finalizing the review of the AY 20-21 Catalog via email.

[Divisional Council](#) (DivCo) consults regularly with the EVC/Provost. At its last meeting, DivCo members heard updates on LASC activities from LASC Chair DePrano and University Librarian Li and discussed library resources in the context of the review of academic degree program proposals. DivCo is discussing plans for Fall instruction in the context of the pandemic.

## **May Meeting Schedules**

**DIVCO** - MAY 13  
**CAP** - MAY 1, 8, 15, 22, 29  
**CAPRA** - MAY 12  
**CoR** - MAY 13  
**GC** - MAY 12  
**UGC** - MAY 8  
**AFAS** - MAY 8  
**D&E** - MAY 4

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**COUNCIL** - MAY 27  
**ACSCOLI** - MAY 18  
**BOARS** - MAY 1  
**CCGA** - MAY 6  
**EDIT** - MAY 15  
**UCAADE** - MAY 28  
**UCAP** - MAY 13  
**UCEP** - MAY 4  
**UCFW** - MAY 8  
**UCIE** - MAY 15  
**UCOLASC** - MAY 20  
**UCORP** - MAY 11  
**UCPB** - MAY 5  
**UCP&T** - MAY 29

## **Contact the Chair**

Questions, concerns, or issues you would like to see addressed? Contact Senate Chair Hansford at [senatechair@ucmerced.edu](mailto:senatechair@ucmerced.edu).



## **Review Items:**

A new webpage on the UCM Senate website is now available and will be updated regularly. Please click

[here](#) to view the items that are currently discussed and reviewed locally and at the systemwide level.



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