

**Admissions and Financial Aid Committee (AFAC)**

**Meeting Minutes**  
**Thursday, February 9, 2023**  
**10:30am – 12:00pm**

- I. Consent Calendar – Chair Eaton – 10:30am – 10:35am**
- A. The Agenda
  - B. [December 9 Meeting Minutes](#)

**Action:**

- The Consent Calendar was approved as presented.

- II. Chair’s Report – Chair Eaton – 10:35am – 10:45am**
- A. January 23 and February 6 Divisional Council Meetings

- EVC/Provost Camfield discussed the aftermath of the strike in terms of meeting financial needs for TAs.
- EVC/Provost Camfield discussed plans to help recover relationships between graduate students and faculty that have declined after the strike. EVC/Provost Camfield’s email to the UC Merced faculty appeared a lot more constructive compared to the emails sent from Provosts at other UC campuses.
- Further discussions were held regarding the proposals for new majors and minors and departments in terms of university growth. There is still no rigorous analytic work being conducted to evaluate which new majors will generate the most enrollment growth and which faculty lines will be required.
- DivCo unanimously endorsed AFAC’s recommendations for canceling institutional debts and ending third-party debt collections. The next step is for Chair Eaton to meet with Senate Chair LiWang and CFO Schnier to discuss implementation of the recommendations.

- B. January 6 BOARS Meeting

Member Doshi attended the January 6 BOARS meeting on Chair Eaton’s behalf and provided her report below in item III.

- III. Member Doshi’s Report – Sapana Doshi - 10:45am – 11:00am**

- A. Background and report on February 3 BOARS meeting regarding A-G Ethnic Studies requirement.

Member Doshi reported that Ethnic Studies is referred to as the addition of Area H to the A-G Requirement. In October 2021, Governor Gavin Newsom signed a mandate which

required all California high schools to have one semester course of Ethnic Studies. Ethnic studies is a curriculum that includes the histories and experiences of indigenous people of color, especially in the United States, but also transnationally. For students of racialized backgrounds, Ethnic studies has shown to improve student engagement on many different levels and is now required at the high school level.

The UC Ethnic Studies Faculty Council includes many experts within Ethnic Studies in charge of developing a model curriculum; however, there is current debate as to whether the UCs should require Ethnic Studies as part of their admissions criteria. Due to the many political issues regarding race that have arisen from the other UC campuses due to misunderstanding of the field, there has been concern regarding how Ethnic Studies will be implemented. The main goal is to ensure that the study of Ethnic Studies does not include these political debates, and the distinction between Ethnic Studies and Critical Race Theory remains clear.

During the BOARS meeting, members also wondered what would happen to the schools who do not have the capacity or funding to offer Ethnic Studies as a requirement. Member Doshi noted that the requirement will be implemented for the 2029-20230 graduating class, so there is still time, and the UCs also have money allocated for such instances, so funding should not be a concern. AFAC members agreed to invite the BOARS Work Group leads to join the March 16 AFAC meeting for further discussion.

**Action:**

- Members agreed to have the Work Group Leads join the March 16 AFAC meeting for 30 minutes to further discuss the A-G Ethnic Studies Requirement. AFAC Analyst will coordinate their visit (completed 2/10).
- AFAC will draft a memo response following the March 16 AFAC meeting that will be shared at the April 7 BOARS meeting.

**IV. Systemwide and Campus Review Items - 11:00am – 11:10am**

**A. Systemwide Review Item - Senate Review of Senate Regulations re: Admission  
– Member Lor**

**Lead Reviewer:** Yang Lor

Lead reviewer's draft memo is available [here](#).

**Requested Action:** Members discuss the proposal and lead reviewer's assessment. If no additional comments, members vote to endorse the draft memo.

**Deadline for comments to the Senate Chair:** Friday, February 17, 2023.

Member Lor summarized his assessment of the proposed amendments to Senate Regulations on Admission highlighting that the most significant revision is the removal of the standardized testing requirement for admission. In November 2021, the Board of Regents voted to remove the use of SAT and ACT scores for undergraduate admission into universities. Member Lor shared data noting that the

Fall 2021 incoming class was affected by this amendment resulting in a significant increase in the number applicants and the number of students from underrepresented racial and ethnic groups admitted into a UC. Member Lor concluded his assessment noting that he encourages the UC System and individual campuses to develop the necessary resources for admissions offices to handle the increased volume of applicants.

Chair Eaton wondered to what extent this amendment affects out-of-state students versus in-state students who lack residency because of immigration status. Students from out of state appear to come from more advantaged backgrounds, and therefore, there are equity implications for treating their applications the same as in-state applications. Member Lor noted that the policy states that out-of-state students need to compare more favorably to and have better credentials than in-state students to gain admission into a UC.

**Action:**

- Voting members voted to endorse member Lor’s draft memo (6 in favor, 0 opposed, 0 abstentions, 1 member not present during time of vote).
- AFAC Analyst will transmit the final memo to the Senate Chair.

**B. Campus Review Item – Proposal for a B.A. in Data Science and Analytics – Chair Eaton**

The proposal was distributed to the Chairs of Senate Committees, the SNS Executive Committee, and the SSHA Executive Committee. The policy governing the review and approval of Undergraduate Degree Programs is available [here](#).

**AFAC, CAPRA, UGC, and SSHA and SNS Executive Committees are lead reviewers.**

**Action:**

- Member Spencer volunteered as lead reviewer and will submit his assessment to AFAC Analyst by March 10, 2023.
- The proposal and lead reviewer’s comments will be discussed at the March 16 AFAC meeting.
- **Deadline for comments to the Senate Chair:** Friday, March 24, 2023.

**V. Request from Graduate Council (GC) - Proposed Policy for Undergraduate/Graduate Hybrid Degree Programs – Chair Eaton – 11:10am – 11:20am**

In AY 21-22, a proposal for a combined Bachelor’s and Master’s program was submitted to the Senate; however, there was no UCM policy in place for establishing and reviewing such programs. GC has worked to develop a policy modeled after that of UC Riverside and invites AFAC to review the proposed policy in terms of admissions.

**Lead Reviewer:** Chair Eaton

Lead reviewer's draft memo is available [here](#).

**Requested Action:** Members discuss the proposed policy and Chair Eaton's draft memo. If no additional comments, members vote to endorse Chair Eaton's draft memo.

Chair Eaton summarized his assessment of GC's Proposed Policy for the Establishment of Undergraduate/Graduate Hybrid Degree Programs noting that the establishment of such a policy was presented to AFAC in AY 20-21 when Professor Sarah Kurtz submitted to the Senate a proposal for a 4+1 B.A./M.A. degree in MBSE. The proposal would admit students as first-year undergraduate students in a program that would last an average of five years; in the first three-four years, the student would acquire their bachelor's degree, and in their fifth year, they would acquire their master's degree.

One of AFAC's initial concerns was in regard to financial aid noting that financial aid for terminal master's programs is very different than financial aid for undergraduate education. Chair Eaton's draft memo states that AFAC supports the overall framework; however, members believe that one large omission must be addressed before the committee can endorse the framework, which is standards for financial aid and student debt outcomes should be added to proposal requirements and review. Chair Eaton noted that most undergraduate students do not acquire debt because of Pell Grants and Cal Grants; however, when the student reaches their fifth year, they become ineligible for Pell Grants and Cal Grants, thus acquiring student debt. Chair Eaton's memo essentially states that UC Merced should adopt standards for evaluating such proposals in terms of financial aid.

A member wondered how the maximum number of units that can be double counted was determined and recommended asking GC for clarification.

Director of Financial Aid Ron Radney recommended AFAC consult with Vice Provost and Dean of Graduate Education (VPDGE) Hrant Hratchian regarding the current average levels of student loan borrowing by students in UC Merced's terminal master's programs, as well as how many such programs are at UCM and how many students are enrolled.

**Action:**

- Voting members voted to endorse the draft memo with the addition of requesting a rationale for the 12-unit limit for double counting courses (5 in favor, 0 opposed, 1 abstention, 1 member not present during time of vote).
- AFAC Analyst and Chair Eaton will consult with VPDGE Hratchian regarding graduate financial aid data.

VI. [Spring 2023 A by E Review](#) – Admissions Director Noji – 11:20am – 11:25am

**Requested Action:** AFAC to vote on the A by E Report. AFAC Analyst will transmit AFAC’s decision to Director Noji.

Director Noji noted that the report includes individuals who require verification of their application against their academic records; nothing out of the ordinary compared to previously reviewed A by E reports.

**Action:**

- Voting members voted to endorse the Spring 2023 A by E report (6 in favor, 0 opposed, 0 abstentions, 1 member not present during time of vote).
- AFAC Analyst will notify Director Noji.

**VII. Any Other Business – 11:25am – 11:30am**

The Faculty Forum is scheduled to take place on Tuesday, March 14, 2023, in which the Admissions Office provides reports on admissions, financial aid, and enrollment management. Vice Chair Cleary volunteered to attend the event and will debrief the membership at the next AFAC meeting.

Members also discussed student academic activity tracking. Last year, AFAC solicited feedback from School Executive Committees and Senate Committees, and in light of the feedback received, AFAC made some recommendations to DivCo. Chair Eaton expressed his concerns regarding the inability to use students’ grades in CatCourses to record academic activity. Director Radney stated that the Office of Financial Aid and Office of Information Technology (OIT) created an interface tool that was specifically designed to extract student activities from CatCourses in an attempt to reduce the need for faculty to report attendance. He stated that the easiest way to record student activity is to assign a simple assignment in CatCourses; an assignment as simple as having students confirm they have read the syllabus. Director Radney does not feel it necessary to revise the tool since it has shown to work well. Chair Eaton welcomed further discussion with Director Radney regarding communications with faculty to help them better understand the tool.

**VIII. Informational Items** will be regularly uploaded on the “Informational Items” AFAC Box Folder [here](#).