

Undergraduate Council (UGC)**Meeting Minutes  
Friday, March 4, 2022  
1:00-2:25pm****I. Chair's Report – Holley Moyes - 1:00pm – 1:05pm****A. February 24 Divisional Council Meeting**

Chair Moyes provided 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. 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 and sent it back to him but has not heard any updates.

**B. Confidentiality of UGC Business**

Chair Moyes reiterated that business discussed during UGC meetings is to remain confidential, and materials are not to be shared with anyone outside of the membership.

**UGC meeting agendas and correspondence are not to be distributed beyond the membership of the Council.** Redacted agendas will be routinely published on the Senate website. Committee discussions are meant to encourage open dialogue to inform recommendations and decisions. Part of how committee discussions function effectively is by assuming that the specifics of conversation stay in the room. It is important, then, to treat all discussions as in progress and specific to committee activity; unless an update or information sharing is part of a designated activity. Similarly, committee documents circulated are considered confidential in nature or still in draft form; they are not to be shared with campus constituents or anyone outside the meeting. If meeting participants are unclear as to the nature of a discussion or a document, they should be reminded to seek clarification from the Chair and

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the UGC Analyst ([Overview of Senate and UGC Guidelines](#), page 5).

## II. [Review of the AY 2022-2023 Catalog](#) – 1:05pm – 1:10pm

Catalog updates are effective Fall 2022

### Action:

- Members Ryan Baxter (SSHA), Jason Lee (SNS), and Siddaiah Yarra (SoE) volunteered to review the substantial changes to the AY 2022-2023 Catalog.
- UGC Analyst will send the review subcommittee members information to help guide their review.

## III. Consent Calendar – 1:10pm – 1:15pm

A. The Agenda

B. [GE Request – One-time exception for Summer 2022 Online Modality](#)

C. [SSHA Request - One-time exception for Summer 2022 Online Modalities](#)

### Action:

- The agenda was approved as presented.
- UGC approved GE's request for a one-time exception for Summer 2022 online modality. UGC Analyst will notify the GEEC Chair Leppert (completed 3/4).
- UGC approved SSHA's request for a one-time exception for Summer 2022 online modality. UGC Analyst will notify the SSHA Instructional Manager (completed 3/4).

## IV. Approval of Courses – Jason Lee, Ryan Baxter, Siddaiah Yarra – 1:15pm – 1:25pm

Courses are available at the links below.

### Action:

- The following courses were approved by UGC and Curriculog will be updated accordingly (completed 3/7):
  1. [ENG - 058 - Literature of the Natural Environment](#)
  2. [MSE - 111 - Materials Kinetics and Processing](#)
  3. [PHYS - 181 - Computational Physics](#)
  4. [SPAN - 190 - Spanish Capstone Seminar](#)
- The following course was denied by UGC and Curriculog will be updated accordingly (completed 3/7):
  1. [BIO - 125 - Microbial Genetics](#)
- UGC Analyst will contact the SNS and SSHA Instructional Managers to seek clarification on the following courses before recommending approval (completed 3/7):
  1. [ESS - 011 - Climate Justice](#)
  2. [GASP - 003 - Introduction to Visual Culture](#)
  3. [GASP - 006 - Global Art History](#)
  4. [GASP - 055A - Arts of Asia](#)
  5. [GASP - 055B - Arts of the Islamic World](#)
  6. [HIST - 055 - Arts of the Islamic World](#)

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7. [HIST - 055A - Arts of Asia](#)
8. [POLI - 109 - Legislative Simulation](#)

## V. UCOPE Update (January 28) – Eileen Camfield – 1:25pm – 1:30pm

Member Camfield provided the following updates from the January 28 UCOPE meeting:

1. Members of the Entry Level Writing Requirements Task Force reported that they are on track for delivering phase one of the investigation into the definitions and history of entry-level writing. The Task Force will move to phase two this spring, which will involve reviewing recommendations for writing placement.
2. Members also discussed the plans for administering the final Alternate Writing Placement Exam (AWPE). Members voted in favor of honoring the ELWR satisfaction by way of alternative placement to the AWPE.
3. Members asked for additional information regarding the smarter balanced English Language Arts assessment scores that could be used in combination with other data for satisfaction.
4. UCOPE received data reports from UC Davis and UC Irvine on the success of their alternative placement processes. UC Merced is piloting alternative placement largely based on what UC Davis is practicing.
5. Lastly, members discussed a document related to the values and principles on what members feel should animate decisions regarding writing placement. There were hopes of ratifying a document that UCOPE members drafted last year; however, since the membership of the committee changes from year to year, there are ongoing discussions. There are four steps in the process and the committee is currently on step two, which is to decide who to disseminate the statement to.

Chair Moyes asked if UC Davis has data on their alternative placement. Member Camfield confirmed that they have a report and will ask if they feel comfortable sharing their data with UGC.

## VI. VPDUE Frey Report – 1:30pm – 1:40pm

- A. Academic policy modifications to allow for first-year student exploration and academic recovery. The proposal is available [here](#).

VPDUE Frey clarified that the proposal linked above includes suggestions for policies rather than a list of policies that members must choose from. VPDUE Frey introduced this proposal to the committee as a conversation starter and to gauge members' opinions on the several proposed options for students who are struggling academically in their first year.

Members shared their preference for 1.B.: “Students with less than 30 total units earned may switch any course to P/NP grading up until the last day of instruction. (Note: Major courses would still need to be taken for letter grade.)”. VPDUE Frey agreed that this is the best option from 1.A. – 1.C. and clarified that advisors from the Bobcat Advising Center would flag and reach out to students with “No Pass”. These students would not necessarily be put on academic

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probation, but they would be contacted by an advisor.

VPDUE Frey explained that students tend to continuously repeat a class in attempt to improve their overall GPA. Option 2.A.: “Students may retake a course as P/NP grading that was originally taken for a letter grade” would allow a student to change their letter grade to P/NP without affecting their overall GPA. Students who repeat a course tend to only improve by one letter grade. This option would also prevent a student from repeating a course that is not in their discipline, making seats available to those who are required to take the course.

A member wondered about an alternate option for students that does not require them to retake a course at all. VPDUE Frey stated that parachute classes could be offered, which are classes designed in a way for students who are not doing well in another class to transfer into about five weeks into the semester. Another member recommended providing students the option to switch from a letter grade to P/NP retroactively, and VPDUE Frey confirmed that this would be a reasonable approach.

**Action:**

- Further discussion will take place at the March 11 UGC meeting

B. Proposal to move the Undergraduate Studies (USTU) course designation to be under the oversight of the Division of Undergraduate Education/College One. The proposal and accompanying email from SSHA Dean Gilger are available [here](#).

VPDUE Frey introduced the proposal at the October 22, 2021 UGC meeting, and Chair Moyes had suggested that VPDUE Frey present the proposal to SSHA Dean Gilger to see if there were any objections. An email from SSHA Dean Gilger, linked above, notes that there were no concerns. If the USTU course designation is moved under the oversight of the Division of Undergraduate Education/College One, UGC would still receive course requests for approval. Having an administrative oversight of Undergraduate Education would have some advantages.

VPDUE Frey explained that SSHA is currently the only School that can assign an instructor to a USTU course, and if a USTU course was under the oversight of Undergraduate Education, any of the Schools would be able to assign an instructor to teach the USTU course.

**Action:**

- Voting members voted during executive session to approve the proposal.
- UGC Analyst will notify VPDUE Frey.

**VII. VCSA Nies’ Report – 1:40pm – 1:45pm**

A. Student experience at UC Merced and its impact on retention

VCSA Nies reported that several faculty members are concerned that students are disengaged, mainly those in the second-year cohort. A high level of student engagement, both inside and outside of the classroom, helps them feel connected to the institution, which then is connected to persistence and completing their degree. Student Affairs plans to strategize different ways to engage the second-year cohort of students throughout the remainder of the Spring 2022 semester. VCSA Nies has received feedback from several students noting that their instructors who check in and ask

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how they are doing is extremely helpful.

VSCA Nies also reported that there is only one student currently in the isolation space on campus. When COVID was at its peak, there was a total of 30 students occupying the isolation space, but now there is a total of two or three students on average per week. Because numbers continue to decrease, several student events and activities are taking place to engage students.

Lastly, VCSA Nies noted the importance of staff returning to campus. The physical presence of people on campus is important for scholars. When students have questions, they want an immediate answer and not have to schedule a zoom call or wait several weeks for a response.

#### **VIII. Update on Principles for University of California Online Degree Programs – Chair Moyes and Vice Chair Baxter – 1:45pm – 2:00pm**

This item was discussed during the January 14, 2022 UGC meeting. A [memo](#) was drafted on behalf of UGC and transmitted to the University Committee on Educational Policy (UCEP) on February 4, 2022. Vice Chair Baxter provided an update from the February 7, 2022 UCEP meeting at the February 18, 2022 UGC meeting. UGC was invited on February 22, 2022 to provide comments on a series of questions regarding online undergraduate degree programs. The Google Doc with members' comments is available [here](#).

Chair Moyes feels that any online programs that University of California offers should differ from what is being offered at the schools in order to avoid competition between the different universities. She suggested multi-disciplinary programs.

A member wondered if offering online degree programs is a way to save money, and Chair Moyes clarified that it would save space rather than money. Several other universities are beginning to offer online degree programs, and Chair Moyes believes that the University of California has a fear of losing students. This also leads to an equity issue because instructors who teach online are not offered the same wage as those who teach in person.

#### **Action:**

- Chair Moyes encouraged members to review the document on [Google Docs](#) and provide additional comments. The current document is also available in our shared box folder, [here](#) (please note this version may not be up to date if comments are added on Google Docs).
- Further discussion will take place at the March 11 UGC meeting.

#### **IX. [Proposal for a B.S. in Electrical Engineering](#) – Professor Sarah Kurtz – 2:00pm – 2:10pm**

The proposal was distributed to the Chairs of Senate Committees, the SNS Executive Committee, and the SSHA Executive Committee. Professor Kurtz is joining the meeting today to provide further information on the proposal.

**Lead Reviewers:** Alejandro Gutierrez and Michelle Leslie

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

#### **Comments:**

[AFAC](#)

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[CAPRA](#)

[CoR](#)

[GC](#)

[LASC](#)

[EVC/Provost & VPDUE](#)

SoE Professor Kurtz joined the meeting to discuss the proposal for a B.S. in Electrical Engineering. Looking at the Engineering degrees that are offered across the country, statistics suggest that Mechanical Engineering is the largest and Electrical Engineering is the second largest. Therefore, Electrical Engineering is a foundational degree that is offered by majority of universities. Professor Kurtz believes that offering Electrical Engineering at UC Merced would provide a great opportunity for growth.

A member asked Professor Kurtz to clarify what physical space would be allocated for labs, especially for upper division courses. Professor Kurtz stated that there is some current space that can be expanded, and additional space is planned in the new medical building. There may be a year or two with limited space until the medical building is completed, and some instructors may need to work in the evenings in order to resolve the space issue.

A member inquired about the plans for teaching subjects such as telecommunication and satellite signal processing. Professor Kurtz stated that because everything in the world today operates through telecommunication, it is a very important subject that should be offered.

**Action:**

- UGC Analyst will draft a memo with members' comments.
- Members will be invited to review the draft memo before transmittal to the Senate Chair.

**X. [Proposed Revisions to English Major and Minor](#) – Professor Katie Brokaw – 2:10pm – 2:20pm**

Member David Kaminsky is currently leading the review of this item. His comments, along with other Senate Committees' comments will be discussed at the April 8 UGC meeting. Professor Brokaw is joining us today to introduce the proposed revisions.

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 21<sup>st</sup> century. From an admissions standpoint, Professor Brokaw pointed out that these are long-term trends and will help with enrollment growth at UC Merced.

**Action:**

- This item will be further discussed at the April 8 UGC meeting.
- Members will be invited to review a draft memo before transmittal to the Senate Chair.

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**XI. Other Business? – 2:20pm – 2:25pm**

**XII. Informational Items**

A. [Recommendations to Senate Divisions on the Mandated Recording of Classes](#)

**XIII. Executive Session – Voting Members Only – 2:25pm – 2:30pm**