

**Undergraduate Council (UGC)****Meeting Minutes****Thursday, October 12, 2023****1:00pm – 2:30pm****I. Chair's Report – Heather Bortfeld – 1:00pm – 1:10pm****A. September 29 Shared Governance Retreat**

Participants discussed financial reporting systems, enrollment growth, and faculty hires.

**B. October 2 UCEP Meeting**

The main topic of discussion revolved around UC Online. Online education has become a large focus, and campuses are responsible for developing their own policy for remote learning. UC Online includes several courses from all UC campuses. Chair Bortfeld has been assigned, along with a UC Riverside representative, to provide an update on the Deloitte report later this semester.

**C. October 12 DivCo Meeting**

- AVC for Interdisciplinary Research & Strategic Initiatives Josh Viers attended the meeting to report on UCM's Agricultural Experiment Stations (AES) Designation, which differs from UC Agriculture and Natural Resources (ANR).
- Chancellor Muñoz attended the meeting to discuss the ongoing campus financial systems problems, which he confirmed are being addressed.

**II. Consent Calendar – 1:10pm – 1:15pm****A. The Agenda****B. [September 28 Meeting Minutes](#)****Action:**

- The Consent Calendar was approved as presented.

**III. VPDUE Frey's Report – 1:15pm – 1:30pm****A. Summer Session Holidays and Scheduling**

Depending on the calendar, Juneteenth, July 4<sup>th</sup>, and Memorial Day may fall on the same day of the week and substantively reduce instructional time in UC Merced's condensed Summer terms. In AY 21-22, an advisory note was transmitted to all Curriculum Managers to encourage instructors to refrain from scheduling their classes on only one day a week or a MW pattern in order to avoid losing excessive instructional time.

VPDUE Frey would like to propose that the Registrar's Office transmit an advisory note

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every year to Curriculum Managers on behalf of UGC about the impact of holidays on summer course schedules.

**Requested Action:** Members discuss the proposal. Voting members vote on the proposal in the executive session.

VPDUE Frey summarized her proposal noting that two years ago when Juneteenth was established as a holiday, it was noted that the summer session academic calendar would be impacted. Every seven years, Juneteenth, July 4<sup>th</sup>, and Memorial Day fall on the same day of the week. Approximately two years ago, UGC transmitted a memo to the School Curriculum Managers and Deans suggesting that they carefully consider the distribution of their summer session course offerings, particularly during the short 6-week summer sessions, so as to not schedule classes on the same days that the aforementioned holidays. In doing so, instructors can lose up to 30% of their instructional time.

A member inquired about an automated message to transmit at the beginning of every year; however, VPDUE Frey stated that no such mechanism exists. Another member inquired about makeup classes, and VPDUE Frey responded that students cannot be forced to make up classes that are scheduled on the same days as holidays.

**Action:**

- Voting members voted in the executive session to approve VPDUE Frey's proposal for the Registrar's Office to transmit an advisory note every year to Curriculum Managers about the impact of holidays on summer course schedules.
- UGC Analyst will draft a memo. Voting members will be invited to review the draft memo prior to transmittal to VPDUE Frey.

B. [First Semester Dismissal](#)

UGC has approved not academically dismissing first semester undergraduate students, but rather putting them on academic probation and providing them with an advising and academic support intervention.

VPDUE suggests that UGC either permanently approve the practice of not academically dismissing students after their first semester or extend the temporary approval to not academically dismiss students after their first semester through Spring 2024.

**Requested Action:** Members discuss the potential change in practice of academic dismissal of first semester students. Voting members vote in executive session on whether to permanently approve the practice or extend the temporary approval through Spring 2024.

VPDUE Frey summarized her proposal noting that UGC has temporarily paused first semester dismissals over the past two years. It is unusual for universities to dismiss students after their first semester, but rather place them on academic probation and provide them with advising. VPDUE Frey would like UGC to decide whether to extend the pause to Spring 2024 or to permanently remove the practice of dismissing students from UC Merced after their first semester.

Several members were not aware of this current policy and inquired about why it was ever established. Speculation is that advisors were worried about students accumulating additional debt. A member recommended including in UGC's response memo a suggestion for the Division of Undergraduate Education to maintain student advising and academic support interventions to ensure students are provided the proper tools to succeed, and thus, helping to minimize them from them accruing additional debt. Another member recommended requesting an annual report that includes all retention and success rates.

**Action:**

- Voting members voted in the executive session to approve VPDUE Frey's proposal to permanently approve the practice of not academically dismissing students after their first semester.
- Voting members also voted in the executive session to recommend maintaining student interventions and to provide UGC with an annual report that includes retention and success rates.
- UGC Analyst will draft a memo. Voting members will be invited to review the draft memo prior to transmittal to VPDUE Frey.

**IV. [Proposed policy on Assignment of Faculty-Authored Course Materials](#) – Policy Subcommittee Members Ryan Baxter and Alejandro Gutierrez - 1:30pm – 1:50pm**

VPDUE Frey would like to request that UGC develop a policy for COI with textbook selection when the instructor is the author and receives royalties/profits.

The Policy Subcommittee met to discuss the proposed policy (linked above). Members Baxter's and Gutierrez's comments are available [here](#).

**Requested Action:** Members discuss VPDUE Frey's request and determine next steps.

Members Baxter and Gutierrez summarized the draft policy noting that they do not feel that instructors should be prohibited from providing their own authored materials as required instructional materials and that it should be left to the discretion of the instructor's department to determine whether their course materials are appropriate. Members Baxter and Gutierrez also believe that if the course materials were developed using university resources, then they should be available for free to all UC Merced students. A member recommended removing the language related to sabbatical, as it does not seem appropriate to prohibit an instructor from creating a textbook during this time.

A consultant noted that this policy should not apply to Open Educational Resources (OER). A member recommended including in the policy language related to Open Access resources. Members agreed to consult with the Library once a final policy is drafted.

VPDUE Frey noted that Top Hat is a platform that makes it possible for instructors to charge students for their materials that are not well-defined or reviewed such as homework, exams, PowerPoint slides, etc. VPDUE Frey would like UGC to consider the limits on what is acceptable. A member recommended replacing all language related to "textbook" with "course materials".

**Action:**

- Member Gutierrez will revise the draft policy to include Open Access resources, remove language related to sabbatical, and replace “textbook” with “course materials”.
- UGC Analyst will invite the Library and Scholarly Communications (LASC) Committee to review and comment on the draft policy prior to UGC’s review and approval.

**V. Approval of Courses – CRF Subcommittee Members Francois Blanchette, Felicia Lopez, and Alexander Petersen – 1:50pm – 2:05pm**

Courses are available at the links below. The CRF Subcommittee’s recommendations are available [here](#).

**Action:**

- The following courses were approved, and Curriculog will be updated accordingly:
  1. [BIOE - 135 - Biochemistry for Engineers](#)
  2. [PHIL - 123 - Technology Ethics](#)
  3. [PHYS - 108 - Thermal and Statistical Physics Core](#)
- The following courses were rejected with minor recommended revisions, and Curriculog will be updated accordingly:
  1. [CHEM - 152 - Biochemistry Laboratory](#) – ask proposer to remove class level restrictions and inquire about when the CHEM 122 proposal will come to UGC for modifications.
  2. [ENVE - 010 - Environment in Crisis](#) – ask proposer to ensure hours add up to 12 and provide a consistent class description that does not refer to the removed labs.
  3. [PH - 181 - Public Health Research](#) – ask proposer to reassess and modify resource requirements to clarify whether the IoR will be grading all 60 students.

**VI. Any Other Business – 2:05pm – 2:10pm**

VPDUE Frey reported that the Division of Undergraduate Education is piloting a new program for the Fall commencement to recognize students who have participated in experiential learning. Five areas of experiential learning have been identified, and students will receive a pin to include on their stole and asked to stand in recognition during graduation.

A consultant inquired about whether another category could be added called international educational experience to recognize students under DACA and did not have the opportunity to study abroad. VPDUE Frey confirmed that she would relay the suggestion to those managing the program.

**VII. Executive Session – Voting Members Only – 2:10pm – 2:30pm**

No minutes were recorded during the executive session. The action items were shared with voting members and included in item III. above.