

Undergraduate Council (UGC)

Meeting Minutes
Tuesday, October 25, 2022
10:30am – 11:50pm

Zoom Information:

<https://ucmerced.zoom.us/j/84479214389>

Meeting ID: 844 7921 4389

One tap mobile: +16699006833, 84479214389

I. Chair's Report – Holley Moyes – 10:30am – 10:40am**A. October 18 Divisional Council meeting**

- EVC/Provost announced that UCOP has recently issued a new UC Title IX policy.
- EVC/Provost Camfield also provided a brief update on the union contracts regarding the engagement with students who are also employees at the UC. UCOP is developing guidance, and EVC/Provost Camfield will share this information with faculty when received.
- The Administration will circulate a revised mission statement for campus review by faculty, staff, and students.
- Members discussed the recent problematic response times to several review items and inquired about an appropriate timeline for what the Administration considers feasible.
- Members advocated for more faculty participation in the development of the annual shared governance retreat agendas.
- CFO Schnier and Associate VC and Controller Nelson provided an update on the Oracle System stating that they have been working diligently on improving the system but that it will continue to take time before running well.
- AFAC Chair Eaton continued his discussion on institutional student debt.

B. October 21 Regular Check-in Meeting with GC Chair Scheibner, VPDUE Frey, and VPDGE Hratchian

- Further discussions were held regarding the lack of consultation with the Senate prior to the announcement of separate graduate and undergraduate commencements. Further discussions will take place at Divisional Council.
- VPDGE Hratchian has asked to be invited to review proposals for new majors and minors. UGC will revise its policy to include the VPDGE as a recipient during the review and approval processes.

II. Consent Calendar – 10:40am – 10:45am

- A. The Agenda
- B. [October 11 meeting minutes](#)

Action:

- The agenda was approved as presented.
- The October 11 meeting minutes was approved as presented.
- UGC Analyst will update the Senate website accordingly (completed 10/25).

III. Consultation with VPDUE Frey and Associate University Librarian Davidson Squibb – 10:45am – 11:00am

- A. Open Educational Resources Systemwide Task Force work
PowerPoint slides are available [here](#).

Requested Action: Members engage in discussion and provide feedback on the Open Educational Resources Systemwide Task Force work.

VPDUE Frey and Associate University Librarian Davidson Squibb serve on a systemwide task force to review Open Educational Resources (OER) for reducing textbook costs for students. The task force includes representatives from each UC campus, as well as additional members with expertise. Their goal is to create a UC systemwide plan to increase the adoption of OER within undergraduate courses, and VPDUE Frey and Associate Librarian Davidson Squibb are soliciting feedback to help inform the plan. The state appears to be interested in funding potential large scale textbook initiatives, and there are also several grant opportunities. The task force is aiming to create a plan for UC-wide coordination for preparation to respond to the state, to have funding available, or to proactively advocate for funding.

Associate Librarian Davidson Squibb reported that she is involved with the 2018 Zero-cost Course Materials Grant that has been revived with additional funding from the Student Transformational Impact (STI) fund. OERs are freely available resources that faculty and students can reuse and retain with the Zero-Cost Course Materials Grant. Faculty have received many grants to convert courses to have zero costs using OER materials and/or already available library resources. VPDUE Frey and Associate Librarian Davidson Squibb asked UGC members for their preliminary feedback on incentives for developing or adopting OER content, as well as possible barriers in doing so.

A member noted that OER materials are limited to a few topics and believes the UC has the capacity to work collaboratively to create its own textbooks to increase offerings. Another member asked if the textbooks that are currently available through the Library are included in OER materials. Associate Librarian Davidson Squibb clarified that they are separate materials; OER materials are reusable and retainable, whereas Library resources are typically a one-time cost or a subscription.

A member noted that faculty are expected to provide their own resources, which has created a huge burden when having to grade their students' homework. Several members agreed that not having a system for grading assignments is a barrier for the faculty, and the UC should pay a company for such services. A recommendation was made to use Openstax textbook and a pay MacMillan product for homework, which is less expensive than purchasing their textbook. Chair Moyes wondered if this initiative would fund open-source textbooks. VPDUE Frey confirmed that the task force is considering funding for collaborative development or for individual development of material; there is considerable flexibility with OER materials.

Action:

- VPDUE Frey invited members to complete a survey:
https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSfbG2iotYu5Tqv6D_7n54EEVqooEDWu-OXL5q43EpdhSyYmNg/viewform?usp=sf_link.

IV. October 14 UCIE Meeting Update – Michelle Leslie – 11:00am – 11:10am

Member Leslie reported that the University Committee on International Education (UCIE) reviews all international programs, specifically the University of California Education Abroad Programs (UCEAP). UCEAP is the systemwide study abroad program in which students are guaranteed UC credit. There are three programs currently under review, and four noncontroversial reports from last year were recently approved. The UCEAP Dean reported that the number of students studying abroad has begun to rise since the pandemic, with UC Merced at approximately 72 students from nearly 120 students prior to the pandemic.

UCEAP has also approved a three-year pilot for a first semester abroad program in Seville, Spain and in Sicily, Italy beginning Fall 2023. The goal is for students to complete their General Education requirements, and there is a focus on sustainability at both sites. One main concern with the first semester abroad program is whether students will make the connection to their home campus. UCEAP is aware of the potential issues and is working closely with students to foster that connection. A member wondered whether UCEAP also provides counseling support to students, and member Leslie confirmed that all mental health related issues are included in the review process.

V. Approval of Courses – Ryan Baxter, Felicia Lopez, Alexander Petersen – 11:10am – 11:25am

Courses are available at the links below.

Action:

- The following courses were approved, and Curriculog will be updated accordingly (completed 10/25):

1. [ENGR - 175 - Information Systems for Management](#)

2. [MIST - 175 - Information Systems for Management](#)
3. [PH - 118 - Public Health Nutrition](#)

Action:

- The following course was rejected, and Curriculog will be updated accordingly (completed 10/25):

1. [ME - 151 - Fuel Cells and Batteries](#)

VI. Senate Spending Plan for MacKenzie Scott Gift – Chair Moyes – 11:25am – 11:35am

A. Spending plan as approved by Divisional Council in Spring 2022 is available [here](#).

Chair Moyes reported that UGC has received \$60k from the MacKenzie Scott Gift for undergraduate research and training. Chair Moyes solicited feedback from the membership regarding the structure of the funds. A member recommended consulting with the Undergraduate Research Opportunities Center (UROC). UROC is a resource center for students interested or involved in undergraduate research, and they provide support services for faculty members interested or involved in undergraduate research mentoring. The center also has a collection of data related to undergraduate research participation. Chair Moyes expressed concern that students must remain in the country to receive the grant, and she and VPDUE Frey have recently met to discuss alternative pathways with less restrictions.

Chair Moyes asked the membership if they would like to use the funds for research only or for research and training. Training would include workshops, coursework, classes abroad, etc. VPDUE Frey clarified that students cannot receive credit and funding for the same activity. UROC can also help facilitate the grants regardless of the structure that UGC decides to use. Furthermore, the landscape for undergraduate research funding had changed dramatically in the last year. The Undergraduate Division has received new funding from the state for Learning Aligned Employment Program (LAEP), also managed by UROC, which can only be used for undergraduate research for low-income students. The MacKenzie Scott Gift funds can be used for students studying abroad or as academic-year funding for non-low-income students, etc.

VPDUE Frey also mentioned that no money from the Mackenzie Scott Gift was allocated to the Undergraduate Division. There are several undergraduate initiatives, and VPDUE Frey wondered whether UGC would consider advocating for funding allocation to these different initiatives. Chair Moyes agreed to provide additional recommendations to DivCo.

Action:

- Chair Moyes and VPDUE Frey will collaborate and develop several models for using the MacKenzie funds.
- Chair Moyes will also further discuss with VPDUE Frey other programs in which

the MacKenzie funds could be used for.

- Further discussion will take place at a future UGC meeting.

VII. **Online Course Tracking – Chair Moyes – 11:35am – 11:40am**

On Monday, October 24, 2022, Chair Moyes met with VPDUE Frey and the Registrar and recommended conducting a pilot for tracking online courses. The Registrar will provide UGC with a report once a year showing the percentage of online courses that students are taking. Once sufficient data is achieved through the pilot, UGC will determine a threshold for alerting students when they have reached a certain level of online courses.

Requested Action: Members to vote in executive session to endorse a pilot for tracking students' online courses before implementing a threshold for alerting students.

Last academic year, UGC discussed with the Registrar a mechanism for alerting students when they meet a certain threshold of online courses to help prevent them from inadvertently achieving an online degree. Chair Moyes, VPDUE Frey, and Registrar Webb proposed a pilot for two to three years to track the number of online courses that students are taking to observe whether a mechanism is necessary. If data reveals that a mechanism is necessary, UGC will revisit the exact threshold for when to provide a warning to students.

Action:

- Voting members voted in executive session to endorse a pilot program for tracking students' online courses for two to three years before implementing a mechanism to alert students when they meet a certain threshold of online courses.
- UGC Analyst will notify VPDUE Frey and Registrar Webb.

VIII. **Upcoming Business – 11:40am – 11:45am**

A. [First-year Flex Proposal](#)

In AY 21-22, VPDUE Frey introduced to UGC, a proposal for policies supporting flexibility for major exploration and recovery from early academic struggle. UGC held lengthy discussions last year and their recommendations are highlighted in the proposal linked above. Over the Summer, Chair Moyes collaborated with the School Academic Directors, Curriculum Managers, and the Registrar to further discuss this proposal and to propose revisions to the Senate Regulations and University Catalog.

Registrar Webb proposed alternative language to the following documents, in which members reviewed via screen share:

1. [Change of Major in the University Catalog](#)
2. [Pass/No Pass in SR Part I, Section I, E](#)
3. [Dropping a Course in SR Part I, Section 2, B2](#)

A member recommended further revising the language for Change of Major in the University Catalog to indicate that “students are subject to admissions criteria into the new major” rather than “not be subject to departmental criteria”.

Action:

- UGC Analyst will revise the Change of Major language accordingly (completed 10/25).
- Voting members will be invited to review and vote to endorse the proposed language to all three documents.
- If UGC votes in favor of endorsing the proposed language, the three documents will be transmitted to the School Executive Committees and SSHA Curriculum Committee for comments, and then to CRE for endorsement.

IX. New Business? – 11:45am – 11:50am

No new business was discussed.

X. Executive Session – Voting Members Only – 11:50am – 12:00pm

No meeting minutes were recorded during executive session. The action items were shared with UGC voting members.