

Undergraduate Council (UGC)

Meeting Minutes
Tuesday, February 20, 2024
1:00pm – 2:30pm

Zoom Information:

<https://ucmerced.zoom.us/j/84154985472>

Meeting ID: 841 5498 5472

One tap mobile: +16694449171,,84154985472# US

I. Consent Calendar – 1:00pm – 1:05pm

- A. The Agenda
- B. [February 6 Meeting Minutes](#)

Action:

- The agenda and February 6 meeting minutes were approved as presented.
- UGC Analyst will update the Senate website accordingly.

II. Chair’s Report – Christopher Viney – 1:05pm – 1:15pm

- A. February 12 DivCo Meeting

DivCo transmitted a memo to Interim VPDUE Utter, Interim GEEC Chair Hicks, and Honors Program Director Moyes offering comments on the proposed Bylaws for the Division of Undergraduate Education Executive Committee (DUEEC).

- B. UCEP Update – [SR 630.E](#)

Chair Viney provided an update from the February 14 Regents Meeting noting that members voted down on SR 630.E. SR 630.E was adopted by the systemwide Academic Senate in February 2023. The Regulation “created a ‘campus experience’ requirement that students must complete in order to earn an undergraduate degree, which had the effect of precluding the creation of any fully online undergraduate degrees by campuses and preventing any individual students, with the exception of incarcerated students, from being able to obtain an undergraduate degree by enrolling only in online classes. The campus experience requirement in SR 630.E requires enrollment in a minimum number of units in courses with at least 50 percent in-person instruction.”

VCSA Nies reported that looking at graduation rates for fully online universities, very few of them are above 20%. Retention and graduation rates in the online environment have not matched the needs. There is predicted to be a 1.1 million shortage in workforce by 2030, and moving education to fully online is not necessarily improving bachelor graduation rates. There seems to be confusion between offering online courses to increase enrollment rates versus graduation rates.

The recording for the February 14 Regents meeting is available [here](#).

III. January 18 UCOPE Meeting Update – Felicia Lopez – 1:15pm – 1:20pm

During the January 18 UCOPE meeting, members discussed the planning and approval of the Entry Level Writing Requirement (ELWR) Coordinating Committee (ECC). This is a new systemwide committee that will be looking at the diverse strategies of placement. Since all the UCs have slightly different placement strategies, this committee will aggregate data and analyze that data to determine what is working and not working. The committee will also provide suggestions for best practices and for improving methods of placement.

Discussions were also held regarding the need for more remediation with students UC-wide. This pertains to not only writing and language courses, but math courses and various other courses, as well. UCOPE members wondered whether there are current methods for accurately tracking students' scores. This is an ongoing discussion.

IV. UGC Awards Subcommittees– 1:20pm – 1:30pm

A. [Distinguished Undergraduate Teaching Award for Non-Senate Faculty](#)

Selection Process: The Undergraduate Council (UGC) will form an ad-hoc committee to serve as the UGC Awards Committee with a minimum of three members.

Membership will include:

- At least one UGC Senate faculty who will also serve as Chair of the Awards Committee
- A UGC ex-officio member (Interim VPDUE Utter or VCSA Nies)
- A Center for Engaged Teaching and Learning representative (UGC Analyst will contact a member of CETL)

Action:

- Member Alejandro Guitierrez (SoE) volunteered to serve as the Chair of the subcommittee.
- VCSA Nies volunteered to serve as the ex-officio member on the subcommittee.
- UGC Analyst will identify a member of CETL to serve on the subcommittee.
- UGC Analyst will share the nominations with the subcommittee members following the March 22, 2024 deadline.
- The deadline for the subcommittee to provide their recommendation will be determined once the Spring Meeting of the Division date is finalized.

B. [Distinguished Undergraduate Teaching Award for Senate Faculty](#)

Selection Process: The Undergraduate Council (UGC) will form an ad-hoc committee to serve as the UGC Awards Committee with a minimum of three Senate faculty.

Membership will include:

- A minimum of three UGC Senate faculty (one from each School), one who will

also serve as the Chair of the Awards Committee.

- A UGC ex-officio member (Interim VPDUE Utter or VCSA Nies)
- Unit 18 Lecturer (UGC Analyst will contact a Unit 18 Lecturer)

Action:

- Chair Viney (Chair of subcommittee; SoE), and members Elaine Denny (SSHA), and Bin Liu (SNS) volunteered to serve on the subcommittee.
- Interim VPDUE Utter volunteered to serve as the ex-officio member on the subcommittee.
- UGC Analyst will identify a Unit 18 Lecturer to serve on the subcommittee.
- UGC Analyst will share the nominations with the subcommittee members following the March 22, 2024 deadline.
- The deadline for the subcommittee to provide their recommendation will be determined once the Spring Meeting of the Division date is finalized.

V. Campus and Systemwide Review Items – All - 1:30pm – 1:40pm

A. [SoE Proposal for MIST B.A. Degree Program](#)¹

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 Greg Wright volunteered to serve as lead reviewer.
- All Senate and School Executive Committee comments are due to the Senate Chair by Friday, March 15, 2024 and will be shared with the lead reviewer.
- The lead reviewer will review all associated comments and send their assessment to UGC Analyst by Monday, March 25, 2024.
- All comments and lead reviewer's assessment will be discussed at the April 2 UGC meeting.

B. [SNS Biochemistry B.S Proposal](#)²

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 Alexander Petersen volunteered to serve as lead reviewer.

¹ Recusal: Alex Petersen

² Recusal: Ryan Baxter

- All Senate and School Executive Committee comments are due to the Senate Chair by Friday, March 15, 2024 and will be shared with the lead reviewer.
- The lead reviewer will review all associated comments and send their assessment to UGC Analyst by Monday, March 25, 2024.
- All comments and lead reviewer's assessment will be discussed at the April 2 UGC meeting.

C. [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:

- UGC Analyst will contact member Ryan Baxter to see if he is willing to serve as lead reviewer.
- All Senate and School Executive Committee comments are due to the Senate Chair by Friday, March 22, 2024 and will be shared with the lead reviewer.
- The lead reviewer will review all associated comments and send their assessment to UGC Analyst by Monday, April 8, 2024.
- All comments and lead reviewer's assessment will be discussed at the April 16 UGC meeting.

D. [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 Eileen Camfield volunteered as lead reviewer.
- All Senate and School Executive Committee comments are due to the Senate Chair by Tuesday, April 2, 2024 and will be shared with the lead reviewer.
- The lead reviewer will review all associated comments and send their assessment to UGC Analyst by Tuesday, April 11, 2024.
- All comments and lead reviewer's assessment will be discussed at the April 16 UGC meeting.

E. [Senate Regulation 424.A.3 \(Area H\)](#)

The proposal was distributed to all Senate Committees, School Executive Committees, and the HCRES department.

AFAC, CRE, EDI, UGC, and School Executive Committees are lead reviewers.

Action:

- Member Felicia Lopez volunteered as lead reviewer and will send their comments to UGC Analyst by Monday, March 25, 2024.
- **Deadline for comments to the Senate Chair:** Friday, April 5, 2024.

The following review item was added to the agenda during discussion of the above new program proposals.

F. [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, SNS and SOE Executive Committees are lead reviewers.

Action:

- The policy governing the review and approval of Undergraduate Degree Programs is available [here](#).
- Chair Viney volunteered as lead reviewer.
- All Senate and School Executive Committee comments are due to the Senate Chair by Friday, April 19, 2024 and will be shared with the lead reviewer.
- The lead reviewer will review all associated comments and send their assessment to UGC Analyst by Thursday, April 25, 2024.
- All comments and lead reviewer's assessment will be discussed at the April 30 UGC meeting.

VI. Conflict of Interest with Course Material Selection when the Instructor is the Author – All - 1:40pm – 1:55pm

At the October 12, 2023 UGC meeting, members discussed and proposed a policy for conflict of interest with course material selection when the instructor is the author and receives royalties/profits, available [here](#).

On November 22, 2023, CRE was invited to review the proposed policy.

On February 7, 2024, members of CRE offered several recommendations to strengthen the policy, available [here](#).

Requested Action: Members discuss CRE's recommendations and revise the policy accordingly.

Member Gutierrez summarized the proposed policy, which was developed and approved by UGC in Fall 2023. CRE generally supported the proposed policy and offered several recommendations for clarity. One main recommendation was to clarify in the first paragraph how long Open Educational Resources (OER) will be available to the student. Discussion amongst members determined that the intent of this policy is to prevent faculty from charging their students for their course materials, not requiring faculty to use OER; OER is available

as an alternative option. Because it is only a suggestion, a member recommended placing the first paragraph at the end of the policy, to which other members agreed.

Action:

- Voting members unanimously approved the placement of paragraph one to the end of the policy.
- UGC Analyst will transmit the updated proposed policy to DivCo.

VII. Approval of Courses³ – CRF Subcommittee Members Elaine Denny, Bin Liu, Felicia Lopez, Alexander Petersen, and Greg Wright – 1:55pm – 2:05pm

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

Action:

- The CRF Subcommittee's recommendations are available [here](#).
- The following courses were approved, and Curriculog will be updated accordingly.
 1. [CSE - 157 - Signal Processing for Internet of Things](#) (new; Spring 2025)
 2. [DSC - 011 - Introductory Computing & Statistical Programming](#) (new; Fall 2024)
 3. [EE - 001 - Electrical Engineering Introduction](#) (modify existing; Spring 2025)
 4. [MATH - 018 - Data Science for Life Sciences](#) (modify existing; Fall 2024)
 5. [MIST - 060 - Introductory Data Analytics](#) (modify existing; Fall 2024)
 6. [PH - 130 - Introduction to Toxicology and Risk Assessment](#) (new; Fall 2024)
 7. [PSY - 191 - Psychology Culminating Experience](#) (modify existing; Fall 2024)

Action:

- Voting members agreed to send the following course back to the proposers:
 8. [MATH - 018 - Data Science for Life Sciences](#) (modify existing; Fall 2024) – this appears to be a request to undo cross-listing, but the courses are not actually cross-listed. Rather, it seems that the proposers' intent is to discontinue a parallel course. UGC recommends asking the proposers to clearly articulate their intended request.

VIII. VCSA Nies' Report – 2:05pm – 2:15pm

A. Enrollment Update

VCSA Nies reported that UC Merced's historical attrition rate typically falls around 92% between fall and spring. This is generally due to the high number of December graduates. In Fall 2023, 2,416 first-year students joined the university with a 95%

RECUSALS:

Elaine Denny - EE

Alexander Petersen - MIST

retention rate. UC Merced currently has 2,306 first-year students, indicating that 110 first-year students have left the university. VCSA Nies and his team are working to determine the cause for this decrease. UC Merced also conducts mid-year admissions for both first year and transfer students, in which 98 students joined the campus. UC Merced currently has 8,544 enrolled students, which includes 728 graduate students. 8,533 are full-time status, and the other 11 students may be enrolled in part-time status, which is common for students in their last year who only have a couple more classes to complete. The enrollment target for Fall 2024 is 2,600 new first-year students and 200 transfer students.

VCSA Nies reported on the many complications with the new FAFSA released by the Federal government. Many students are waiting to hear back regarding their financial aid packages, and FASFA processing has been delayed until mid-March. Typically, by the middle of March, financial aid packages would have already been processed and sent to the admitted students.

Lastly, VCSA Nies reported on students who might be a U.S. Citizen but their parents are not documented. This means that they are from a mixed-status family in terms of their citizenship. The new FASFA was set up in a way that will not accept those parents' information, so they cannot physically fill out the electronic FAFSA document. The University of California estimates that about 15,000 undergraduates fall into this category and currently cannot submit a FASFA application in order to receive their timely financial aid information. The entire state of California is engaging in lengthy discussions to address the issue and determine a solution.

A member wondered if Charles could share data regarding emphases tracks because the School of Engineering faculty have been discouraged from creating them. Data showing the success of new emphasis tracks would be helpful. VCSA noted that he will share this information with members and the School Deans.

IX. Any Other Business – 2:15pm – 2:20pm

No other business was discussed.

X. Executive Session – Voting Members Only – 2:20pm – 2:30pm

An executive session did not take place.

XI. Informational Items

- A. [Academic Council Chair Steintrager's letter re: Regional and Institutional Accreditation Terminology](#)

