

**Admissions and Financial Aid Committee (AFAC)**

**Meeting Minutes**  
**Friday, October 25, 2024**  
**11:30am – 1:00pm**

**I. Consent Calendar – Chair Cleary – 11:30am – 11:35am**

- A. Today's Agenda
- B. [September 27 Meeting Minutes](#)

**Action:**

- The Consent Calendar was approved as presented.

**II. Chair's Report – Chair Cleary – 11:35am – 11:45am****A. October 4 BOARS Meeting**

- Office of the President staff discussed and shared data related to systemwide admission processes.
- Members discussed the committee's priorities and anticipated business:
  - The UC Regents are advocating for fully online degree programs.
  - Transfer issues and Cal-GETC. The State Government is recognizing that transferring to UC can be complicated. For each round of admissions, the goal is to admit 1/3 transfer students. Discussions were held on how this can be best achieved and how to streamline the process to ensure all campuses are meeting their targets.
  - Area H Ethnic Studies Proposal. Area A through G are the requirements that high school students must complete for UC eligibility. The systemwide Senate will vote on a proposal in December to determine whether the University of California should add an Area H Ethnic Studies requirement.

**B. October 7 and 21 Divisional Council Meetings**

- Enrollment is flat. Current enrollment stands at 9,500, which is approximately 3,000 less than the projection of UC Merced's financial model to balance the budget. In light of this discrepancy, the university is pursuing strategies to increase enrollment in a bid to address its structural deficit.
- Senate Chair Mitchell announced that the Promise Housing Project with Merced Community College is underway and is scheduled for groundbreaking in Spring 2025. It will house both UC Merced transfer students and Merced Community College students.
- Divisional Council members unanimously approved the renaming of University Extension to the "Division of Professional and Continuing Education (PACE)".

- CAPRA Vice Chair Mike Beman provided an update on the Temporary Academic Staffing (TAS) Working Group noting that members are discussing how to implement principles and reviewing the past processes at other UC campuses. The TAS budget is based on student credit hours, and the working group is weighing different factors such as lecture courses, writing courses, large vs. small courses, and resource-intensive laboratory courses.
- The Shared Governance Retreat will take place on October 29 and 30, 2024. Members of the Senate and Administration will be in attendance, and AFAC Vice Chair Spencer will attend on Chair Cleary's behalf. The four main topics of discussion will be financial reporting systems, enrollment growth, graduate student preparation and growth, and advancing the research enterprise and mission of the university.

### **III. Consultation with Director of Medical Education Margo Vener – 11:45am – 12:00pm**

#### **A. Update on Medical Education**

Dr. Vener summarized her PowerPoint presentation, available [here](#), highlighting the following points:

- UC Merced is a regional medical campus of UCSF School of Medicine.
- No UC Merced funding has or will be requested for faculty, staff, or department resources.
- The Department of Medical Education has been approved.
- A B.S. M.D. Dual Degree Program is being proposed, which UGC will be invited to review.
- The program consists of a baccalaureate and admissions pathway. Students are admitted into UCSF with provisional acceptance into School of Medicine after four years.
- The program consists of Foundations 1 (UC Merced; classroom-based) and Foundations 2 (UCSF; clinical rotations).
- Admission criteria include: must be a high school senior, applying to UC Merced as a first-year student, reside in the San Joaquin Valley, maintain a GPA of 3.6, etc.
- Expansion of admittances will recur over time, and UC Merced will eventually have its own independent Medical School.
- UC Merced received over 1,200 applicants and admitted 15 students who have completed their first year.
- The first class will graduate with their baccalaureate degree from UCM in 2027, enter Foundations 1, and transition to UCSF in 2029.
- DOME – Department of Medical Education.
- There are six founding faculty.
- The Medical Education building at UCM is forthcoming, which will also house social sciences, public health, psychology, etc.

Chair Cleary inquired about the projection for cohort growth. Director Vener hopes to

increase the class size from 15 students to 24 B.S. and M.D students together, with the ultimate growth aspiration of 50 students per year. She added that funding is the largest barrier to meeting this goal.

Members are welcome to email Director Vener ([mvener@ucmerced.edu](mailto:mvener@ucmerced.edu)) with any additional questions.

#### **IV. Consultation with Institutional Research Analyst Corrine Townsend – 12:00pm – 12:15pm**

##### **A. Data for students switching between different academic programs**

Institutional Research Analyst Townsend shared data with members from the 2020 cohort, which revealed that 9% of students who leave UC Merced matriculate to another UC, with UC San Diego as the most popular option. Approximately 11% of UC Merced students matriculate to a California State University, with Stanislaus State as the most popular option. 37% of UC Merced students matriculate to a Community College, which typically includes students with a low GPA or those who are on academic probation. 36% of students who left the university show no record. Overall, the data illustrates that majority of students who leave UC Merced tend to matriculate to other institutions. For all schools combined, 7.2% of students matriculate to a sister campus.

A member inquired about data related to students moving within UC Merced. Data over the years has revealed that it is rare for students to begin in SSHA and transfer to another school, but rather there is a much stronger trend of students moving from SNS to SSHA, often transitioning from Biology to Psychology. There is also a noticeable trend where students who begin in Mechanical Engineering in SoE end up moving toward a Management discipline.

A member mentioned that it appears UC Merced is a “stepping stone” into the UC system - some students establish themselves at a less competitive UC campus and later transfer to a more prestigious campus. Members wondered how to grow admissions at UC Merced. A deeper dive into students who leave UC Merced but still perform well academically could offer insights into how the university can retain more students. It might also provide information on how admissions or support services could be adjusted to meet students' needs and expectations. A member noted that recruiting more students from the Central Valley may be more helpful. Another reason for low recruitment could be because there is not much entertainment in the Merced area, which may be deterring applicants.

Faculty have access to relative data on the [IRDS website](#). Members are welcome to email Institutional Research Analyst Townsend ([ctownsend@ucmerced.edu](mailto:ctownsend@ucmerced.edu)) with any additional questions.

**V. Report from Office of Admission Director Noji and Vice Chancellor for Enrollment Management Hagg – 12:15pm – 12:40pm****A. Update on Fall Recruitment Activities**

This item was tabled for a future AFAC meeting.

**B. AY 24-25 Enrollment Report (specifically for incoming Freshmen the last year or several years)**

Director Noji presented his PowerPoint slides, available [here](#), and reported that enrollment numbers are flat this year. The target for first-year students was 2,610, but actual enrollment was 2,097. The target for transfer students was 237, with actual enrollment coming very close at 223. Since the COVID-19 pandemic, first-year student enrollment has generally remained flat, though there have been increases in yield from the referral pool students. The referral pool includes students that have applied to the University of California but were not admitted to any campus. UC campuses can then offer admissions to students from this pool to meet their targets. The number of referral pool applicants has dropped by approximately 200 students in the past year.

Several factors have impacted enrollment numbers, including the new FAFSA process, which has created challenges students and families. Additionally, a strong job market, especially in recent years, has led many students and families to question the value of higher education. Lastly, there is rising competition with other universities; UC Merced's enrollment is influenced by decisions and trends at other UC and CSU campuses, as well as nationwide perceptions of higher education.

- Geographic region (including areas of CA)

Director Noji shared a breakdown of enrollment by regions. Prior to the pandemic, most of UC Merced's students were recruited from the Southern California region. Following COVID-19, there has been a noticeable shift in enrollment patterns, with more students coming from the North Central Valley and the Bay Area. This shift is significant for UC Merced, as Southern California, particularly Los Angeles, has historically been UC Merced's largest applicant pool. The decline has been especially noticeable post-COVID, with a significant drop starting in 2021.

While the applicant pool from Southern California has decreased, the more substantial issue has been a drop in the yield — the percentage of accepted students who choose to enroll. This trend suggests that while there may still be interest, factors like financial aid and the perceived value of higher education are influencing final decisions.

In response to the regional shifts and demographic changes, the Admissions Office has been working on initiatives like increasing recruitment officers, offering automatic admissions programs, and trying to address the financial aid concerns (like FAFSA) to mitigate the drop in yield.

- Major

Director Noji reported that UC Merced had expected to see increases this year in Computer Science enrollment due to national trends in tech industry growth; however, last year there was an unexpected dip in interest in these majors.

- Financial aid status/need – how FAFSA delays/problems affected enrollment

Director Noji reported that California FAFSA filers were down 10% this year, with 8.3% of filers being students of color from the suburbs and towns or rural areas. Urban areas were even lower. Merced County is down 13% in FAFSA filers. UC Merced has been known as a place of access for first-generation low-income students; however, this past year has shown a decrease, which is thought to be due to the FAFSA situation.

Director Noji also reported on enrollment by Pell eligibility noting that there have been more non-Pell Grant enrollees versus Pell Grant enrollees this year, which is the first time this has ever occurred.

## VI. Campus Review Item – 12:40pm – 12:50pm

### A. [Proposed Revisions to Senate Regulation 479 \(Cal-GETC\)](#)

The revisions address the California General Education Transfer Curriculum (Cal-GETC) and are provided in tracked changes on page 7 of the linked document.

**Lead Reviewer:** Mike Cleary

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

Chair Cleary summarized his draft memo, highlighting the two proposed revisions to Cal-GETC proposed by the Academic Council Special Committee on Transfer Issues (ASCOTI):

1. *Modify the Definition of Cal-GETC Area 5* (Physical and Biological Sciences) so that instead of requiring one course in Physical Science and one course in Biological Science, the two courses “must be from two distinct academic disciplines” and one course must still include a laboratory. This change will particularly benefit majors in STEM fields other than biology.
2. *Defer Two Additional Cal-GETC courses*, for a total of four Cal-GETC course deferrals. This will allow more flexibility for completing major preparation courses along with GE, which lower division major-preparatory

courses are taken is quite important and courses in such a series should (ideally) not be deferred in favor of fulfilling Cal-GETC requirements.

Members shared no concerns with the draft memo.

**Action:**

- AFAC members unanimously endorsed the draft memo.
- AFAC Analyst transmitted the final memo to the Senate Chair on October 25, 2024.

**VII. Any Other Business – 12:50pm – 1:00pm**

No other business was discussed.

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