

**Undergraduate Council** (UGC)**Meeting Minutes****Tuesday, April 2, 2024****1:00pm – 2:30pm****I. Consent Calendar – 1:00pm – 1:05pm**

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

**Action:**

- Members are to let UGC Analyst know of any revisions to the March 19 meeting minutes **by 5:00pm, Friday, April 5, 2024**. Otherwise, they will be considered approved, and will be posted on the Senate website along with the April 2 agenda.

**II. Chair's Report – Christopher Viney – 1:05pm – 1:10pm****A. March 25 DivCo Meeting**

- DivCo approved UGC's proposed Policy for COI with Course Material Selection when the Instructor is the Author.
- DivCo reviewed and approved Senate Regulation I.1.E (Passed/Not Passed) and Senate Regulation III.1.A.d (Satisfactory Progress-P/NP); however, members had concerns about Senate Regulation I.2.B (Dropping a Course) related to the part-of-term courses, and thus, the amendments to that Regulation were not approved. Registrar Webb and Interim VPDUE Utter will work to revise the Regulation once a formal response is received from DivCo. It is important for UGC to clearly articulate what it is that they would like to achieve through the Regulation amendment – e.g. provide students with the option to exit a course they are struggling in and remain full-time status, or allow them to exit a course and add a course to ensure they are still making timely progress to degree – with the overall objective of increasing retention. UGC will be invited to review the proposed amendments.

**B. April 1 UCEP Meeting**

Members of UCEP discussed revisiting of the minimum standards for graduation currently summarized in [Senate Regulation 782](#). The Regulation currently notes that for the grade of Passed or Not Passed, to receive a bachelor's degree, a student must obtain a grade point average of at least 2.0 for all courses attempted at the university. Members would like to revise the Regulation to require a GPA of 2.0, not for all courses attempted, but in a minimum of 180 units (presumably 120 units for campuses that divide the academic year into semesters instead of terms). Chair Viney will circulate an email with additional information to UGC members and further discussion may take place at the April 16 UGC meeting.

### III. VCSA Nies Report – 1:10pm – 1:15pm

#### A. Athletics

UC Merced has submitted its application to be considered for the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) Division 2. There were concerns that this would cost the campus more money; however, VCSA Nies clarified that annual fees for the National Association of Intercollegiate Athletics (NAIA) are significantly more expensive. There are more universities in the NCAA division, resulting in lower fees per campus. UC Merced will need to add an increase in scholarship funds for student athletes to its operations budget. A site visit is scheduled to take place on Friday, April 5, 2024 to review UC Merced's current operations, and a formal report will be submitted to the NCAA Council, which will make their decision in mid-July.

UC Merced has also submitted a request to join a Division 2 conference, which was unanimously approved. The California Coastal Athletic Association is comprised of only California schools, thus reducing travel costs for UC Merced because the team will not have to travel out of state. Moving to the NCAA will also help increase UC Merced's enrollment numbers and recruitment work as the team competes with other institutions and California State Universities.

### IV. Campus Review Items – All – 1:15pm – 1:35pm

#### A. [SNS Proposal for a Biochemistry B.S. Degree Program](#)

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

**Lead Reviewer:** Alexander Petersen

Lead reviewer's draft memo and Senate Committees' comments have been shared with UGC voting members.

**Requested Action:** Members discuss the proposal and lead reviewer's assessment. Voting Members vote in executive session to approve the proposal if there is consensus.

Member Petersen summarized the proposal noting that the proposed program largely leverages existing curriculum, personnel, and other resources. The anticipated enrollment projections are between 100-400 students by 2031. There is sufficient referral pool data indicating that there were 831 students who listed biochemistry on their UC application for another campus, thus indicating demand. The proposed major is also a common major at other R1 and R2 universities. The proposal has unanimous endorsement from the School of Natural Science Executive Committee, as well as support letters from the School of Natural Sciences Departments, Bioengineering, and Computer Science & Engineering.

Member Petersen highlighted the following main points from his assessment:

- The proposers are requesting immediate hiring of one tenured Senate faculty line and one laboratory staff line, and UGC should defer this consideration to the campus administration.
- The proposers are working with the Vice Chancellor of Physical Operations, Planning and Development to secure an organic Chemistry laboratory in the planned Medical Education building.
- The proposal calls for relatively incremental investment and faculty and staff in order to add a canonical major to campus, one that has clear regional workforce relevance to the local biomedical and biotech sector and aligns with the strategic campus development of the Medical Education B.S./M.D. Pathway.
- Member Petersen recommends approval of the proposed program.

**Action:**

- Voting members approved the draft memo (9 in favor, 0 opposed, 1 recusal).
- UGC Analyst will transmit the final memo to the Senate Chair.

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

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

**Lead Reviewer:** Greg Wright

Lead reviewer's draft memo and Senate Committees' comments have been shared with UGC voting members.

**Requested Action:** Members discuss the proposal and lead reviewer's assessment. Voting Members vote in executive session to approve the proposal if there is consensus.

Member Wright summarized the proposal noting that the new major will develop a valuable skill set that combines soft skills with marketable technical skills and real-world problem-solving skills. The new degree will not require any new research faculty; however, the proposers have asked for a new teaching faculty line along the way, to which many Senate Committee members and the administration have asked for clarification.

The Interim EVC/Provost and Interim VPDUE suggested a change in title for consistency with other similar programs, to which member Wright agreed. Member Petersen clarified that the name of the proposal was chosen in response to student surveys from the three Schools and a strong justification is provided in the proposal.

Member Wright also noted that the Economics Department is currently proposing a bachelor's degree in business administration, which is very different from this degree program proposal, but there could be some overlap and some shifting of students across those degrees.

VCSA Nies recommended changing the term "soft skills" to "core skills", as "soft

skills” derived from the military, which was a reference to the skills needed other than the hard skills of operating weapons and machines.

**Action:**

- Voting members approved the draft memo (9 in favor, 0 opposed, 1 recusal).
- UGC Analyst will transmit the final memo to the Senate Chair.

C. [Report of the University of California Systemwide Advisory Work Group on Students with Disabilities](#)

The report was distributed to all Senate Committees and School Executive Committees.

**Lead Reviewer:** Christopher Viney

Lead reviewer’s comments/questions are available [here](#).

**Requested Action:** Members discuss the report and Chair Viney’s comments/questions and provide additional insights.

Chair Viney presented the following five questions to the membership:

1. To what extent does CETL provide UC Merced faculty with advice and resources for designing or redesigning courses that are inclusive? Are improvements needed?
2. How would we identify, train, and reward formal faculty liaisons? Would the liaisons have stipends and/or teaching releases, and how would these be funded? How would CAP recognize liaisons’ contributions?
3. Possible changes in Academic Senate regulations for incomplete grades and academic standing / progress policies are consistent with our local efforts to increase retention and academic recovery. Should we consider additional changes?
4. (How) can we formally extend support to a student who is the responsible caregiver for a child with a profound disability?
5. How can we ensure that our Student Accessibility Services office is providing functional (i.e. helpful) support?

Chair Viney noted that a suggestion has been made that UC Merced should have formal faculty liaisons between the faculty and those who provide advice and resources on designing or redesigning courses. Faculty liaisons must be trained, and the time commitment and work of faculty liaisons must be recognized through compensation and/or course release and in merit reviews.

Regarding question 3, UC Merced Senate Regulations currently suggest that a student can only count 15 units as incompletes in each semester. If a student is taking 20 units and faces difficulties, is the university going to make it difficult for them to recover from that point?

A member noted that questions 2, 4, and 5 can be better addressed by the Student Accessibility Office and that UGC may not be best equipped to handle those 3 items.

Another member noted that Accessibility Services is already charged with this outreach. Rather than duplicating the work, a suggestion was made to review that communication. Identifying a mechanism for clearer and more direct communication, perhaps from Accessibility Services, would be beneficial.

VCSA Nies reported that \$150,000 was provided to support the growth of some of this work that must be used directly in support of Student Accessibility Services. The campus must then provide matching funds. Regarding the infrastructure within Student Accessibility Services, there has not been funding to hire more than one staff member. With the additional funding forthcoming from the Office of the President, and then matched by the campus, additional staff can be hired, which will contribute to better communications. Communications between Accessibility Services and the faculty should be a two-way process that ensures course-specific accommodations. The accommodations that are optimal for a writing course might not work for a chemistry laboratory course; one size does not fit all.

A member shared an instance they encountered with a student who had a severe medical emergency and noted that it is not clear where the “teeth” are in policies related to actually creating a space for a student. Faculty should be held accountable to provide “reasonable” accommodation based on a student’s verified condition.

**Action:**

- Members are to send Chair Viney and UGC Analyst their answers to questions 1-5, along with any other relevant comments, by COB, Wednesday, April 3, 2024 (completed 4/3).
- Members will be invited to review a draft memo prior to transmittal to the Senate Chair.

**V. Defining “Major Revisions” – 1:35pm – 1:50pm**

At the January 23, 2024 UGC meeting, Registrar Webb volunteered to categorize campus review items and develop a “third column” in the chart included in [the Registrar’s 2017 memo to UGC](#) (pg. 2) regarding Program Curriculum Revisions and Catalog Review—Definition of “Substantial” Changes. The updated chart is available [here](#).

**Requested Action:** Members review the updated chart and recommend revisions. If there are no additional revisions, voting members vote in the executive session to approve the updated chart. A revised memo will be distributed by the Registrar.

Registrar Webb summarized her revisions to the chart, linked above. Chair Viney recommended the following three additional revisions, to which UGC members agreed.

1. Add a descriptive heading for the chart.
2. Fix the asterisks, as the material to which they correspond is not identified.
3. Note deadlines under “non-substantial” and “substantial” that can be found in the

academic calendars stored on the UGC webpage, and provide a link to the webpage.

**Action:**

- Voting members unanimously approved the three revisions to the chart.
- UGC Analyst will notify Registrar Webb.

**VI. Approval of Courses<sup>1</sup> – CRF Subcommittee Members Elaine Denny, Bin Liu, Felicia Lopez, Alexander Petersen, and Greg Wright – 1:50pm – 2:00pm**

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

**Action:**

- The following courses were approved, and Curriculog will be updated accordingly:
  1. [CHE - 176 - Microelectronics Fabrication](#) (new crosslisted; Fall 2025)
  2. [MSE - 176 - Microelectronics Fabrication](#) (new crosslisted; Fall 2025)
  3. [ESS - 118 - Climate Change: Science and Solutions](#) (modify existing; crosslisted; Spring 2025)
  4. [ENVE - 118 - Climate Change: Science and Solutions](#) (modify existing; crosslisted; Spring 2025)
  5. [MIST - 118 - Climate Change: Science and Solutions](#) (modify existing; crosslisted; Spring 2025)
  6. [MSE - 119 - Computational Materials Science](#) (modify existing; Spring 2025)
  7. [NSED - XM023 - Introduction to Teaching Science in Elementary School](#) (Extension; Summer 2024)
  8. [PH - 119 - Mental Illness and Public Health](#) (new; Fall 2025)

**Action:**

- Voting members agreed to send the following three courses back to the proposer with the following comment (completed 4/4):

Please clarify whether the three courses are intended for 100% online or for hybrid. Please note that if the courses are approved for fully online, they will not be able to be offered in hybrid format in the future without modifying the course proposals. Please also clarify whether the three courses will be delivered synchronously or asynchronously.

9. [CRES - 011 - Climate Justice](#) (modify existing; crosslisted; Fall 2024)
10. [ESS - 011 - Climate Justice](#) (modify existing; crosslisted; Fall 2024)
11. [MIST - 011 - Climate Justice](#) (modify existing; crosslisted; Summer 2024)

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**RECUSALS:**

Christopher Viney – CHE, MSE  
 Valerie Leppert – CHE, MSE  
 Alejandro Gutierrez – ME  
 Alex Petersen - MIST

**VII. Any Other Business – 2:00pm – 2:05pm**

No other business was discussed.

**VIII. Executive Session – Voting Members Only – 2:05pm – 2:30pm**

No minutes were recorded during the executive session. The action items were shared with UGC voting members.