

Undergraduate Council (UGC)**Meeting Minutes****Friday, January 27, 2023****1:00pm – 2:25pm****I. Chair's Report – 1:00pm – 1:10pm****A. January 9 and 23 UCEP Meetings**

- Director of UC Online Ellen Osmundson reported on a \$10 million allotment for funding and development for student support including cross-campus courses. Approximately 6,000 students are currently taking online high-flex or asynchronous courses.
- Discussions were held regarding academic planning on the future of undergraduate education. Enrollment is predicted to increase by 4,200 students systemwide in AY 23-24.
- UCEP is currently developing guidelines and criteria for the review of proposed online programs, which Chair Moyes plans to share with UGC by the end of the academic year.
- Discussions were held regarding the pre-proposal for a Creative Technologies major at UCSC. There is a question as to whether the proposers are asking for a major or an online degree program.

B. January 23 DivCo Meeting

- At the January 17 Deans' Council meeting, members discussed the future of graduate education following the strike including how the campus will fund it and the need to reduce the size of graduate classes.
- CAPRA consulted with EVC/Provost Camfield regarding the increased costs of GSRs.
- CAPRA reported that faculty will receive a 4.5% salary increase.
- EDI Chair Menke inquired about obtaining historical data from the administration regarding merits and accelerations awarded to/denied to faculty.
- Chair Moyes presented the new Chemical Engineering (ChE) major, the new Biochemical and Biomolecular Engineering (BCME) major, and the new Aerospace (AE) minor. The ChE major and AE minor were approved, and the BCME major was sent back to the proposers with recommended revisions.
- AFAC Chair Eaton mentioned that AFAC would have liked to see how the proposed majors would affect overall campus enrollment.
- Graduate Council proposed a policy for Undergraduate/Graduate Hybrid Degree Programs, which will be included on the February 13 UGC meeting agenda for further discussion/endorsement.

II. Consent Calendar – 1:10pm – 1:15pm

- A. The Agenda
- B. [November 29 meeting minutes](#)
- C. [December 6 meeting minutes](#)

Action:

- The agenda was approved as presented. UGC Analyst will update the Senate website accordingly (1/30).
- The November 29 and December 6 meeting minutes were approved as presented. UGC Analyst will update the Senate website accordingly (1/30).

III. [Campus Review Item – Proposal for Electrical Engineering Department](#) – Member Leslie – 1:15pm – 1:25pm

The policy governing the establishment of new departments is available [here](#).

CAP, CAPRA, CRE, GC, and UGC are lead reviewers.

Lead Reviewer: Michelle Leslie

Lead reviewer's comments are available [here](#).

Requested Action: Members to discuss the proposal and lead reviewer's comments.

Deadline for comments to the Senate Chair: Friday, February 3, 2023.

Member Leslie summarized her assessment of the Electrical Engineering Department proposal, highlighting the following points:

- The proposed department will begin as a very small department consisting of Professor Kurtz, Professor Singhal, and two new faculty members, with the hopes of attracting additional students and faculty.
- There was concern that Professor Kurtz and Professor Singhal transitioning to the new department would affect teaching in their current departments. Member Leslie stated that the proposers did a good job in explaining that Professor Singhal will continue teaching CSE courses for a couple years and that there is an approved line for his replacement. Professor Kurtz's current teaching assignment will not change; she currently teaches one graduate class, which she will continue to teach.
- The new department hopes to receive new operating funds and not just a redistribution of existing funds from other departments.

Member Leslie recommended supporting the proposal and to note in UGC's memo that members discussed the potential impacts of teaching assignments and financial resources on undergraduate education, but feel that the impact will likely be minimal.

Action:

- Members had no concerns with the Electrical Engineering Department proposal.
- UGC Analyst will prepare a memo conveying UGC's support, and voting members will be invited to review the draft memo prior to transmittal to the Senate Chair.

IV. Honors Program Proposal¹ – Chair Moyes – 1:25pm – 1:40pm

During the February 18, 2022 UGC meeting, members discussed the initial draft of the Honors Program Proposal, and the proposal was submitted for campus review in April 2022. Throughout Summer 2022 and Fall 2022, members of the Honors Program Working Group met to discuss the comments received and to revise the proposal accordingly. On January 12, 2023, members of the Honors Program Working Group endorsed [draft 9 of the Honors Program Proposal](#).

Comments:

[CAPRA](#)

[COR](#)

[GC](#)

[Library](#)

[ALO](#)

[GE](#)

[SNS Dean](#)

[SoE Dean](#)

[SSHA Dean](#)

[SSHA EC](#)

[SSHA CC](#)

[VPDUE](#)

[EVC/Provost](#)

Requested Action: Members to vote in executive session to endorse draft 9 of the Honors Program Proposal.

Chair Moyes summarized the revisions made to the Honors Program Proposal, highlighting the following:

- The program aligns with UC Merced's strategic plan.
- Students can concurrently enroll in the Campus Wide Honors Program and an individual Departmental Honors Program.
- The Program Learning Outcomes (PLOs) and the admissions process has been clarified.
- There is no minimum GPA requirement for high school students to apply to the Honors Program. Applicants will be asked to answer a series of questions and provide a creative product i.e., a video, essay, etc.

¹ Recusals: Holley Moyes, Ryan Baxter, Heather Bortfeld, Eileen Camfield, Valerie Leppert

- The program is not only open to incoming freshmen, but to existing sophomores and transfer students, as well. Requirements will change year to year depending on the year the student entered the program.
- Regarding courses, students can fulfill some of their requirements by taking existing departmental Honors courses, departments can decide to offer their Honors courses to non-Honor students, and a WRI 10 Honors and Honors Spark courses will be offered.
- Honors Contracts will be offered to allow students to pursue individualized work within the framework of a non-Honors class.
- The plan is to pilot the program in Fall 2023 with 60 students and to admit 90 students in Fall 2024.

A member inquired about additional resources for the new Honors courses. Chair Moyes clarified that the new Honors courses could be offered as a discussion section, which a graduate student can teach and would require minimal additional resources. The member was also concerned that, with many faculty members eager to teach the new Honors courses, the Unit-18 Lecturers would not have the opportunity to do so, as the Senate faculty have first pick of the courses they teach. Chair Moyes stated that the Honors Program cannot adjudicate this, as it would interfere with individual departments. She recommended faculty speak with their Department Chair if they find this concerning.

Chair Moyes also confirmed that the School Executive Committees will be invited to review and comment on the proposal.

Action:

- Voting members voted in executive session to endorse draft 9 of the Honors Program Proposal (5 in favor, 0 opposed, 4 abstentions, 2 members not present during time of vote).
- UGC Analyst will work with Chair Moyes on next steps.

V. Update on Summer Online – Ryan Baxter, Heather Bortfeld, Alejandro Gutierrez, and Holley Moyes – 1:40pm – 1:50pm

On January 19, 2023, Chair Moyes, CRF Subcommittee members, Policy Subcommittee members, and School Curriculum Managers met to discuss the approval processes and an extended deadline for faculty to submit Summer 2024 online course proposals.

Requested Action: Today, participants will debrief the membership on the January 19 discussion and determine next steps.

Action:

- This item was tabled for the February 13 UGC meeting agenda.

VI. VCSA Nies' Report – 1:50pm – 1:55pm

A. Campus enrollment and admissions outreach efforts for next year's class.

VCSA Nies shared his appreciation for the faculty's and the Registrar's support in ensuring submission of Fall 2022 final grades. Many other UC campuses have not submitted final grades, which is negatively affecting students' scholarship applications.

VCSA Nies reported that more students graduated in December than anticipated, and there are currently 8,400 students enrolled for Spring 2023 - both undergraduate and graduate. 105 new students started at UC Merced in January, originally anticipated to be 85.

Admissions offer letters will be sent out in March. Student Affairs also engages in several activities, including BobCat Day, road shows, and hosting overnight activities. Additional information regarding Spring 2023 yield programs is available [here](#).

A member inquired about connecting students to majors that they show interest in. VCSA Nies confirmed that he will share options with the faculty. He also shared that a program called the Chancellor Scholar's Initiative was created last year for a group of students with academic criteria that do not typically accept the admissions offers. In this case, UC Merced provided additional funding to support these students, which dramatically increased the number of students who accepted their offer to UC Merced.

VII. Consultation with Chair of the Data Science Working Group and the Applied Mathematics Department, Suzanne Sindi – New Data Science Major Proposal – 1:55pm – 2:05pm

Professor Sindi presented a series of slides on the Data Science Major proposal, available [here](#). The School of Natural Sciences (SNS) is creating a new Data Science and Computing major to prepare students in core data science skills and the ability to apply those skills to domain-anchored questions. The proposed major is modeled after the successful Data Science major at UC Berkeley and would build on UC Merced's following strengths:

1. Multidisciplinary research and teaching
2. Connecting theory to applications
3. Emphasis on communication and impact
4. Commitment to inclusiveness and ethical outcomes

The job market for Data Scientists is increasing rapidly, and similar majors at other UC campuses have been very popular. Professor Sindi explained that the backbone of the proposed major is a set of ten core courses that teach the mathematical, statistical, and computational tools and ethical principles of Data Science. The Data Science and Computing Minor is designed to be accessible to students of all majors.

The proposed major would require relatively few courses. The courses are based on curriculum that has either already been taught at UC Merced or the proposers can

leverage with the existing UC Berkeley curriculum. Professor Sindi noted specifically that MATH-041-Linear Algebra is a highly relevant mathematical field that in many institutions, and currently at UC Merced, requires a year of Calculus. New curricular approaches have emerged in Linear Algebra that do not require Calculus, and MATH-041 allows students to complete a minor without having to complete Calculus 001.

Professor Sindi also shared information regarding Jupyterhub, which is a cloud-based computing facility that allows the creation of notebooks that guide students through computing, as well as lets students with relatively modest resources, i.e., a Chromebook, run large-scale computations.

Professor Sindi clarified the distinction between the Data Science major proposal and the many other proposals on campus, specifically that being proposed by the new Gallo School of Management. The two programs will work well together, but fundamentally attract very different cohorts of students. The Gallo's proposed Data Science and Analytics major will use different computational tools.

VIII. Approval of Courses – Ryan Baxter, Felicia Lopez, Alexander Petersen – 2:05pm – 2:20pm

Courses are available at the links below.

Action:

- The following courses were approved, and UGC Analyst will update Curriculog accordingly (completed 1/30).
 1. [AE - 174 - Aeroelasticity](#)
 2. [BIO - 012 - Introduction to Organismal Biology](#)
 3. [USTU - 030 - Research Experience Skill Development](#)

- Further discussion of the following course will take place at the February 13 UGC meeting:
 1. [BIO - 119 - Fantastic Microbiomes and How to Study Them](#)

IX. New Business – All – 2:20pm – 2:25pm

No new business was discussed.

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

No minutes were recorded during the executive session. The action items were shared with UGC voting members and are noted under item IV. above.