

**Undergraduate Council (UGC)****Meeting Minutes****Tuesday, May 14, 2024****1:00pm – 2:30pm****I. Consent Calendar – 1:00pm – 1:05pm**

- A. The Agenda
- B. [April 30 Meeting Minutes](#)

**Action:**

- Members are to let UGC Analyst (cc Chair Viney) know of any revisions to the April 30 meeting minutes **by 5:00pm, Friday, May 17, 2024**. Otherwise, they will be considered approved, and will be posted on the Senate website along with the May 14 agenda.

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

- A. May 3 Meeting of the Division

Quorum was not met, and therefore, the proposed amendments to several Bylaws and Regulations were not voted on. All members of the Merced Division have been invited to vote on the proposed amendments via email, and Chair Viney encouraged members to cast their votes.

- B. May 6 UCEP Meeting

Ongoing discussions are taking place regarding UC Online and its review process. UCEP is currently drafting a memo outlining the criteria for course review while ensuring transparency and fairness in the process. UGC may be invited to review the criteria in the future.

- C. May 6 and 13 DivCo Meetings

DivCo approved the Proposal for the Establishment of a Department of Medical Education, as well as the Proposal to Change the Name of the Materials Science and Engineering (MSE) Department to Chemical and Materials Engineering (CME).

**III. [University Committee on Education Policy \(UCEP\) Request – GPA Regulation](#) – Chair Viney - 1:15pm – 1:35pm**

On April 17, 2024, Chair Viney received a request from UCEP for individual campus/Registrar responses to [four questions](#) to help guide the discussion of the proposed change to [Senate Regulation 634](#) to require a 2.0 GPA, not for all the courses attempted at the university, but in a minimum of 180 units (for term-based universities) and 120 units (for

semester-based universities).

**Requested Action:** Members discuss UCEP’s request and the four questions. Chair Viney will provide a response to the UCEP Chair by May 17, 2024.

Senate Regulation 634 states: “Except as provided in [Senate Regulation 782](#) for the grade of Passed/Not Passed, to receive a Bachelor's degree a student must obtain a grade-point average of at least 2.00 for all courses attempted in the University. (EC 3 Nov 69) (Rev 4 May 1995)”.

Chair Viney explained how the current Regulation creates uncertainty for students who may receive F’s in several of their courses, which may drop their GPA below a 2.0. They would then have to achieve multiple A’s in order to average it above a 2.0, which may be difficult to do.

Page 1 of UCEP Chair Coco’s request explains: “The main reason for requesting this review and change is a question of the meaning of a UC Degree and the philosophical approach the UC has toward education. A ‘units passed’ approach focuses on what students learn and whether they achieve the stated goals of the institution. It emphasizes that exploration and risk-taking is supported, and though failing courses do have consequences (units do not count, students will need to take additional courses, students may not be able to have that particular major), failing courses do not directly inhibit graduation. An ‘average GPA’ approach requires students ‘to make up for’ any failed courses and drives behavior that is in direct opposition to a focus on learning, exploration, and risk-taking.”

Chair Viney invited the membership to provide their thoughts on changing the Regulation from an average GPA requirement to a units-passed requirement. Members were generally supportive of the rationale for the desired change.

One member noted the importance of setting limitations for a student to choose Pass/Not Passed (P/NP) for all their courses. Interim VPDUE Utter stated that neither GE courses (unless the course is only offered on a pass/no pass basis) nor certain degree requirements can be taken as P/NP. Registrar Webb clarified that this Regulation change is not about changing courses to P/NP, but rather changing the GPA requirement for graduation. The Registrar would still review 120 units. The difference would be that only certain courses would be considered for the graduation requirement; a new GPA for graduation would need to be calculated, which would not be the GPA reported on the student’s transcript. She also noted that the Registrar is not in favor of this proposal because UCs would be one of the only institutions in the world that would require less than a 2.0 GPA to graduate, and they would like to adhere to the minimum 2.0 standard. Registrar Webb also stated that not many students face this type of situation by the time they are ready to graduate and have cleared all their degree requirements to where a policy change would be beneficial to them. Current P/NP limitations:

<https://catalog.ucmerced.edu/content.php?catoid=23&navoid=2378#GradeOptions>

Chair Viney clarified that the proposed revised Regulation is phrased in a way that requires a

student to receive a 2.0 in at least 160 of the 180 units (for quarter-based UCs) and 106 of 120 units (for semester-based UCs). Chair Viney inquired about whether such a lower limit/requirement would need to be set on how many units would count toward the 2.0 GPA. Would students be required to complete at least 120 units, and therefore, end up completing more to reach that requirement, or would they be required to complete a lesser number of units that is divisible by 3? Interim VPDUE Utter's understanding of the proposal is that a student can take more than the required 120 units, fail a few courses, and still meet the 2.0 GPA requirement for 120 units. IVPDUE Utter also expressed concern that this would encourage students who are doing poorly in a course to fail rather than get a D.

A member inquired about the complexity of implementation. Registrar Webb responded that it would be very difficult to implement because it would be unclear which courses to include and which not to include. It is not as simple as not including the F's because the F grades would need to be included if they were a part of the student's major requirements. Additionally, would the student be able to choose which courses they would like to count toward the 120 units? How would this change if a student changes majors?

A member noted their concern with making processes more complex by increasing the workload on constrained staff and other support, particularly if it is to promote a practice that seems to be outside the norm for universities.

There was general consensus not to revise the Regulation considering the practicalities of implementation, and that the number of students affected by the current average 2.0 GPA requirement for all courses attempted at UC Merced is very small. Chair Viney also noted that students have the option of petitioning to retroactively withdraw from a course which would then not count toward their GPA.

**Action:**

- Senate Regulation 634 is available [here](#).
- UCEP's four questions are available [here](#).
- Members are to send any further comments to Chair Viney **by 5:00pm, Wednesday, May 15, 2024**.
- Chair Viney will provide a response to the UCEP Chair by May 17, 2024.

**IV. Interim VPDUE Utter's Report - 1:35pm – 1:45pm**

**A. Final Exam Schedule**

The Reading, Review and Recitation (RRR) Week Policy is available [here](#).

IVPDUE Utter explained that the previously proposed RRR policy, linked above, follows UC Berkeley's model of having the final week of instruction as a reading/review/recitation (RRR) week. IVPDUE Utter is concerned about having class on Friday and the final exam the following day on Saturday. He also mentioned the importance of not introducing new materials during the last week of instruction. He proposed to either omit exams on weekends or convert the final week of instruction to a RRR week.

The Registrar's Office supports UC Berkeley's model. The RRR week would still count as a week of instruction and courses would still be scheduled during the week. The current [systemwide policy](#) mostly stipulates what can be reviewed during that week.

Former AY 19-20 UGC Chair Jay Sharping had previously proposed a [policy](#) that was never fully implemented. At the time, Divisional Council agreed it was a good practice to follow but that it should not be required. Members recommended that IVPDUE Utter send a memo to Professor Sharping asking him to reconsider the proposed policy as incoming AY 24-25 UGC Chair.

**Action:**

- Members are to send any further comments to Interim VPDUE Utter **by Monday, May 20, 2024.**

**V. Campus Review Items – 1:45pm – 1:55pm**

A. [SSHA Proposal for a Neuroscience 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 references several Psychology courses which appear to be existing, approved courses, and thus the proposed programs should not be directly impacted by delays in approving the Psychology B.S. major or four of the six Psychology B.A. emphases.
- While the programs will reside in SSHA, the proposal is also supported by the Dean of SOE and the Dean of SNS.
- The anticipated boost to enrollment qualifies the proposed program for the Accelerate Campus' Evolution (ACE) funding initiative.
- The proposers helpfully explain how the program will be accessible to transfer students. Non-majors will be able to benefit from the program via the Minor in Neuroscience.
- The Applied Mathematics Department will gladly partner in creating a Neuroscience emphasis track in their program.
- The proposal includes evidence of significant consultation and correspondence involving the proposers, the SSHA Curriculum Committee, the SSHA Executive Committee, and the SSHA Associate Dean, on the subject of faculty and staff resources.

- Overall, the proposal describes the Neurosciences B.A. and B.S. Degree Programs and the Neuroscience Minor as valuable, rigorous, unique opportunities for undergraduate students at UC Merced.
- Chair Viney recommends approval of the proposed Neuroscience Degree Program.

**Action:**

- Voting members approved the lead reviewer’s draft memo (9 in favor, 0 opposed, 0 abstentions, 1 member not present during time of vote).
- UGC Analyst will transmit the final memo to the Senate Chair.

## VI. Approval of Courses<sup>1</sup> – CRF Subcommittee Members Elaine Denny, Bin Liu, Felicia Lopez, Alexander Petersen, and Greg Wright – 1:55pm – 2:10pm

Courses are available at the links below.

**Action:**

- The following courses were approved, and Curriculog will be updated accordingly (completed 5/14):
  1. [EDUC - X031 - A New Generation of Teachers I](#) (new; Fall 2024)
  2. [EDUC - X032 - A New Generation of Teachers II](#) ((new; Fall 2024)
  3. [CE - 181 - Design of Steel Structural Systems](#) (new; Fall 2025)
  4. [CHEM - 133 - Biophysical Chemistry](#) (modify existing; Spring 2025)
  5. [CHEM - 152 - Biochemistry Laboratory](#) (new; Spring 2025)
  6. [CRES - 030 - Introduction to Chicanx/Latinx Studies](#) (new crosslisted; Fall 2025)
  7. [HIST - 030 - Introduction to Chicanx/Latinx Studies](#) (new crosslisted; Fall 2025)
  8. [ESS - 050 - Ecosystems of California](#) (modify existing; Fall 2024)

**Action:**

- Voting members agreed to approve the following courses for in-person instruction only, as the [updated supplemental forms](#) still do not include a pedagogical justification for why the courses would better serve students if taught via online modality.
- UGC Analyst will notify the proposer, and Curriculog will be updated accordingly.
  1. [CRES - 011 - Climate Justice](#) (modify existing; crosslisted; Fall 2024)
  2. [ESS - 011 - Climate Justice](#) (modify existing; crosslisted; Fall 2024)
  3. [MIST - 011 - Climate Justice](#) (modify existing; crosslisted; Summer 2024)

## VII. Any Other Business – 2:10pm – 2:15pm

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

Ryan Baxter – CHEM  
Alex Petersen - MIST

No other business was discussed.

**VIII. Executive Session – Voting Members Only – 2:15pm – 2:30pm**

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