

Undergraduate Council (UGC)**Meeting Minutes****Monday, May 10, 2021****10:30-12:00pm****Zoom:**<https://ucmerced.zoom.us/j/89191522201>

Meeting ID: 891 9152 2201

One tap mobile

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I. Chair's Report – Matt Hibbing - 10:30-10:35am**A. UCEP (May 3)**

- a. Chegg is a platform for cheating. Chair Hibbing encouraged UGC members to send him any personal experiences or concerns they may have with Chegg so that he can share them with UCEP members.
- b. Ongoing concern regarding healthcare and UC Merced's partnerships with religious institutions. There are ethical concerns about partnering with these hospitals. Some UC campuses have decided to no longer work with these hospitals; however, this creates a potential problem for UC Merced because there are not many medical options in the region.

B. DivCo Updates (April 16 and 30)

- a. DivCo endorsed UGC's approval of the Critical Race and Ethnic Studies (CRES) minor.
- b. There was some discussion about how to incorporate a statement of diversity into the Senate's Bylaws. This topic is ongoing.
- c. Members also discussed the impact of COVID on the academic personnel review process. Vice Provost for Academic Personnel, Teenie Matlock, and CAP Chair, Ashlie Martini, are co-chairs of a Task Force charged with handling these issues. A set of guidelines will be shared at the May 14 DivCo meeting once finalized.

II. Consent Calendar – 10:35-10:40am**A. The Agenda****B. SSHA and SoE Petitions for Graduate Students to Teach Upper Division Courses¹**

- a. [Chauhan, Harmanpreet PH 102 202120](#)
- b. [Gomez, Laura CRES 119 202110](#)
- c. [Mishra, Anupam ENGR 130 202120](#)

¹ The requesting departments have verified that each student is in good standing and has advanced to candidacy and will not be supervising other graduate students. For the petition for Laura Gomez, please refer to the document in the hyperlink for number 2 regarding the faculty mentor for the course.

- d. [Ramirez, Vincent PH 112 202120](#)
- e. [Wright, Tashelle PH 181 202120](#)

Action:

- The consent calendar was approved as presented.
- The UGC Analyst will notify GC Chair Hratchian of UGC's approval of the petitions.

III. Approval of Courses – Jason Lee, Bin Liu, Sachin Goyal – 10:40-10:50am

Courses are available at the link below.

<https://ucmerced.curriculog.com/agenda:145/form>

The subcommittee reviewed and approved 31 courses.

New courses must be approved by Friday, May 14, 2021. Chair Hibbing noted that these are requests for modality changes for Fall 2021. Assistant Executive Vice Chancellor and Provost, Laura Martin, joined the April 12 UGC meeting and discussed the accreditation issues associated with modality changes. In summary, a student cannot take half of their courses online. If a single department approves too many online courses, it will raise concerns with WASC. Chair Hibbing suggested to review these courses in depth and to be cautious about approving them. There is a reason why these courses were not originally approved as online flexible courses. It could cause several problems if the courses are approved too easily. Courses may be approved in good faith; however, some departments may find that they are not in compliance with WASC. It was suggested to look for good reasons for approving the courses, such as the benefit it will provide the student.

Action: UGC approved the courses.

IV. Campus Review Items – 10:50-11:10am

- A. [Proposal for Materials Science and Engineering Minor](#) – Eileen Camfield and Bin Liu
The proposal was distributed to the Chairs of Senate Committees, the SNS Executive Committee, and the SSHA Executive Committee.

Lead reviewer's comments may be found [here](#).

UGC and CAPRA are lead reviewers

Comments:

[AFAC](#)

[CAPRA](#)

[CoR](#)

[LASC](#)

Requested Action: Discuss the proposal and associated comments. Vote on the proposal.

The proposed Materials Science and Engineering minor appears to be an appropriate complement to the existing Materials Science and Engineering major. It is a minor that currently exists on many UC campuses.

The following concerns were raised by UGC, other Senate committees, EVC/Provost Camfield, and VPDUE Frey:

- There are lab access deficiencies. It was suggested that the proposers explain how they are going to correct the physical space challenges.
- There are enrollment/recruitment plan gaps; the proposal does not explain the plan for attracting more students into this minor.
- The curriculum map indicates that students would be starting with Writing 10; however, most students start with Writing 1. There is another four-unit class to account for in their map, and it was suggested to address this.
- An assessment plan was not included.
- There are concerns with approving the minor if it may affect the time it takes for the student to graduate.

Actions:

- UGC approved the proposal for the Materials Science and Engineering Minor contingent upon the proposers addressing the concerns raised by Senate Committees, EVC/Provost Camfield and VPDUE Frey.
- UGC Analyst will draft a memo and circulate for review via email.
- Approved memo will be sent to the proposers.

B. [Proposal for a Writing Studies Major](#) – **Alejandro Gutierrez and Chi-Chun Chien** A [response](#) was sent to the Proposers inviting them to address the questions that were raised by Senate committees, EVC/Provost Camfield, and VPDUE Frey.

Writing Studies faculty's [response](#).

The Writing Studies faculty have addressed most of the concerns that were raised by Senate committees, EVC/Provost Camfield, and VPDUE Frey. They have revised the PLO evaluation plan, proposed a solution to the credit requirement for double major, clarified commitments and connections to the Merritt Writing Program and to General Education, provided a realistic projection for enrollment, etc. The reviewers feel that the revisions are reasonable and that the proposers adequately addressed the concerns that were raised. It was suggested to endorse the proposal.

VCSA Nies noted that he visited other campuses to inquire about enrollment numbers in their

writing majors. The number of transfer students entering the writing major is almost three times larger than first-year students entering the writing major. How do we ensure the major is designed to encourage the transfer student pathway? This could greatly support the institution in partnering with the transfer student pathways. This major should be designed in a way that it could accommodate the transfer students.

Professor Camfield explained that it is difficult to compare one campus to another. Some campuses have an exclusive Creative Writing program, whereas UC Merced is more comprehensive. It was noted in the enrollment plan that enrollment targets were not expected to be met until year three when the transfer initiatives were expected to be fully activated.

VPDUE Frey was concerned with the staffing and selection of instructors for the courses. The proposal mentioned this was going to be equitably done rotating amongst all the Non-Senate and Senate faculty in the unit. This could be problematic because Non-Senate faculty were predominately hired with the expectation that they would teach lower-division courses. As a research university, it is very rare to have upper-division classes taught by someone without a terminal degree (e.g., Ph.D., Ed.D., MFA). It is recommended that whenever possible, priority for upper division course assignments be given to instructors with terminal degrees. Instructors with non-terminal degrees should be used sparingly in upper division instruction assignments and only when they have exceptional experience or qualifications for the course.

Professor Camfield explained that the proposal was created with the idea that qualified faculty or instructors would be delivering the major. The proposers did not delve specifically regarding terminal degrees in a particular field to teach upper division classes. The job ad regarding the hiring of UC Merced's Merritt Writing instructors is included in the proposal, which states that the faculty chosen to teach the upper division courses have expertise in certain fields or subfields in writing. There is a clear process for why instructors are chosen to teach specific courses.

Chair Hibbing suggested to notify DivCo that UGC is pleased that the concerns were addressed and that UGC is satisfied with the proposal; however, the concern with Non-Senate faculty teaching upper division courses remains.

Action:

- UGC Analyst will draft a memo and circulate for review via email.
- Approved memo will be sent to the Senate Chair.

C. Faculty Initiated Drop – Chair Hibbing

Registrar's Office suggests University Catalog text to support the new Faculty Initiated Drop feature within CatCourses. The Systemwide Policy that supports the addition of this text is [Senate Regulation 542](#), which is further explained in the hyperlinked memo.

Comments:

[GC](#)
[SSHA Curriculum Committee](#)

Instructors must have a mechanism for knowing that students are taking the classes they have enrolled in. Several students have been signing up for classes for financial aid purposes but fail to attend the class. Other campuses have implemented a “Faculty Initiated Drop” button, which allows faculty to initiate a drop on behalf of the student if the student has not attended the class for the first ten days of the semester.

The “Faculty Initiated Drop” button in CatCourses appears easily accessible. VPDUE Frey suggested to provide language next to this feature that states the clear intent of dropping a student from a course. The feature should be used only if the student fails to attend the class for the first ten days. It should not be used if the instructor does not like a student, or if too many students have enrolled in their class, etc.

Registrar Webb noted that a federal financial aid audit took place in 2019. The feature is for student activity, not necessarily for student attendance. Registrar circulated an announcement to all faculty in April, and the pilot is scheduled for Summer 2021. Additional information will be provided at the start of the Fall 2021 semester. VCSA Nies noted that because UC Merced received federal financial aid funding, student attendance must be documented. During the audit, several students had received “F’s” on their transcripts but it was unclear whether they were because the student earned them or because of non-attendance/inactivity. This feature would be used to track student activity and give the faculty member the ability to drop a student who is inactive early enough in the semester to open a spot for a student who is on the wait list.

A member recommended to clearly communicate with department chairs and discuss it at a faculty meeting at the beginning of each semester. Another member noted the importance of also communicating it clearly with students. Students should be aware of this feature, so they know that they must attend their classes the first ten days of the semester or else the instructor can drop them. If for some reason the student is unable to attend the first ten days, they need to communicate this with their instructor.

Actions:

- UGC endorsed the proposal with a couple of recommendations.
- UGC Analyst will draft a memo and circulate for review via email.
- Approved memo will be sent to the Registrar’s Office.
Deadline: May 21, 2021.

V. System Review Items – Chair Hibbing – 11:10-11:20am

A. [SARS-CoV-2 \(COVID-19\) Vaccination Policy](#)

This policy would require students, faculty, academic appointees, and staff who are accessing campus facilities at a UC location beginning this Fall to be immunized against SARS-CoV-2, the virus that causes COVID-19.

VPDUE Frey reported that students have been emailed about the details and logistics regarding the vaccine. Other campuses are offering students the vaccine and have partnered in offering to assist UC Merced’s students in receiving the vaccine as well. UC Merced has also implemented a

general information campaign to alleviate some of the students' concerns.

VCSA Nies mentioned that the goal is for everyone to be fully vaccinated by the eighth week from the start of the semester. UC Merced has a vaccination clinic, which runs every Friday, and there are plans to run the clinic for the first eight weeks of the Fall 2021 semester. UC Merced is allowing medical and personal preference exceptions. Accessibility Services manages all medical exceptions. For non-medical reasons, a statement must be submitted that includes reasoning for why they are asking for an exception to the policy, as was done in Fall 2020 with the flu vaccine. There are mandates for vaccinations, and students are compliant with it or else they will be unable to enroll in Fall 2021 classes.

Actions:

- UGC endorsed the proposal.
- A memo will be sent to the Senate Chair.
Deadline: May 17, 2021.

VI. UCOPE Meeting Update (April 30) – Eileen Camfield – 11:20-11:25am

This year, the University Committee on Preparatory Education (UCOPE) has focused on Writing Placement and how incoming students can satisfy the systemwide Entry Level Writing Requirement (ELWR). The UC system has opted away from the SAT and ACT requirement for admission because standardized tests disadvantages students from marginalized communities. So, one pathway by which the ELWR could be satisfied has been removed. Another option for students to complete the ELWR requirement is to take the Analytical Writing Placement Exam (AWPE); however, there are several concerns related to this exam. It has become a challenging test to deliver, with issues related to the vendor, how the exam is paid for, access and equity issues for students, concerns about curriculum validity, etc.

When UC campuses converted to remote instruction over a year ago, the system allowed for more flexibility in conducting Writing Placement. At that time, four campuses decided to pilot an alternate option for placing students into writing courses. They have collaborative self-placement models. The four campuses are being joined by UCSD, using this model with their international students. UCOPE is receiving regular updates regarding the status of the pilot and discussed three different options: 1) create a centralized directive self-placement model that completely replaces AWPE altogether, 2) add a directive self-placement model in addition to AWPE, or 3) each campus can choose their own way of conducting Writing Placement instead of having a centralized mandate. The systemwide Senate has convened an Entry Level Writing Requirement Task Force to generally discuss how the universities are going to define Entry Level Writing.

VII. [Writing Placement and Pathways \(WPP\)](#) – VPDUE Frey and Eileen Camfield – 11:25-11:30am

VPDUE Frey convened a task force to review the Writing Placement and to consider other options. Several other campuses have decided to pilot alternative options due to equity issues,

which is an important value to UC Merced. Also, given that the SAT is being omitted as an admission criterion, there are many students who would have majored in Writing Studies who are no longer pursuing that pathway. So, UC Merced will either be reemphasizing the AWPE exam or considering an alternative approach. The link above shows the report provided by the task force, which explains different options and provides a recommendation.

VPDUE Frey would like to implement a small-scale pilot during Summer 2021 to give students who have already taken the AWPE the chance to take an alternative placement exam to place up to a higher course based on their results.

A member asked if a student could waive Writing 1 or 10 if they take the AWPE. Professor Camfield explained that Writing 10 is the university writing requirement, so every student takes it. If students have not satisfied the ELWR by an AP score, SAT score, or a high enough score on the AWPE, they must take Writing 1. UC Merced only has these two writing classes. Other campuses have quarter systems and multilingual writing courses, etc. 70+% of UC Merced's incoming students are placed into Writing 1. There are concerns whether AWPE is disserving our students; a fifty-minute exam may not allow them to produce their best writing.

Action:

- VPDUE Frey requested time on a Fall 2021 UGC agenda to further discuss Writing Placement and Pathways (WPP) and her recommendations.
- VPDUE Frey requested a UGC representative to serve on the internal alternative writing placement workgroup – Eileen volunteered.

VIII. VPDUE Frey's Report – 11:30-11:40am

- A. Follow-up to discussion about Top Hat with information about UC policies on textbook selection

Top Hat is a major educational technology company. UC Merced students spent \$400,000 on Top Hat licenses last year. They purchased materials directly from the Top Hat vendor and there were potential IP issues. An area of concern with Top Hat is that it allows the instructor to charge students for using their content, and in turn, receive a royalty for it. At the March 15 meeting, VPDUE Frey noted that she would research other campus' policies for textbook and faculty-authored course materials.

VPDUE Frey shared other campus' policies and suggested that UC Merced create a policy of their own. UGC members agreed that there is a need for a policy.

Action:

- UGC Analyst will follow up with VPDUE Frey.
- UGC will revisit this in fall.

- B. Formal proposal to remove the requirement that after matriculation the ELWR

requirements must be satisfied at UC Merced

Once a student matriculates to UC Merced, they must complete the ELWR course at UC Merced. A student cannot take the course at a community college after they have joined UC Merced. This issue does not occur often because the course must be taken in the student's first year. However, for students who are unable to enroll in the class due to class size or who fail the course, in order for them to meet their ELWR requirement, they must wait and take the course in the Fall or pay Summer tuition to complete it. VPDUE Frey does not agree that students cannot take the course at a different institution to meet their ELWR requirement after they have matriculated to UC Merced. Several students take it before entering UC Merced, so it does not make sense that students cannot satisfy the ELWR requirement elsewhere after enrolling at UC Merced. VPDUE Frey suggested to remove this policy on restricting it to be satisfied at UC Merced. The majority will take it at UC Merced anyway once they matriculate, but it can be a cost-savings or access option for those who do not.

UGC members agreed that the policy should be removed.

Action:

- VPDUE Frey will draft a formal proposal.
- UGC will review and endorse the proposal by email.

C. Honors Proposal

In 2015, a proposal for an Honors program was presented to UGC. At the time that this proposal was discussed, it was more of an idea rather than a complete implementation proposal. VPDUE Frey would like to revisit the notion for an Honors program, which would help attract more students to UC Merced.

Honors Program files may be found here:

<https://ucmerced.box.com/s/w1ex0p3a142cj4fjz4khcspm715e36c0>

Action:

- Chair Hibbing suggested to wait until next year's UGC membership is finalized to revisit the proposal and choose a UGC representative.
- This will be revisited at a future meeting in the Fall.

IX. Update on General Education – Holley Moyes – 11:40 – 11:50am

A. [Approaches to Knowledge Waiver](#)

The General Education Executive Committee (GEEC) voted on April 14, 2021, to waive for Junior transfer students the general education requirement that one Approaches to Knowledge A class be from the Engineering category.

A memo was issued to Chair Hibbing asking to waive the Approaches to

Knowledge A in the Engineering category for Junior level transfer students. If a student is entering at the Junior level and they have not satisfied the lower level requirement, they will most likely have to go back and take it anyway as a prerequisite for any of their upper division requirements in Engineering. The GE Executive Committee is advocating for removal of this requirement.

UGC members did not have any concerns with the Approaches to Knowledge waiver.

Action:

- UGC Analyst will notify GE Chair Leppert that UGC had no concerns with the waiver.

B. [General Education Reciprocity](#)

The General Education Executive Committee (GEEC) voted to extend the interim reciprocity agreement currently in effect to the start of AY22-23.

Requested Action: Members to approve an extension to the reciprocity agreement.

In 2018, an agreement was made between UGC and GE on how to deal with transfer students. The UC Merced General Education Executive Committee (GEEC) is working on making the GE program less complicated. This year, two of the badges were reduced. The original memo was sent to Jay Sharping and he stated that until the GE program has been further reviewed, a formal policy on transfer credits should not be implemented. This agreement was made and GEEC has been following it for the last several years. GEEC is asking to continue the agreement for another year.

The agreement recognizes the Intersegmental General Education Transfer Curriculum (IGETC), which is the UC agreement that all lower level GE courses can be taken at a community college and receive recognition for it. The recent memo is updated to reflect that there are only 9 intellectual experience badges, with five required at the lower division level.

Action:

- UGC endorsed to extend the General Education Reciprocity agreement for another year.
- UGC Analyst will notify GE Chair Leppert.

X. [Request from CRE - Grade Appeal Policy](#) – Chair Hibbing – 11:50am-12:00pm

CRE endorsed this proposal put forth by the University Ombudsperson, and invites UGC to consider it.

Requested Action: Members discuss and endorse the revised Grade Appeals Policy. Deadline: June 1, 2021.

UGC members reviewed the Grade Appeal Policy via the link above.

Action:

- UGC endorsed the proposed update to the Grade Appeal Policy.
- UGC Analyst will notify CRE Chair Viney.

XI. CatCourses Auto-populated Information – Chair Hibbing

Background: At its February 22 meeting, UGC discussed the proposed revised policy on the review of CatCourses auto-populated information. Please see relevant correspondence [here](#) (UGC's memo is on p. 2 and GC's response, on p. 1)

Requested Action: Members discuss and endorse the revised CatCourses Resources document, available [here](#).

Note: Review may take place via email if time does not allow.

Action:

- UGC Analyst will invite members to review and endorse via email.

XII. Informational Items

- A. [Academic Senate Guidelines and Recommendations for Fall Re-Opening](#)

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 12:01pm.