

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

- A. The Agenda
- B. [April 16 Meeting Minutes](#)

**Action:**

- Members are to let UGC Analyst know of any revisions to the April 16 meeting minutes **by 5:00pm, Friday, May 3, 2024**. Otherwise, they will be considered approved, and will be posted on the Senate website along with the April 30 agenda.

**II. Chair's Report – Christopher Viney – 1:05pm – 1:10pm****A. April 29 DivCo Meeting**

- DivCo endorsed UGC's memo for the Psychology B.S. and amendments to the Psychology B.A.
- The Spring Meeting of the Division is scheduled to take place on Friday, May 3, 2024. Chair Viney encouraged UGC members to attend, as a quorum will be needed to vote on amendments to UC Merced Bylaws and Regulations.
- The UC Regents Policy on Public and Discretionary Statements by Academic Units is likely to be implemented by the Regents.
- The Senate Leadership reported on the student protests and encampments taking place at other UC campuses. There are concerns about individuals outside of the UC system joining in on the protests with UC students.

**III. UCOPE April 18 Update – Felicia Lopez – 1:10pm – 1:20pm**

Data on Entry Level Writing Requirement (ELWR) across the UC are available [here](#).

- Members discussed the ELWR and digital SAT requirement. UC Merced's stance on the digital SAT is unclear, but it appears that it is not equivalent to the former paper SAT, and therefore, should not be approved for passing the ELWR.
- An ELWR Committee has been formed. There were questions related to compensation; several other UC campuses charge students a fee to take the placement test. Interim VPDUE Utter confirmed that UC Merced also charges a fee and noted a future conversation should take place to discuss what the fee should be and what it should cover.
- UCOPE members discussed math preparation and the decrease in the number of incoming students who are prepared for the successful completion of STEM majors.

- There are ongoing conversations about forming a math committee to address these issues. Member Lopez inquired about data related to math placement, preparatory issues, and remediation courses. Interim VPDUE Utter stated that processes have improved and there is hope that students will be placed into the appropriate math courses. He also noted that the math placement exam is managed by UC San Diego and provides extensive data on student performance. He also confirmed that there are equivalent placement exams for students who speak a foreign language.
- There are ongoing discussions about online modalities, online degrees, and how to move forward with UC Online. The Senior College and University Commission ([WSCUC](#)) policy considers a distance education course to be a course “in which 50% or more of the instruction and interaction occurs using one or more of the technologies included in the definition of distance education” (WSCUC Substantive Change Manual, pg.17).
  - A Senate Task Force was formed to review standardized tests for admissions. Members expressed the importance of standardized testing in gauging student success; however, the Board of Regents decided to do away with them.
  - UCOPE members discussed Ethnic Studies Area H. Several campuses support Area H while others are strongly opposed to its implementation. UCOPE came to the consensus to write a statement of support.

#### IV. Interim VPDUE Utter’s Report - 1:30pm – 1:35pm

##### A. [Senate Regulation II.2B \(Dropping a Course\)](#) - Part-of-term Courses

UGC’s proposed amendment to SR II.2.B aimed to help students who may be struggling in their first year, by allowing them to drop any lower division course during the first six weeks of instruction provided they register for a later part-of-term course.

Interim VPDUE Utter and Registrar Webb were tasked with revising the proposed language in light of DivCo’s recent concerns regarding how the proposed amendment would affect a student’s part-time or full-time status.

Interim VPDUE Utter noted two concerns – 1) there are currently not many later part-of-term courses, and 2) if a student drops out of a course and enrolls in another later part-of-term course, there may be inaccuracies with the number of units and contact hours since the part-of-term course would have fewer weeks of instruction.

Members discussed the intent of the policy change and how to best achieve the intended goal. It was recommended to change the Regulation language to allow students to drop a course as long as they do not fall below 12 units (maintain full-time status). However, it can take 4-6 weeks for a withdrawal request to be approved, and during this time students are encouraged to continue the class until the approval is granted. Interim VPDUE Utter recommended allowing a later deadline for a student to drop a course as long as they remain above 12 units, and the Undergraduate Division could also continue looking into part-of-term course offerings.

A member inquired about why faculty are required to approve a drop request and whether any requests are ever denied. Registrar Webb will provide UGC with relevant data. Another member noted that the requirement ensures an interaction between the student and faculty, providing an opportunity for a discussion of what is in the student's best interests.

**Action:**

- Registrar Webb will collect data on how many students have requested dropping a course and how many were denied, and she will report back to UGC at their May 14 meeting.

**V. Approval of Courses<sup>1</sup> – CRF Subcommittee Members Elaine Denny, Bin Liu, Felicia Lopez, Alexander Petersen, and Greg Wright – 1:35pm – 1:45pm**

Courses are available at the links below.

**Action:**

- The following courses were approved, and Curriculog will be updated accordingly:
  1. [CHN - XM001 - Elementary Chinese I](#) (new; Fall 2024)
  2. [CHN - XM002 - Elementary Chinese II](#) (new; Fall 2024)
  3. [ME - 142 - Mechatronics](#) (modify existing; Spring 2025)
- Chair Viney and member Gutierrez will collaborate over the summer to revise the form for [Online or Blended Course Approval Requests: Supplemental Questions](#). Chair Viney will propose amendments and member Gutierrez will be available after July 10 to review.

**VI. Discussion: Extension Course Proposal Review - Dean of University Extension Annette Roberts Webb, Director of University Extension Michael Pierick, and Associate Dean of University Extension Fanis Tsoulouhas – 1:45pm – 2:00pm**

**Requested Action:** Members are to discuss with Extension staff the review of Extension course proposals, specifically how they are similar/different from standard courses that UGC reviews (online modality aspects, and whether or not they should be held to the same account as standard courses).

UGC is occasionally tasked with reviewing Extension courses, and a member inquired about Extension's objective in terms of curriculum delivery.

University Extension Dean Roberts Webb explained that an XM course proposal is a UC Extension administered course offering of the campus Catalog course. The reason for low course caps is because such courses are primarily for junior and senior high school students.

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<sup>1</sup> **RECUSALS:**

Alejandro Gutierrez - ME

The academic rigor of a UC course is typically very high, and capping enrollment at a lower student-faculty ratio helps to ensure that high school students are successful in the course.

A member asked who generally teaches XM courses and how it affects the campus budget. Dean Roberts Webb responded that Department Chairs have first selection of post graduate students or postdocs to appoint as the instructor. If there are no students in the pool to teach the courses, then AP Recruit is used to search for candidates. The Department Chair has the final authority on who will teach the course. The instructor must have a minimum of a master's degree and teaching experience. University Extension also has a self-supporting budget, so campus core resources are not used.

Members also inquired about the distinction between Extension and UC Online. University Extension Director Pierick explained that UC Online serves full-time matriculated University of California students, and no one outside of that full-time enrollment can access UC Online, whereas Extension courses are for traditionally non-matriculated students who do not have access to UC Online courses.

**Action:**

- UGC Analyst will coordinate a time on an early Fall 2024 UGC agenda for Extension staff to join and provide a presentation on Extension business.

**VII. Campus and Systemwide Review Items – All – 2:00pm – 2:15pm**

A. [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](#).

**Lead Reviewer:** Christopher Viney

Lead reviewer's draft memo and Senate Committees' comments will be 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.

Chair Viney summarized his assessment highlighting the following points:

- The proposal carefully describes the academic merit, contribution to undergraduate education, and value to UC Merced of the proposed programs - a major in Communication and Media; a minor in Communication and Media, which makes it accessible to a broader co-host of students; and two emphasis tracks within the major.
- The proposed program and resource requirements are included and justified in detail.
- The proposers draw particular praise from the Admissions and Financial Aid Committee (AFAC) in regards to how the proposal provides a model for new major proposals to request adequate faculty lines.
- The Committee on Academic Personnel and Resource Allocation (CAPRA) also

notes that the proposal is well written and documented, but suggests a reduction in the number of new courses required, if possible, as well as a reduction in the request for immediate FTE lines until the student enrollments justify more FTE positions.

- No new Library collections are required.
- The proposers explain the accessibility to transfer students, and through the minor, offer a defined way for the program to be accessible to students who are not in the major.

A member inquired about the 7 new lines being requested and expressed their concerns about approving this proposal with the requested resources when UGC decided not to approve the Psychology proposal because of the lack of available resources. Chair Viney clarified that the proposers are requesting 4 new faculty lines and 3 new staff lines; however, it is unclear whether all 4 faculty lines will be needed at the same time. Another member associated with the proposal clarified that the funding is being allocated from the Advancing Campus Evolution (ACE) funds, whereas Psychology did not qualify for this funding. A member recommended making this distinction clear in UGC's memo.

A member noted that there are several points in the proposal where Data Analytics, Data Science, and Data Visualization are mentioned; however, there appears to be no consultation with the related programs. There were also concerns about the split vote between the SSHA faculty, and Chair Viney clarified that it still passed a supermajority of greater than 2/3 of the "yes" and "no" votes cast.

Chair Viney recommended approval of the proposed programs, and UGC's draft memo will be updated accordingly.

**Action:**

- Voting members approved the proposed degree program (7 in favor, 1 opposed, 1 abstention, 1 member not present during time of vote).
- Voting members agreed to implement two minor revisions to the draft memo.
- Voting members will be invited to review an updated draft prior to transmittal to the Senate Chair.

B. [Proposal to Change the Name of the Materials Science & Engineering Department to Chemical & Materials Engineering<sup>2</sup>](#)

The policy governing the establishment or revision of academic units is available [here](#).

**Lead Reviewer:** Alejandro Gutierrez

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.

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<sup>2</sup> **RECUSALS:** Christopher Viney, Valerie Leppert

Chair Viney and Vice Chair Leppert recused from the discussion.

Member Gutierrez summarized his assessment highlighting the following points:

- The Materials Science and Engineering Department faculty launched a new Chemical Engineering program, and thus, the department faculty would like to change the name of the department to Chemical and Materials Engineering.
- The proposers consulted other departments who may be impacted, as well as students who may be confused by the change.
- The change is deemed minimal; some websites and swag will need to be updated.
- Member Gutierrez recommended approval.

**Action:**

- Voting members approved the draft memo (5 in favor, 0 opposed, 2 abstentions, 3 members not present during time of vote).
- UGC Analyst will transmit the final memo to the Senate Chair.

**VIII. Any Other Business – 2:15pm – 2:20pm**

No other business was discussed.

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

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