

**Undergraduate Council (UGC)****Meeting Minutes****Friday, November 22, 2024****2:00pm – 3:30pm****I. Consent Calendar – 2:00pm – 2:05pm**

- A. Today's Agenda
- B. [November 8 Meeting Minutes](#)
- C. [Request from Honors Director Moyes for an exception to UGC's February 5, 2024 deadline to submit ECON 001 in Curriculog with an effective term of Fall 2025.](#)
- D. [Request from SSHA for an Extension to UGC's February 3, 2025 Deadline for Major Revisions to Existing Programs Effective Fall 2026.](#)
- E. [Request from SSHA to change the effective term from Fall 2025 to Summer 2025 for COMM 001 \(previously approved by UGC\), COMM 002, and COMM 003 \(on today's agenda under item VII\).](#)

**Action:**

- The Consent Calendar was approved as presented. The Honors Program Executive Assistant and SSHA Curriculum Manager were notified respectively.

**II. Chair's Report – Jay Sharping – 2:05pm – 2:10pm**

- A. November 18 DivCo Meeting
  - Various systemwide task forces and working groups have been developed to study several initiatives, including assessing the impact of transitioning all UC campuses with undergraduate programs to the semester system (excluding UCSF); and reviewing systemwide policies on the Faculty Code of Conduct, fully online degrees, and Artificial Intelligence (AI).
  - All UC campuses should plan for a potential 5.7% reduction in the state budget next year.
  - DivCo members continued their discussion on APO's proposed revisions to MAPP sections 2013, 2014, 2053 and 2054, and a memo was transmitted to APO.
  - DivCo members discussed a proposal from FWAF to split the committee into two: The Committee on Academic Freedom and The Committee on Faculty Welfare.
  - The Senate issued a joint statement with the administration on the election results.

A member noted the importance of UGC's involvement in conversations regarding budget reduction and the potential impacts on UC Merced's programs. Chair Sharping will ensure that a UGC member is present at every relative meeting when the budget is discussed.

**Action:**

- Chair Sharping will let Fatima and Senate Chair Mitchell know that UGC would like to be involved in any discussions related to the impacts of the budget reductions on undergraduate education.

**III. Consultation with Associate Vice Chancellor & Chief of Staff Zulema Valdez - UC Academic Congress on Hispanic-Serving Research Institutions (HSRI) – 2:10pm – 2:30pm**

AVC Valdez attended the UC Academic Congress on HSIs, where there was a notable push to make all UCs HSIs. She noted that there was also an emphasis on the research aspect of HSIs and what it means for a UC to be an HSRI. As of this year, seven of the nine UC campuses with undergraduate student populations qualify as Hispanic-Serving Institutions, while UCLA and UCB have not yet achieved this status.

AVC Valdez reported that some of the UCs are research universities first and emergent HSIs, while other UCs are HSIs looking to emerge as research universities (HSRIs). UC Merced is not an HSRI, as it has not yet reached R1 status. Once UC Merced reaches R1 status, it will emerge as an HSRI.

AVC Valdez proudly reported that UC Merced was very well represented and noticed at the UC Academic Congress on HSRI.

AVC Valdez informed UGC members that in order to qualify as an HSI, 25% of the undergraduate population must be represented as Latinx. The HSI designation provides access to specific funding for the university and highlights the need to develop specialized programs aimed at supporting Latinx success.

AVC Valdez stated that UC Merced does not yet have a comprehensive approach to HSI, and as a result, the campus is working to assemble a task force dedicated to advancing HSI efforts. She welcomed members to contact her if they have any interest in serving on the task force.

Chair Sharping inquired about whether UC Merced is a HS graduate institution. AVC Valdez responded that there are many graduate programs that would fulfill that designation, particularly with the number of Latinx graduate students in certain programs; however, HSIs and HSRIs are often more focused on serving undergraduate students. She noted that it would be a great opportunity for UC Merced to lead the efforts in serving the graduate student body, as well.

A member had attended an American Physical Society meeting this year where emerging research institutions was discussed as a general category. Because UC Merced has strong undergraduate research programs, the member inquired whether AVC Valdez is looking to partner with other UCs or CSUs to grow those efforts. AVC Valdez confirmed that this is a high priority item that the task force plans to focus on.

She reported that UC Merced currently admits more Latinx students into graduate school than any other UC other than UC Berkeley. UC Merced is building the pathway for graduate students and for hiring a diverse faculty because of the way in which research has been conducted on the campus.

AVC Valdez also reported that she plans to conduct inventory of the existing grant agencies and grant awards UC Merced currently has that are HSI or HSRI specific. Understanding which grants are available and how they benefit HSI or HSRI students can help to better serve these students and advocate for more funding.

**Action:**

- Members are to contact AVC Valdez ([zvaledez@ucmerced.edu](mailto:zvaledez@ucmerced.edu)) if they have any further questions or would like to be included in further HSRI conversations.

**IV. Periodic Review Oversight Committee (PROC) November 18 Meeting Update – Catherine Keske – 2:30pm – 2:35pm**

PROC is conducting business as usual. The History and Anthropology program reviews are ongoing.

PROC representative Keske reported that some programs feel overwhelmed by the amount of review work required, especially when multiple programs (undergraduate and graduate) are housed in the same department or shared across departments. PROC is considering departmental review, which would begin in 2025.

Reaccreditation for Western Association of Schools and Colleges (WASC) will begin in 2026, which will include administrative review. PROC is moving forward with its preplanning in 2025.

Chair Sharping inquired about how PROC plans to address potential issues related to policies or practices that may arise during the WASC reaccreditation review. PROC representative Keske responded that PROC is considering two approaches - standard and individualistic. PROC is leaning more toward individualistic, which is a project-based approach and would include setting your own targets and study questions, etc. UGC should be involved and PROC representative Keske will keep members apprised.

**V. VPDUE Bergerson's Report – 2:35pm – 2:45pm**

**A. High DFW courses**

VPDUE Bergerson reported on her collaboration with the School Deans and the Institutional Research & Decision Support (IRDS) to address courses with high D's, F's and Withdrawals and how to improve student success rates. She added that every time a student receives two D's, F's, or W's, they fall behind by a semester in terms of their degree completion. High rates can also affect UC Merced's instructional capacity

because courses must then be offered again for students to retake.

In order to address the issue, VPDUE Bergerson, the School Deans, and IRDS will analyze classes that have consistently high rates of D's F's and W's, as well as student demographics to identify any patterns. They will also observe classes with high enrollments, as well as courses with multiple sections taught by different faculty to identify any variation of success rates of students across those sections.

Possible solutions that may be implemented include additional resources and interventions for the students, as well as support from the faculty. Other institutions have implemented early alert programs for students and expanded supplemental instruction and peer learning assistant programs. VPDUE Bergerson mentioned the following strategies for UC Merced to consider to address the high D, F, W rates:

- Expanding the Summer Bridge Program
- Accelerated programs and using summer session for academic recovery
- Expanding current resources in the Center for Engaged Teaching and Learning (CETL)
- Professional development
- Standardized assessments

Members discussed strategies for enhancing student support, including conducting a survey for the faculty to identify any patterns they have observed in their courses; integrating tools directly into Canvas for monitoring student progress in different areas such as homework, assessment, attendance, etc.; the importance of offering support outside of the classroom such as content-specific tutoring; and the importance of addressing the high attendance rates across campus.

**Action:**

- VPDUE Bergerson will share UGC's feedback with the School Deans and IRDS staff and will provide UGC with an update at a future meeting.

**VI. AY 25-26 Catalog Revisions – Jay Sharping, Santosh Chandrasekhar, and Lindsay Crawford – 2:45pm – 2:55pm**

SNS: <https://ucmerced.box.com/s/20t3hrdc99cnutp87o3i2zk38datwjfd>

SoE: <https://ucmerced.box.com/s/796jyimh4ja74dcs5ar1ec3vrp3o03tj>

SSHA: <https://ucmerced.box.com/s/irvtfvv6p6n7ggdted0t5d8zn3mkcek0>

**Requested Action:** Voting members vote in executive session to approve the AY 25-26 Catalog revisions.

**Note:** According to [UGC's AY 24-25 Academic Calendar](#), the hard deadline to submit AY 25-26 Catalog revisions is February 3, 2024. UGC will review any additional Catalog revisions following the hard deadline.

Chair Sharping summarized the Catalog Review Committee's comments noting that majority of the substantial revisions looked okay. There was a concern with the Electrical Engineering and Aerospace Engineering Catalog updates, which have been resolved. Chair Sharping recommended approval of the AY 25-26 Catalog revisions.

Chair Sharping inquired about a style guide, and Registrar Webb confirmed that she would work on creating one. Chair Sharping also asked for clarification regarding the hard February 3, 2025 deadline, to which the UGC Analyst clarified that this academic year there are two deadlines to provide the faculty with ample time to transition to the hard deadline, which will be enforced next year.

**Action:**

- Voting members voted in the executive session and unanimously approved the AY 25-26 Catalog revisions.
- Curriculog was updated, and voting members will review additional substantial Catalog revisions following the hard deadline of February 3, 2025.

**VII. Approval of Courses<sup>1</sup> – Santosh Chandrasekhar, Haiyan Liu, and Maria Zoghbi - 2:55pm – 3:10pm**

The Subcommittee's recommendations are available [here](#).

**Action:**

- The following courses were approved, and Curriculog will be updated accordingly:
  1. [COMM - 002 - Argument and Debate](#) (new; Fall 2025)
  2. [COMM - 003 - Interpersonal Communication](#) (new; Fall 2025)
  3. [COMM - 004 - Small Group Communication](#) (new; Fall 2025)
  4. [COMM - 016 - Forensics](#) (new; Fall 2025)
  5. [COMM - 151 - Social Media](#) (new; Fall 2025)
  6. [SOC - 001 - Introduction to Sociology](#) (modify existing; Fall 2025)
  7. [COMM - 051 - Introduction to Visual Culture](#) (crosslisted with GASP 003; new; Fall 2025)
  8. [GASP - 003 - Introduction to Visual Culture](#) (crosslisted with COMM 051; modify existing; Fall 2025)
  9. [COMM - 052 - History and Practice of Photography](#) (crosslisted with GASP 057; new; Fall 2025)
  10. [GASP - 057 - History and Practice of Photography](#) (crosslisted with GASP 057; modify existing; Fall 2025)
  11. [COMM - 100 - Advanced Writing](#) (crosslisted with WRI 100; new; Fall

---

<sup>1</sup> RECUSALS

Jay– Phys

Aurora – Chem

Maria – Chem

- 2025)
12. [WRI - 100 - Advanced Writing](#) (crosslisted with WRI 100; modify existing; Fall 2025)
  13. [CRES - 124A - African American History to 1877](#) (crosslisted with HIST 124A; new; Fall 2025)
  14. [HIST - 124A - African American History to 1877](#) (crosslisted with CRES 124A; modify existing; Fall 2025)
  15. [ENGR - 152 - The Physics of Energy](#) (crosslisted with PHYS 152; new; Fall 2025)
  16. [PHYS - 152 - The Physics of Energy](#) (crosslisted with ENGR 152; new; Fall 2025)

**Action:**

- Members agreed to ask for clarification on the following courses:
  1. [BIO - 117 - Advanced Molecular Biology](#) (new; Fall 2025) – The class can be repeated 99 times. Request change to 0.
  2. [CHEM - 002 - General Chemistry I](#) (modify existing; Fall 2025) - Missing non-contact hours.
  3. [CHEM - 010 - General Chemistry II](#) (modify existing; Fall 2025) - Missing non-contact hours.
  4. [CRES - 197 - Colloquium in History and Critical Race and Ethnic Studies](#) (crosslisted with HIST 197; new; Fall 2025) – Request change to the number of contact hours to a full number (no decimals).
  5. [HIST - 197 - Colloquium in History and Critical Race and Ethnic Studies](#) (crosslisted with CRES 197; new; Fall 2025) - Request change to the number of contact hours to a full number (no decimals).

**VIII. Any Other Business – 3:10pm – 3:15pm****A. [Recommendations for changes to minor and double major policies](#)**

Chair Sharping summarized the linked document, noting that UGC has one of two options to consider: 1) align the double major policy and the minor policy, or 2) relax restrictions on unit sharing.

Chair Sharping encouraged voting members to review the document and be prepared to discuss it at an upcoming UGC meeting.

**Action:**

- This item will be included on the December 6 UGC agenda for further discussion.

**B. Update - Academic Integrity Policy**

Chair Sharping explained that UGC has been invited to share what the committee has been working on in terms of a policy or guidance around Artificial Intelligence (AI). UGC has also been asked to consider an Academic Integrity Policy, which may include elements of AI. Chair Sharping offered two distinct pathways for

addressing academic integrity concerns: 1) Recommend revisions to the [Office of Student Rights and Responsibilities' Academic Honesty Policy](#), or 2) further review academic integrity and AI and develop a separate Senate Policy.

**Action:**

- Members are to email Chair Sharping and the UGC Analyst with any questions or ideas regarding moving forward with an Academic Integrity Policy.
- Chair Sharping will draft a response Fatima regarding the Artificial Intelligence initiatives that UGC is working on.

Chair Sharping also reported that UGC's priority for developing an End of Term Policy will be addressed in the spring. He also mentioned that he has been involved in the Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs and Engagement (VCSAE) interviews, which included five very strong candidates, and an offer should be made soon.

**IX. Executive Session – Voting Members Only – 3:15pm – 3:30pm**

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