

DIVISIONAL COUNCIL
Minutes of Meeting
Thursday, February 10, 2022

Attendees: Chair LeRoy Westerling, Vice Chair Patti LiWang, Christopher Viney, Ramesh Balasubramaniam, Kevin Mitchell, Erin Hestir, Holley Moyes, Jason Sexton, Jesus Sandoval-Hernandez, David Jennings, Martin Hagger, Min Hwan Lee, Justin Yeakel, Jeff Butler

I. Chair’s Report – LeRoy Westerling

A. January 27 Meeting with Chancellor Muñoz and EVC/P Camfield

- They are working on increasing staffing and addressing the problems of the Oracle financial system.
- They reacted positively to the Senate’s proposed plan of spending the \$1 million allocated to the Senate from the MacKenzie Scott campus gift. Specifically, they were enthusiastic about providing funds for undergraduate student research support and professional development for faculty.

B. February 3 Meeting with EVC/P Camfield

- The discussion centered on issues related to research productivity on campus, such as the implementation of the systemwide cybersecurity policy and the new recharge rates for the UC Merced cluster which are negatively affecting faculty.

C. February 9 Meeting of the Assembly of the Academic Senate

- Chair Westerling reported that much of the meeting was informational about discussions that are occurring at the systemwide level.
- UGC Chair Moyes stated that UCEP is concerned about online programs and how to implement them. Chair Westerling added that online programs at the bigger UC campuses could damage the finances of our university, as their additional online programming would impact UC Merced’s ability to recruit and retain undergraduate students.
- GC Chair Hestir raised CCGA’s concerns that OP appears unwilling to take a strong stand against online cheating platforms and questioned how this intersects with the Regents’ push for more online education. CCGA has raised their concern with the Regents. Chair Westerling added that the additional online courses during the pandemic has eroded faculty’s control over the curriculum and this is exacerbated by the state legislature’s interest in more online education. GC Chair Hestir pointed out that the UC needs to increase its lobbying and advocacy efforts to change the law.
- Senate Executive Director Paul informed Divisional Council members that the following individuals are leaving their systemwide roles: Provost Brown, Vice Provost for Academic Personnel and Programs Susan Carlson, and Senate Executive Director Hilary Baxter.
- Chair Westerling announced that the Assembly discussed proposed revisions to SR 478 which pertains to a change in the rules about transfer units from the community colleges to the UC and the CSU. State law mandates that the UC and CSU have a common pathway but that is difficult to achieve given that the systems have different priorities. The UC and CSU must arrive at an agreement on a common pathway by a certain date or else the state legislature will remove the UC and CSUs’ control over the issue.

D. Oracle Advisory Committee

- The three purposes of the committee are:
 - make choices about how to modify the functionality of the system

- engage with Interim VC/CFO Schnier on the service model that is supported by Oracle
- facilitate communication between the administration and the faculty

E. Streamlining Senate Committees' Procedures/Processes

Chair Westerling stated that the administration has suggested that the terms of the Senate Chair and Senate Vice Chair be increased to two years in the interest of continuity. Chair Westerling also suggested that Senate committees attempt to streamline their work, for example, CoR could leverage the assistance of the School Executive Committees in reviewing future grant proposals.

Action: this item will be discussed at future Divisional Council meeting.

II. **Consent Calendar**

- A. The Agenda
- B. January 27 Meeting Minutes
- C. Charge for the Joint Senate-Administration Research Safety Advisory Committee.

Action: the Consent Calendar was approved as presented.

III. **Updates from UGC Chair Moyes and GC Chair Hestir**

GC Chair Hestir stated that she, together with the chairs of UGC and FWAF, issued a memo to faculty recently reminding them of flexibility in instruction in the case of emergencies and to work with their department chairs.

UGC Chair Moyes shared with Divisional Council that UGC is revising the procedures for approving online courses and discussing how to track them. UGC is close to finalizing a plan and UGC Chair Moyes will submit it to Divisional Council for review and once approved, the plan will be transmitted to the department chairs and deans. UGC will be requesting curriculum maps (3 years for graduate courses and 4 years for undergraduate courses) as well as requiring the completion of a more rigorous form. UGC hopes this will make the department chairs more mindful of what their programs will look like to ensure they do not end up with accidental online degrees.

GC Chair Hestir added that GC developed a clear set of review criteria and rubrics that are based on the best available science for online pedagogy and requirements for accreditation. GC met with the deans, curriculum managers, and the Registrar multiple times to solicit their input during this process. GC Chair Hestir pointed out that the previous accreditation policy stated that programs could have no more than "50% of courses in a major" online; however, the policy now states "50% of courses in the degree". This will require cooperation and communication across programs and Schools.

IV. **Campus Honors Program – UGC Chair Moyes**

UGC Chair Moyes informed Divisional Council that UGC is still finalizing the plan. She would like to offer an incentive to faculty members to teach honors courses and wants to obtain faculty members' feedback.

Action: UGC Chair Moyes will present the plan at the next Divisional Council meeting.

V. **CoR Updates - Chair Sexton**

- A. Campus Research Infrastructure
 - CoR/FWAF/GC's memo on research obstacles (Oct. 6, 2021)
 - Chancellor and EVC Provost's response (Nov. 1, 2021)
 - Faculty toolkit referenced in the Chancellor and EVC/Provost's response:
<https://research.ucmerced.edu/faculty-toolkit>

CoR Chair Sexton informed Divisional Council that CoR is drafting a response to the Chancellor and EVC/Provost's November 1 comments. He asked CoR members to share the aforementioned three documents with their department colleagues and solicit their feedback. CoR will share its response with Divisional Council when the document is finished. CoR Chair Sexton suggested that GC and FWAF may want to join CoR in drafting the response as those two committees helped draft the original, October 6 memo to the Chancellor and EVC/Provost.

CoR recently consulted with Interim VC/CFO Schnier regarding the problems with the Oracle financial system and the lack of faculty consultation on adopting Oracle 4 years ago. CoR members emphasized to Interim VC/CFO Schnier that a self-service model of purchasing is not feasible for faculty. CoR Chair Sexton also pointed out to Divisional Council that CoR members noted that Chancellor and EVC/Provost's November 1 response memo did not address the original CoR/GC/FWAF memo's point about the negative impact on women faculty, junior faculty, and faculty from underrepresented backgrounds.

B. Campus Cyber Infrastructure

- Information Security Policy
- UCOP Recommendations to Protect UC's Digital Research Data

CoR Chair Sexton encouraged Divisional Council members to review the aforementioned informational security policy and UCOP recommendations. CoR recently consulted with IT staff who informed CoR that that the campus had to move quickly to adopt the systemwide cybersecurity policy. There was no Senate consultation. There needs to be consultation and better communication in the future. CoR also raised the issue of faculty members' reluctance to sign liability clauses in the case of security breaches. Deputy CIO Dugan informed CoR that exceptions can be made. Interim VCORED Zatz chairs the campus Research Data Protection Working Group. She acknowledged in the CoR meeting that the group was slow to convene and was unable to consult and communicate with faculty on the systemwide cybersecurity policy. CoR also raised the issue of the new expenses related to the UC Merced cluster that faculty had not previously budgeted for. Director of Cyberinfrastructure and Research Computing Chadalapaka told CoR members that IT is exploring ways to alleviate the burden from faculty members.

Chair Westerling stated that EVC/Provost Camfield agreed that faculty who submitted grants prior to the implementation of the new cluster payment schedule (and therefore did not budget for the added expense) should not have to pay the expense.

Action: Chair Westerling requested that Divisional Council send a memo to IT stating that faculty should not be compelled to sign the liability document.

VI. Consultation with AFAC – Chair Ghassemi and Member Gonzalez

Topic: SJV PRIME + Admissions Criteria

AFAC member Gonzalez summarized the admissions criteria which was hyperlinked on today's agenda. A Divisional Council member expressed concern that the admission standards are too low in terms of GPA. AFAC member Gonzalez pointed out that the university wants to attract students who may have fallen behind early in their high school careers but later improved, and, students who have to work while attending school. GPA is not the only indicator of success, so the campus does not want to discourage students from applying to medical school based solely on GPA.

Action: Divisional Council members are asked to send any questions to AFAC Chair Ghassemi.

VII. Systemwide Review Item

A. UCAF Recommendations for Departments Political Statements – Justin Yeakel

The Academic Council is considering a systemwide approach to the issue of department political statements because principles of academic freedom guide the ten-campus UC system. At the request of the Academic Council, the University Committee on Academic Freedom (UCAF) made two recommendations regarding the ability of academic departments on campuses to issue, or endorse, statements on political issues in the name of the department. UCAF's recommendations are summarized below and available at the hyperlink above (page 6).

Recommendation #1: When a departmental statement is issued or endorsed indicating support, endorsement, or opposition with regard to any commercial, religious, or political activity or issue, the statement should be accompanied by a disclaimer in the form of an explicit statement that the department's statement should not be taken as a position or endorsement of the University of California, or of the campus, as a whole.

Recommendation #2: When a department chooses to issue or endorse a statement with regard to any commercial, religious, or political activity or issue, it should indicate in some manner whose views within the department the statement represents. In addition, departments should ensure that minority viewpoints are provided a reasonable and proportionate opportunity to express their views on the same platform as the departmental statement.

Comments were received from the following committees:

- GC
- UGC
- CRE
- FWAF
- SSHA EC

Divisional Council member Yeakel summarized the two UCAF recommendations as well as the memos submitted by Senate committees. The issue is somewhat contentious and related to other policies, such as those pertaining to individuals posting content on social media with disclaimers. The SSHA Executive Committee pointed out that they are unclear why recommendation 2 is necessary, unless it is done for everything. Departments make many types of decisions without reporting minority views.

FWAF was concerned with the way the proposal phrases the idea of granting the minority a "proportionate opportunity" to convey its views: some FWAF members were worried that the language was vague enough to leave room for the minority to gain undue space for voicing its view.

Action: Divisional Council will transmit its comments to Academic Council Chair Horwitz by March 22, 2022.

VIII. Other Business

GC Chair Hestir asked for Divisional Council's assistance in repopulating and reconvening the Anti-Racism Working Group that was empaneled in a previous academic year. The Chancellor allocated funding to the Senate which were used to hire an outside consultant to draft a self-study and to create mini grants. However, the working group has lost members and GC Chair Hestir expressed concern that anti-racism work is stalled. She also requested that the working group draft a new charge. Senate Chair Westerling asked if the working group should continue as an independent body or be folded back into EDI.

CoC Chair Hagger informed Divisional Council that the Senate did not receive enough nominations for the vacant CoC slots. We have a sufficient number of nominations for the Divisional Council at-large slots, but need four nominees for CoC. Senate Chair Westerling added that the systemwide Senate is also seeking nominees for the position of systemwide Senate Vice Chair.

IX. Consultation with EVC/Provost Camfield

EVC/Provost Camfield thanked the Senate for the conscientious message it issued to the faculty recently about online instruction. The message helped faculty understand that their department chairs and deans will allow flexibility. The tenor and impact of the message was excellent, and EVC/Provost Camfield heard positive feedback from faculty on the Senate's support of faculty during the pandemic.

EVC/Provost Camfield thanked the Senate for being a good partner with the administration during the pandemic. He reported that many of the beds that the campus located for quarantine and isolation space have gone unused thanks to high vaccination rates and consistent masking.

Overall enrollment is flat compared to last year, as the campus lost more students than originally thought. It is critical that the campus think of ways to increase enrollment. EVC/Provost Camfield stated that he worked with the proposers of the Electrical Engineering B.S. degree program to determine demand and expectations. The new program should attract several new students. EVC/Provost Camfield informed SoE Dean Matsumoto that he supports the proposal and credited his early conversations with the lead authors for the solid proposal that is currently under Senate review.

EVC/Provost Camfield informed Divisional Council that the campus is increasing its targeted marketing. He wants to strategically invest so that the campus can enhance the marketing of what we already offer. He requested to speak to Divisional Council at a future meeting about the creation of certificates for students that would help in the marketing efforts.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 10:00 am.
Attest: LeRoy Westerling, Senate Chair