

Admissions and Financial Aid Committee (AFAC)

Meeting Minutes
Thursday, November 16, 2023
10:30am – 11:30am

Documents available in [box](#)
[AFAC Duties](#)

I. Consent Calendar – Chair Eaton – 10:30am – 10:35am

- A. The Agenda
- B. [October 19 Meeting Minutes](#)

Action:

- The agenda and October 19 meeting minutes were approved as presented.
- AFAC Analyst will update the Senate website accordingly.

II. Chair’s Report – Chair Eaton – 10:35am – 10:50am**A. October 26 and November 9 DivCo Meetings**

- Discussions were held about the ongoing financial systems issues. A task force has been formed to address the issues and focus on establishing high-level benchmarks and measures to evaluate progress in fixing the financial systems. The task force is expected to develop a plan and provide a report by January.
- Discussions were held about the TAS budgets, including the significant cuts made and the lack of faculty involvement in determining the budget formula. A task force has been initiated to work on the TAS budgets, aiming to involve faculty in deciding the budget and formula.
- CAPRA is conducting a study to examine faculty lines, looking at the reduction in the total number of Senate faculty and analyzing patterns and replacement issues across the Schools.

B. November 3 BOARS Meeting

Chair Eaton reported on a memo from BOARS Chair Barbara Knowlton, available [here](#), regarding the Area H Ethnic Studies requirement. BOARS has been working to establish this as a requirement and revise the criteria to align with high school graduation; however, during the November 3 BOARS meeting, BOARS Chair Knowlton suggested making this a recommendation rather than a requirement. This generated confusion amongst members, and a vote to transmit the approved criteria back for review failed. Further discussion will take place at the December 1 BOARS meeting, and members are awaiting an update from the systemwide Parliamentarian.

Action:

- Members voted unanimously to approve the transmittal of a memo to BOARS Chair Knowlton reiterating their support for an Ethnic Studies requirement rather than a recommendation.
- AFAC analyst will draft a memo and share it with Chair Eaton for review prior to transmittal.
- DivCo will be invited to review and endorse the memo prior to transmittal to BOARS.

C. Institutional Student Debt

The Administration agreed to provide an annual report on student debts incurred; however, due to staffing shortages and turnover, the report has not yet been generated.

III. Consultation with Admissions Director Noji – 10:50am – 11:10am**A. [Proposed revisions to A by E Review Process](#)**

Director Noji's memo is available [here](#).

Research is available [here](#).

The Office of Admissions is proposing revisions to the current A by E Review Process to simplify resident and non-resident requirements and maximize UC Merced's opportunity to yield students less than 3.0 to 2.8.

Requested Action: Members vote to approve the proposed revisions to the A by E Review Process.

Director Noji summarized the proposed revisions to the A by E Review Process. The goal is to enhance efficiency in the admissions process and increase the enrollment of A by E students to meet the 6% threshold.

The revision would change the admissions GPA requirement from 3.0 to 2.8 for incoming students who are likely to be successful at UC Merced. To support these students, Admissions is also exploring the possibility of pairing them with academic navigators on campus. To maintain alignment between first-year students and transfer students, Admissions is also proposing that the GPA requirement for lower division transfer students be changed to 2.8, matching the same threshold for incoming freshmen.

Furthermore, Admissions is requesting the allowance of one more deficiency in coursework, particularly for students with up to four-unit deficiencies. This flexibility is aimed at accommodating students with specific academic gaps, such as foreign language or world history courses.

Director Noji noted that last year only 66 students were admitted through the A by

E process, falling short of the 6% threshold. The Admissions Office would like to improve the admissions process and provide support to a broader range of students.

A member wondered whether the GPA requirement will need to be changed every year. Director Noji noted that he uses the 2.8 GPA as a parameter to stay within the 6% enrollment threshold, along with several other categories used to rank the student (leadership, volunteer work, disadvantages, etc.). Another member noted his appreciation for offering students additional assistance to be successful.

Action:

- Members voted unanimously to approve the proposed revisions to the A by E Review Process.
- AFAC Analyst will formally notify Director Noji.

IV. Campus Review Items – All – 11:10am – 11:25am

A. [SNS Proposal for Biology B.A. Degree Program](#)

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

Lead Reviewer: Siddaiah Yarra

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

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

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

Chair Eaton summarized member Yarra's memo pointing out two main areas of concern:

1. The proposed major is projected to increase enrollment numbers, and thus, the proposal should include how much TA support is needed.
2. The proposal included several letters of support; however, did not include a letter from the Environmental Systems Sciences Department.

A member recommended including in AFAC's memo the recommendation to consult with Bioengineering faculty regarding the potential inclusion of BioE courses. AFAC Analyst implemented the revision in the linked draft memo.

Action:

- Members voted unanimously to approve the draft memo.
- AFAC Analyst will transmit the final memo to the Senate Chair.

B. [SoE Aerospace B.S. Degree Program Proposal](#)

The proposal was distributed to the Chairs of Senate Committees, the SSHA Executive Committee, and the SNS 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.

Requested Action: Identify a lead reviewer. Lead reviewer will send their assessment to AFAC Analyst by Wednesday, November 29, 2023. The proposal and lead reviewer's comments will be discussed at the December 7 AFAC meeting.

Deadline for comments to the Senate Chair: Friday, December 8, 2023.

Action:

- Member Lee volunteered to lead the review. He will share his comments with AFAC Analyst by Monday, December 4, 2023.
- The proposal and member Lee's comments will be discussed at the December 7 AFAC meeting.
- Comments are due to the Senate Chair by Friday, December 8, 2023.

V. Any Other Business – 11:25am – 11:30pm

Chair Eaton reminded members that the December 7 meeting will take place in person.

VI. Informational Items will be regularly uploaded on the "Informational Items" AFAC Box Folder [here](#).