

Undergraduate Council (UGC)

Meeting Minutes
Friday, September 24, 2021
1:30pm-3:00pm

I. Chair's Report – Holley Moyes**A. September 16 Divisional Council Meeting**

Chair Moyes provided several updates from the September 16 DivCo meeting:

- Potential Unit 18 lecturer strike
Contingency planning is underway. There may also not be much advance notice; could be as little as one or two days prior to the strike.

- Consultation with Interim CFO Kurt Schnier regarding alpha financials
The system was launched in mid-January without the proper infrastructure. CFO Schnier's division had to deal with data integrity and data conversation issues immediately after the launch. There are two main issues: 1) addressing the procurement problems that were present before the launch and 2) addressing the procurement problems that have arisen with the system itself (user end problems). Many faculty members are having issues with procurement, reimbursements, and grant administration. As a short-term resolution, CBS2 is hiring new staff (and re-hiring staff that previously separated from the campus).

Divisional Council members wondered why there was a change in UC Merced's financial system in the first place. UCLA was no longer able to manage UC Merced's financial systems. UC Merced tried to locate another campus to partner with but was unsuccessful; this necessitated the launch of our campus system.

- Patent Administration
Patent administration shifted from UCOP to individual campuses. UCOP also wants to revise the APM to emphasize patents in faculty personnel review.

- Self-supporting Programs
UC Provost Brown wants to eliminate the systemwide review of self-supporting programs and give authority to the individual campuses. This is somewhat problematic as campuses appreciate systemwide reviews due to conflicts of interest at the campus level.

B. September 20 Meeting with School Deans

A meeting took place last week with the School Deans, VPDUE Frey, VPDGE Kello, ALO Martin, and GC/UGC leads to discuss the tracking of online courses. There are concerns with receiving too many requests for online modalities, which could lead to students inadvertently achieving an online degree. There are ongoing discussions about having department chairs provide curriculum mapping to show which courses will be delivered online and how students can progress through their program without achieving an online degree.

II. Consent Calendar

- A. The Agenda
- B. [September 10 Meeting Minutes](#)
- C. [GE Program Chair Leppert's request for an extension for Spark seminar course submission to October 4, 2021 for effective term Fall 2022.](#)

Action:

- The consent calendar was approved as presented.
- GE Program Chair Leppert's request was approved.
- UGC Analyst will notify Chair Leppert.

III. VPDUE Frey's Report

- A. Sample degree plans in the catalog
 - Many universities include their 4-year degree plan for each major within the catalog. VPDUE Frey is proposing that UCM begin including such sample degree plans starting with the 2022-23 catalog.

VPDUE Frey noted that departments do not include sample degree programs in the Catalog and it is causing several issues, with the biggest issue being lag. The Catalog is published in May and several programs do not create a sample plan to be included in the new Catalog version until October or November. Incoming students view the Catalog to try to decide what courses to take and plan out their degree of studies and the sample plans are not available to them.

VPDUE Frey shared a sample degree plan from UC Irvine's Catalog, and proposed that UC Merced departments start including sample plans in the Catalog to be made available for incoming students. A member noted the importance of providing a template for the formatting structure and an easy web form, etc. to ensure an easy process for the faculty.

Registrar Webb plans to send a call for Catalog content to the Schools next week and would like to request an earlier deadline in order to publish the Catalog sooner for next year's incoming class.

Action:

- UGC members endorsed the addition of a 4-year degree plan for each major within the Catalog.
- Registrar Webb will ask departments to include a 4-year degree plan for their majors when she sends the call for Catalog content on Friday, October 1, 2021.
- UGC Analyst will notify VPDUE Frey.

B. Academic dismissal of first semester students

- Last year the campus did a pilot of not dismissing first semester students. VPDUE Frey is proposing that this practice be repeated this year. This would allow a study of the efficacy of intervention strategies so that the campus might consider proposing a permanent change in this practice.

UC Merced traditionally dismisses students with weak academic performance after their first semester. Several other institutions do not dismiss first semester students for several different reasons. Many students may not immediately adjust to the college climate, they may have a mismatch in their major, incorrect placement in courses, etc. VPDUE Frey feels strongly that students deserve a second chance. Furthermore, the policies related to the dismissal causes a lot of stress for the students. They receive notice of their dismissal shortly after Christmas and only have six days to submit an appeal. Many students do not feel confident enough to appeal and do not have access to campus advisors/mentors during this time because of the campus closure.

An aggressive intervention plan was piloted last year; however, there were several challenges due to the pandemic. VPDUE Frey proposed another year of piloting and based on results, she hopes that the following year, a permanent policy change can be implemented. The aggressive intervention plan would include the student meeting with their academic advisor three times during the semester. Academic coaching, tutoring, and small group sessions are also being considered.

A member noted the importance of not dismissing first semester students; however, there are concerns that their GPA drops so low that it becomes difficult for them to raise it again and they end up on academic probation and must keep petitioning in order to remain a student at UC Merced. When first semester students are dismissed due to weak academic performance, there is hope that the student will complete courses at a Community College and then reapply to UC Merced. VPDUE Frey noted that this is an option; however, the question is whether we want students to attend a Community College to catch back up or if we would like them to remain at UC Merced and intervene with them.

VPDUE Frey explained further plans for improving retention rates at UC Merced. One such way would be by offering parachute classes. These classes would begin five weeks into the semester and are available for students who are struggling in their current class. There will also be several existing resources available to students, such as the tutoring center, among many others. VPDUE Frey also noted plans for reducing the

advisor workload. Last year, there were 12,000 manual overrides during the registration cycle. Once an automated approval system is developed, more time can be allocated to student success.

Action:

- UGC members unanimously endorsed the proposal to continue the pilot for another year of not dismissing first-semester students.
- UGC Analyst will notify VPDUE Frey.

C. [Permanent approval to fix the ELWR C- Repeat Loophole](#)

WRI 001 is the Entry Level Writing Requirement (ELWR) course that students must take at UC Merced. At the systemwide level, passing is defined as C or better, whereas UC Merced defines passing as C- or better. If a student earns a C- in WRI 001 at UC Merced, they do not satisfy their ELWR requirement and cannot repeat the course for a higher grade. VPDUE Frey proposed the following:

1. Allow the Entry Level Writing Requirement (ELWR) to be cleared by a second enrollment of WRI 001 where a passing grade (C or higher) is earned.
2. Allow the final ELWR grade (C or higher) to repeat/replace the previously earned grade of C-.

Action:

- UGC members unanimously endorsed the proposal.
- UGC Analyst will notify VPDUE Frey.

IV. **Temporary Approval of Online Modalities for Spring and Summer 2022 – Chair Moyes**

Chair Moyes reported that GC has established a moratorium for approving any online modalities. Rather than having a moratorium, Chair Moyes suggested UGC's temporary approval of Spring and Summer 2022 online courses. Such courses would be approved for a semester and then UGC members would revisit them. Chair Moyes would like to postpone approving any online courses with an effective term of Fall 2022 or later.

Action:

- UGC members unanimously endorsed the proposal to consider temporarily approving online modalities for Spring and Summer 2022.

V. **Approval of Courses – Ryan Baxter, Jason Lee, and Siddaiah Yarra**

Courses are available at the link below.

<https://ucmerced.curriculog.com/agenda:156/form>

Requested Action: UGC members discuss the Courses' subcommittee recommendations and vote.

The subcommittee reviewed and provided recommendations on eight course proposals. Six courses met the criteria; however, one subcommittee member had concerns with BIOE-145 and BIO-168:

BIOE-145 is a new course. The course description should be formatted according to the guidelines, the PLO's are not listed, and a question was raised regarding who can enroll and if there are restricted majors.

BIOE-168 is a new course. A question was raised whether this course requires any math courses as a prerequisite.

Action:

- The following courses were approved by UGC and the UGC Analyst will update Curriculog accordingly:
 1. BIOE - 104 - Biotransport Phenomena
 2. BIOE - 106 - Cell Biology and Physiology for Engineers
 3. BIOE - 115 – Biomechanics
 4. BIOE - 127 - Biomedical Instrumentation Lab
 5. BIOE - 130 – Biothermodynamics
 6. BIOE - 135 - Biochemistry for Engineers
- The following courses were rejected by UGC and the UGC Analyst will update Curriculog accordingly:
 1. BIOE – 145 – Bioprocess Engineering
 2. BIOE – 168 – Digital Techniques

VI. **Provost M. Brown's Juneteenth Proposal – VPDUE Frey – 2:10pm – 2:15pm**

When Juneteenth and the July Fourth holiday are both observed on a Monday, as is the case in 2022, intensive Summer Session classes could lose significant instructional contact hours without some adjustment.

To meet instructional needs, it is beneficial if the requirement in systemwide calendar policy for a common summer start date for the semester and quarter campuses, respectively, be relaxed in 2022. Each campus should establish its own summer session calendar in 2022 (with varying start dates) as long as each calendar maintains the systemwide holiday schedule and complies with the other aspects of systemwide calendar policy.

Graduate Council has been invited to review the proposal.

Required Action: UGC to discuss the proposal. Vote on proposal via email.

Deadline: October 11, 2021

VPDUE Frey asked if it would be possible to receive UGC's feedback by next Friday, October 1, 2021 because the summer session calendar is currently being drafted.

Action:

- UGC Analyst will ask the SSHA Curriculum Committee chair and the School Executive Committee chairs to review the proposal and provide feedback by 5:00pm on Tuesday, September 28, 2021.
- UGC Analyst will share associated comments with UGC members.
- UGC members are to review the proposal and provide any comments by 5:00pm on Thursday, September 30, 2021.

VII. Consultation with GE Executive Committee Chair Valerie Leppert

The General Education Executive Committee (GEEC) is working to streamline the General Education (GE) Program. There are currently 26 requirements at UC Merced, whereas other GE programs usually have about a dozen. There are concerns about the quality and depth of the experiences for our students. UC Merced's current GE Program has six upper division requirements, which contributes to the shortfall in transfer student admissions because transfer students can satisfy all their GE requirements at a Community College.

GEEC Chair Leppert shared a document with UGC members, which showed revisions to the current GE program. Chair Leppert explained the breadth requirements and the Approaches to Knowledge requirements, and how a student can navigate through the program in a timely manner without lengthening their time to degree.

A GE Survey was conducted in Spring 2021 and results showed that many students felt they did not have meaningful engagement with some of the topics. Last year, the Senate faculty voted to broaden the options for Spark seminar. Chair Leppert noted certain requirements that were added and removed last year, and the GEEC would like to conduct further streamlining to deepen the experience for students. Streamlining would take place in areas such as breadth requirements. Chair Leppert provided several scenarios with different badge requirements that students could take. The adjustments that would take place focus on consolidating and streamlining requirements and not changing the learning experience or the expected learning outcomes.

Chair Leppert would like feedback from UGC members. She will consult with the General Education Executive Committee and provide another update at the next UGC meeting.

Action:

- GE Executive Committee Chair Leppert will be invited to the October 8 UGC meeting to provide additional updates.

VIII. Consultation with Head of Research and Learning Services, Sara Davidson-Squibb, and Research Services Librarian, Elizabeth Salmon – 2:30pm – 2:45pm**A. [Zero-Cost Course Materials Grant](#)**

Librarian Elizabeth Salmon presented her slides on the Zero Cost Course Materials

(ZCCM) Initiative, which were provided to UGC members prior to this meeting. The ZCCM Grant is a program that was started within the library, along with the Center for Engaged Teaching and Learning (CETL) to support the use of either open educational resources or library licensed e-resources. The main topics of the presentation were:

- There are two awards - \$1,000 or \$1,500 – that faculty can apply for to support replacing materials with Open Educational Resources (OER) or Library licensed materials.
- Benefits of replacing materials include 24/7 access, first day of class access, removal of financial barrier, increases the chance of success, and the materials can be customized to match teaching styles and learning needs of students.
- 17 courses and over 2,500 students were supported between Spring 2019 and Fall 2021.
- Projected cost savings at the end of Fall 2021 semester is over \$275,000.
- Survey results from students indicated that the students have spent a substantial amount on textbook materials and reported negative effects associated with the cost of textbooks.
- Students were asked to rate the quality of the materials and the majority of students expressed that they were about the same quality, if not a little bit better than what they are using in their other courses.
- Survey results also showed that students are more likely to enroll in a course with online texts that are free of charge.
- Instructors indicated that these materials were about the same or worse than the quality of commercial text, and that they were somewhat likely or extremely likely to use the Zero Cost Course Materials.
- The ZCCM is looking at other ways to build OER awareness, including workshops, increasing visibility on campus, partnering with ASUCM to support student advocacy efforts, etc.

Librarian Salmon provided the following resources:

1. <https://openstax.org/subjects> - textbook collection
2. <https://libguides.ucmerced.edu/oer> - resource guide
3. <https://open.umn.edu/opentextbooks> - Open Textbook Library

IX. Systemwide Review Items – 2:45pm – 2:55pm

A. [Revised Senate Regulation 478 -IGETC](#)

The revision creates Intersegmental General Education Transfer Curriculum (IGETC) Area 7 – Ethnic Studies, an additional IGETC subject area that prospective California Community College (CCC) transfers can fulfill by completing an approved ethnic studies course.

Lead Reviewer: Alejandro Gutierrez

Comments provided by Prof. Sapana Doshi, Chair, Department of History and Critical Races and Ethnic Studies, are available [here](#).

Comments provided by Anthropologies faculty members Prof. Kathleen Hull, Prof. Daniel Thompson, and Prof. Robin DeLugan, as well as Heritage Studies faculty member Karl Ryavec, are available [here](#).

Requested Action: UGC to discuss the lead reviewer's comments and associated comments.

Deadline: October 15, 2021

The proposal asks for a revision to Senate Regulation 478 to include Intersegmental General Education Transfer Curriculum (IGETC) Area 7 – Ethnic Studies in the curriculum that all Community College transfer students would be required to take before matriculating to the UC. The revision also aligns UC with new state legislation requiring the California State University to include an Ethnic Studies course in their general education curriculum for a baccalaureate degree.

Action:

- Member Alejandro Gutierrez will prepare a draft memo with his comments, as well as comments from CRES and Anthropology and Heritage Studies faculty and send it to Chair Moyes and the UGC Analyst.
- UGC Analyst will share the draft memo with members.
- Deadline: October 15, 2021.

X. Any Other Business

Chair Moyes asked members to check their email for review of the Electrical Engineering proposal. Chair Moyes offered several comments and encouraged members to review the proposal and provide additional feedback.

Action:

- UGC members are to review and provide additional comments **by 3:00pm, September 27, 2021**, on the draft proposal from the School of Engineering for an undergraduate Electrical Engineering (EE) degree program that includes comments from Chair Moyes.

Meeting adjourned at 3:07pm