

**Admissions and Financial Aid Committee (AFAC)****Meeting Minutes  
Tuesday, March 1, 2022  
2:00pm – 3:00pm****I. Chair's Report – Abbas Ghassemi – 2:00pm – 2:05pm****A. [February 10](#) and 24 DivCo Meetings**

Chair Ghassemi shared the following updates from the February 10 DivCo meeting:

1. Chancellor Muñoz and EVC/P Camfield continue to work on increasing staffing and addressing issues regarding the Oracle Financial System, and they both reacted positively to the Senate's proposed plan of spending the \$1 million allocated to the Senate from the MacKenzie Scott campus gift.
2. During the February 9 Meeting of the Assembly of the Academic Senate, UGC Chair Moyes noted 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.
3. In regard to 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.
4. UGC Chair Moyes and GC Chair Hestir issued a joint memo with FWF to faculty recently reminding them of flexibility in instruction in the case of emergencies and to work with their department chairs. UGC and GC are also revising the procedures for approving online courses and discussing how to track them.
5. 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.
6. EVC/Provost Camfield reported that, 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.

Chair Ghassemi shared the following updates from the February 24 DivCo meeting:

1. Chair Westerling reported on the UCOP Budget Meeting noting the discussions related to fully online education, and that the UC advocates for online undergraduate degree programs that would appeal to the same student demographics as in-person degree programs.
2. Chair Westerling provided an update on a recent court order that is forcing UC Berkeley to reduce undergraduate enrollment in response to a lawsuit regarding the environmental impact of Berkeley's expansion plan, which is causing a lot of confusion for other UC campuses. The state legislature will introduce a bill to exempt enrollment growth.
3. Chair Westerling met with Chancellor Muñoz and EVC/Provost Camfield to discuss longer terms for chairs of certain Senate committees in the interest of continuity and to facilitate better collaboration. Senate Chair Westerling is advocating for teaching relief for certain committee chairs to incentivize a possible change to longer terms.
4. UGC Chair Moyes shared the Honors Program Proposal and asked for input from DivCo members. The proposal will be submitted for Senate review soon.
5. Issues with the campus research infrastructure continue to arise. The Senate revised the draft Oracle Advisory Committee charge sent by Interim VC/CFO Schnier but has not heard any updates.

#### B. February 4 BOARS Meeting

Chair Ghassemi shared the following updates from the February 4 BOARS meeting:

1. Several campuses reported their growth or potential expected growth for the upcoming fall. UCLA reported that they have approximately 1,400 more students than they did last year. This creates difficulties for the reviewers because they are required to conduct a secondary review of the materials.
2. Zachary Bleemer from Harvard and Asish Chacko from UC Santa Barbara attended the meeting to discuss college major restrictions and student stratification. They have conducted a study and published a report on underrepresented minority college students who have been steadily earning degrees in relatively less lucrative fields of study since the mid-1990s. They gathered data from other universities and found that restricted majors depleted the enrollment of their under-represented minorities by 20%.

## II. Consent Calendar – 2:05pm – 2:10pm

- A. The Agenda
- B. [February 1 Meeting Minutes](#)

**Action:**

- The consent calendar was approved as presented.

**III. Consultation with SSHA Professor Katie Brokaw – 2:10pm – 2:25pm****A. [Revisions to English Major and Minor](#)**

Professor Brokaw is joining the meeting today to introduce the proposed revisions.

**Lead Reviewer:** Erik Menke

Member Menke reviewed the proposed revisions and has no comments, as the revisions will likely not impact admission or financial aid.

**Requested Action:** Members to discuss and vote on the proposal.

SSHA Professor Brokaw joined the meeting to discuss the proposed revisions to the English Major and Minor. There are three main reasons for offering the tracks: student interest, faculty strengths, and simply what the world needs. UC Merced would be the first in the UC system to offer these tracks, and it would help UC Merced in terms of recruitment and admissions. Professor Brokaw also noted that there are several new hires, one being a new Senate faculty hire, who will teach these tracks and who specialize in social justice and/or environmental literature. Lastly, Professor Brokaw explained that social justice issues and environmental issues are two of the most important challenges of the 21st century. From an admissions standpoint, these tracks would help with enrollment growth at UC Merced, and would be beneficial in terms of career preparation.

A member wondered how many English majors and minors are currently enrolled in the program. Professor Brokaw reported that there are 113 majors currently enrolled in the program, and the number of English minors currently enrolled in the program is much smaller.

As the lead reviewer, member Menke reported that he had no concerns with the proposal, as the proposed revisions are not likely to impact admissions or financial aid.

**Action:**

- Members voted to approve the proposed revisions to the English Major and Minor (4 in favor, 0 against, 1 abstention).
- AFAC Analyst will draft a memo noting AFAC's endorsement and circulate to voting members for review.

**IV. [Update on Bioengineering Selection Requirement](#) – Admissions Director, Dustin Noji, and Associate Director of Admissions, Ruben Lubers – 2:25pm – 2:40pm**

The Office of Admissions received an update to a major that could involve updating selection for Bioengineering, Biomedical Imaging and Bioinstrumentation, B.S.

(Available for Transfer Students beginning Fall 2023) and were asked to include this information in ASSIST.org to inform future prospective transfers.

**Requested Action:** Members to review and provide comments on the update.

Admissions Director Noji shared a PowerPoint, available in our shared Box folder [here](#). The Bioengineering Department had requested a change to their selection criteria that is not currently included in the Catalog. Director Noji asked committee members if they feel that the Admissions Office should publish major selection criteria changes that are requested outside of the established processes, or if major selection criteria changes should only be reviewed and published during the annual review of the Catalog.

Members agreed that the established processes should not be bypassed to allow for temporary approval of major selection changes outside of the normal Catalog approval process. AFAC recommended that the Bioengineering Department and all UC Merced Departments follow protocol and submit the revisions to major selection requirements to be included in the University Catalog. Additionally, AFAC members agreed that ASSIST.org should include a footnote for emergency situations with the caveat that departments may add a selection criterion prior to the publication of the Catalog and AFAC will review the request.

**Action:**

- AFAC Analyst will draft a memo with members' comments regarding the publishing of permanent major selection requirements and circulate to voting members for review before transmittal to Director Noji and Associate Director Lubers.

- V. **Informational items** will be regularly uploaded on the “Informational Items” AFAC Box Folder: <https://ucmerced.app.box.com/folder/140193076190>