

[Admissions and Financial Aid Committee](#) (AFAC)

**Meeting Minutes**  
**Friday, February 16, 2024**  
**1:00pm – 2:30pm**

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

**I. Consent Calendar – Chair Eaton – 1:00pm – 1:05pm**

- A. The Agenda
- B. [January 26 Meeting Minutes](#)

**Action:**

- The agenda and January 26 meeting minutes were approved as presented.
- AFAC Analyst will update the Senate website accordingly.

**II. Chair’s Report – Chair Eaton – 1:05pm – 1:15pm**

**A. February 2 BOARS Meeting**

Academic Council Chair James Steintrager reported that the Area H review item has been circulated for systemwide review. The Academic Council voted to move this forward 13 to 6, with the BOARS Chair voting against. The Merced Division will be asked to provide comments, and AFAC is a lead reviewer. Controversy surrounds the issue of access and whether high schools could deliver the curriculum that is required by state law.

**Action:**

- Members are to review systemwide review item (second review) - Senate Regulation 424.A.3 (Area H), available [here](#), and send any comments to AFAC Analyst **by Monday, March 11, 2024**.
- All comments will be shared with Chair Eaton and member Doshi, who will draft a memo.
- The draft memo will be shared with voting members prior to transmittal to the Senate Chair.
- **Comments due to the Senate Chair:** Friday, April 5, 2024.

**B. February 12 DivCo Meeting**

- Senate Chair Hibbing reported on the MacKenzie Scott Gift Funds noting that the funds have been spent or committed and there will not be an endowment.

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- Senate Chair Hibbing provided a detailed report on Area H. The Academic Council voted in favor of sending the Area H issue back to the campuses to discuss the access component. Ultimately, the issue will return to BOARS.
- Senate Vice Chair Mitchell provided an update on the two TAS working groups. The goal for both groups is to generate a fiscally sustainable TAS budget model that enables the achievement of the campus's student success goals.
- Chair Eaton and Professor Khatri reported on the Financial Management and Reporting Task Force noting the main focus is ensuring summer salaries are paid correctly.
- Discussions were held regarding delays on graduate students' and postdocs' research and time to degree. A survey was conducted to identify the impacts, and a memo with recommendations was transmitted to the administration.

### III. Proposed Amendment to AFAC Bylaws – Chair Eaton – 1:15pm – 1:25pm

During the October 19, 2023 AFAC meeting, members proposed amendments to the AFAC Bylaws to include in the committee's membership a student representative appointed by the Graduate Student Association (GSA) as well as clarification of the voting rights of the student representatives and to remove redundancies. AFAC's October 30, 2023 memo to CRE is available [here](#).

On December 4, 2023, CRE transmitted a memo to Chair Eaton, available [here](#), recommending additional revisions.

**Requested Action:** Members discuss CRE's recommendations. If there is consensus, members vote to endorse CRE's proposed amendments to the AFAC Bylaws.

Chair Eaton summarized CRE's recommended amendments, which aim to clarify the role of the student representative on AFAC. Members did not have any concerns.

**Action:**

- CRE's memo with additional recommended edits shown in yellow highlight and blue font is available [here](#).
- AFAC unanimously approved CRE's recommendations.
- AFAC Analyst will draft a memo to CRE.

### IV. Campus Review Items – All – 1:25pm – 1:55pm

#### A. [Data Science and Policy Analysis Minor Proposal](#)

The proposal was distributed to all Senate Committees and the SoE and SNS School Executive Committees.

**Lead Reviewer:** Joel Spencer

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

Member Spencer summarized his assessment noting that the new minor would be available to Political Science majors and non-majors. The minor will provide students with new tools and skills who seek occupations in public and private organizations that require data handling skills and social science study design. The minor would require a total of 20 units and appears accessible to students. Member Spencer shared only one concern related to data ethics and recommended the proposers provide a clear plan for how data ethics will be taught in the proposed courses.

**Action:**

- AFAC unanimously endorsed member Spencer’s memo.
- The final memo will be transmitted to the Senate Chair.

B. [Psychology B.S. Degree Program & Amendments to B.A. Degree Program](#)

The proposal was distributed to all Senate Committees and the SoE and SNS School Executive Committees.

**Lead Reviewer:** Mike Cleary

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

Member Cleary summarized his assessment noting that the amendments to the B.A. is straightforward. The first amendment is a change in the Program Learning Outcomes (PLOs) to align with the most up-to-date American Psychology Association guidance for PLOs. The same PLOs are included in the B.S. proposal. The other amendment to the B.A. is modifying two existing writing courses, one upper division and one lower division, to add discussion sections to fulfill their writing requirements.

Member Cleary believes the rationale for the new B.S. program proposal to be strong. A student survey of current Psychology majors at UC Merced was conducted and is included in the proposal, which clearly demonstrates interest in the B.S. major and will be popular for pre-med students. The new major also requests two new hires that will replace existing lines.

Since the new major will be a popular choice to students interested in medical school, there is concern with the elective courses. There are several courses required for pre-med, and member Cleary recommended asking the proposers to provide a sample plan for how a pre-med student could complete the B.S. in Psychology and the additional pre-med requirements in Biology, Chemistry and Physics within four years.

**Action:**

- AFAC unanimously endorsed member Cleary’s memo.
- The final memo will be transmitted to the Senate Chair.

C. [SoE Proposal for MIST B.A. Degree Program](#)

The policy governing the review and approval of Undergraduate Degree Programs is available [here](#).

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

**Action:**

- Member Lee volunteered as lead reviewer and will share their comments with AFAC Analyst by Wednesday, March 6, 2024.
- Voting members will review the proposal and lead reviewer's assessment via email.
- **Comments due to the Senate Chair:** Friday, March 15, 2024.

D. [SNS Biochemistry B.S Proposal](#)

The policy governing the review and approval of Undergraduate Degree Programs is available [here](#).

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

**Action:**

- Chair Eaton volunteered as lead reviewer and will share their comments with AFAC Analyst by Wednesday, March 6, 2024.
- Voting members will review the proposal and lead reviewer's assessment via email.
- **Comments due to the Senate Chair:** Friday, March 15, 2024.

E. [SNS Ecology, Evolution, and Conservation Biology B.S. Proposal](#)

The policy governing the review and approval of Undergraduate Degree Programs is available [here](#).

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

**Action:**

- Member Cleary volunteered as lead reviewer and will share their comments with AFAC Analyst by Wednesday, March 13, 2024.
- The proposal and lead reviewer's assessment will be reviewed at the March 22 AFAC meeting.
- **Comments due to the Senate Chair:** Friday, March 22, 2024.

F. [SSHA Proposal for a Science, Technology, and Ethics B.S. Degree Program](#)

The policy governing the review and approval of Undergraduate Degree Programs is available [here](#).

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

**Action:**

- Member Doshi volunteered as lead reviewer and will share their comments with AFAC Analyst by Wednesday, March 13, 2024.
- The proposal and lead reviewer's assessment will be reviewed at the March 22 AFAC meeting.
- **Comments due to the Senate Chair:** Tuesday, April 2, 2024.

G. [SSHA Proposal for a Communication and Media B.A. Degree Program](#)

The policy governing the review and approval of Undergraduate Degree Programs is available [here](#).

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

**Action:**

- Chair Eaton and member Spencer volunteered as lead reviewers and will share their comments with AFAC Analyst by Friday, April 12, 2024.
- The proposal and lead reviewer's assessment will be reviewed at the April 19 AFAC meeting.
- **Comments due to the Senate Chair:** Friday, April 19, 2024.

V. **Civil and Environmental Engineering (CEE) TAG Criteria – 1:55pm – 2:10pm**  
CEE Chair Marc Beutel submitted a memo to AFAC requesting the addition of TAG criteria to their major, available [here](#).

**Requested Action:** Members discuss CEE's request to adapt TAG admission criteria into the Civil Engineering Major. If there are no concerns, voting members vote to endorse the TAG criteria.

Chair Eaton summarized the Civil Engineering Department's request. Admissions Director Noji confirmed that there are no issues and that the criteria aligns well with other engineering criteria.

**Action:**

- AFAC approved (5 members in favor, 0 opposed, 1 abstention) CEE's request.
- AFAC Analyst will notify the CEE Department Chair.

VI. **Update to Biological Sciences (BIO) B.A. and B.S. Transfer Selection Criteria – 2:10pm – 2:25pm**

Biological Sciences Department Chair Justin Yeakel submitted a memo to AFAC outlining changes to the selection criteria and transfer requirements for the Biological

Sciences B.A. and B.S. majors.

Changes to BIO B.A. transfer selection criteria are available [here](#).

Changes to BIO B.S. transfer selection criteria are available [here](#).

**Requested Action:** Members discuss the requested changes to BIO B.A. and B.S. transfer selection criteria. If there are no concerns, voting members vote to endorse the changes.

Chair Eaton summarized the Biology Department's requests noting that the change to the B.A. criteria is to remove General Education requirements as major selection because most students complete IGETC (which will be transitioning to CAL-GETC). The change to the B.A. criteria is removing Organic Chemistry as a requirement for transfer.

Members did not have any concerns. The Admissions Office had previously spoken with Natural Sciences faculty and did not have any concerns.

**Action:**

- AFAC approved (5 members in favor, 0 opposed, 1 abstention) the updates to BIO B.A. and B.S. Transfer Selection Criteria.
- AFAC Analyst will notify the BIO Department Chair.

**VII. Any Other Business – 2:25pm – 2:30pm**

A member inquired about Fall 2024 admission acceptances. Director Noji reported that UC Merced is up by 8% for first-year level applications and up by approximately 48% for non-resident international. UC Merced expects a record number of first-year applications this year; however, there is a slight drop in transfer applications. Decisions for first-year students will be made by March 1, 2024 and decisions for transfers will be made by March 15, 2024.

Director Noji also inquired about inviting the new Interim Vice Chancellor for Enrollment Management to future AFAC meetings, to which AFAC members agreed.

**Action:**

- AFAC Analyst will invite the Interim Vice Chancellor for Enrollment Management, Brenda Amenson-Hill, to future AFAC meetings.

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