

Undergraduate Council (UGC)**Meeting Minutes****Friday, December 6, 2024****2:00pm – 3:30pm****I. Consent Calendar – 2:00pm – 2:05pm****A. Today's Agenda****Action:**

- The Consent Calendar was approved as presented.

II. Chair's Report – Chair Sharping – 2:05pm – 2:15pm**A. December 2 DivCo Meeting**

- EVC/Provost Dumont gave a presentation on a budget update. She shared a slide containing a tally of Senate Faculty FTE from 2019-2024, pointing out the significant growth in faculty numbers over this time frame.
- PROC Co-Chair Monroe reported on the upcoming administrative review. A list of four high priority items was discussed: the Sponsored Projects Office (SPO) and its pre- and post-award administration, advising (specifically the switch from first year advising to the advising that is conducted within the Schools), transfer course articulation, and lab renovations for faculty.
- DivCo members discussed the SSHA Restructuring Proposal. The primary issues raised were the size and distribution of the two new units being created; the cost, roles, and responsibilities of the Associate Deans; and the handling of the Merit Writing Program, which was not adequately addressed in the proposal. Ultimately, there was strong support for the proposal, and DivCo members endorsed it along with the proposed bylaws.
- Chair Sharping is planning to give a short presentation at the December 16 Meeting of the Division regarding faculty engagement in undergraduate recruiting and enrollment. This was one of the challenges that arose from the October 30 Governance Retreat. Chair Sharping hopes to collaborate with Vice Chancellor for Enrollment Management Scott Hagg on this issue.

B. December 2 UCEP Meeting

- Academic Senate Chair Cheung reported that the Regents approved a 9.9% tuition increase for new undergraduate admits. This change is part of a new model where tuition is determined at the time of admission and remains fixed for those students. The tuition increases will only apply to new admits, not continuing students.
- Two Regents, John Perez and Richard Sherman, have decided to leave.
- A campus climate survey has been conducted and the report is forthcoming.
- The United Auto Workers (UAW) have reached a tentative agreement for a contract extension for graduate students, covering the period of May through

January. This extension is meant to provide additional time for ongoing negotiations. However, since it's a tentative agreement, it still requires a vote before it becomes final.

- The new UCOP President search will begin in the spring.
- Several systemwide working groups are convening with a focus on the academic calendar, doctoral education, and the Academic Personnel Manual (APM).
- The Online Modalities Task Force, which focuses on online education, will have a successor working group following last year's efforts; however, the charge has not yet been finalized.
- Santa Cruz approved a policy for certificate programs.

III. Consultation with SSHA Associate Dean Anne Zanzucchi and Executive Director of Degree Completion Catherine Koehler – 2:15pm – 2:30pm

A. [Draft campus policy for undergraduate certificate programs](#)

Associate Dean Zanzucchi and Executive Director of Degree Completion Koehler summarized their proposal noting that the idea of certificate programs emerged from degree completion and the need to enhance career readiness, professional preparation, and interdisciplinary experiences for students, including both reentry and current students. Historically, certificates have originated from Extension programs aimed at non-matriculated students; however, recent legislative funding for reentry and degree completion across UCs have incentivized stronger connections between Extension programs and academic departments to provide more opportunities for undergraduates. The proposal for certificates is complementary to what University Extension offers but includes an academic structure distinct from degree programs.

The proposal design aims to offer certificates through academic departments in partnership with Extension programs, addressing barriers for matriculated students, especially regarding financial aid, which is not available for traditional extension offerings. Unlike other UC campuses (e.g., UC Berkeley and UC Santa Cruz), where students pay out-of-pocket for Extension certificates, this proposal would integrate financial aid, making it more accessible for UC Merced undergraduate students.

The primary features of proposed certificates include a focus on interdisciplinary areas that enhance career readiness, professional skills, or complement existing degree programs, without interfering with normal degree progress. These certificates would follow academic guidelines for credit and unit allocation.

Associate Dean Zanzucchi clarified that the completion of a certificate would follow the same grading policies outlined in the Catalog, meaning students would need to complete courses with either a letter grade or pass/no pass, as per standard policy. Furthermore, for students who do not complete their undergraduate degree, they would still be eligible for the certificate, assuming they meet the requirements for the respective certificate program. The certificate is designed as an academic recognition

independent of degree completion.

A member inquired about the number of credits required for the certificate. Associate Dean Zanzucchi explained that the primary goal is to ensure that the certificate provides a substantial academic experience without overlapping with minor degree program policies, which require a minimum of 20 units. The decision to structure the certificate as 3 courses, typically 4 units each, was made to align with the structure of many existing courses on campus. This design is flexible enough to accommodate variations, as some courses may not be exactly 4 units. The primary focus is 12 units, and the 3-course framework was chosen to fit this criterion while maintaining coherence with academic norms. Because of this, the proposal does not set a specific timeframe like restricting the certificate to be completed within a certain number of semesters or by junior year. Flexibility allows various configurations of courses or experiences. The timeframe will likely be clarified and shaped by feedback and further proposal development. The intent is to keep it open for now to provide more latitude for including experiential elements that might benefit students. However, future feedback could lead to more defined expectations on the timeframe.

Another member mentioned that since certificates are intended to demonstrate expertise, perhaps a higher-grade threshold might be something to consider. Associate Dean Zanzucchi acknowledged this point and confirmed that she will consider it as part of the ongoing discussions and development of the proposal.

Associate Dean Zanzucchi described the "what if" scenario tool in MyDegreePath and transcript systems, which is an underutilized feature that could be highly beneficial for managing certificate programs. This tool allows students and advisors to simulate different academic paths by running scenarios with specific courses or areas of study, helping to visualize how adding a certificate might impact their degree timeline and requirements. It could help students plan more effectively, see potential conflicts or opportunities, and make informed decisions about pursuing a certificate.

Action:

- Chair Sharping will review the initial draft policy in comparison to the revised version to ensure that UGC's prior concerns have been addressed.
- Further discussion will take place at an upcoming UGC meeting to determine how to move forward with its implementation.

IV. Update: [Public Law 117-328 \(Incomplete Grading Policy\)](#) – Chair Sharping – 2:30pm – 2:40pm

The systemwide Senate leadership and the systemwide Student Financial Support are asking each Division to review their policies and procedures for handling incomplete grades to ensure compliance with the new guidelines.

On November 6, 2024, Registrar Webb and Financial Aid Deputy Director Nardello were invited to review the request. Registrar Webb's memo is available [here](#).

Public Law 117-328 requires educational institutions to provide greater flexibility for military students who are called to active duty, training, or state service regarding incomplete grading. This flexibility allows them more time and options to complete their coursework. The Registrar's Office has suggested two potential options for compliance.

Option A involves revising Academic Senate Regulations to apply the more flexible rules for incomplete grades to all students, ensuring the policies align with the legal requirements for military students.

Option B suggests granting authority to the Registrar's Office to make individual exceptions for military students who are called to active duty, training, or state service, ensuring compliance without overhauling the rules for all students.

Chair Sharping believes Option 2 is more targeted and manageable, as it allows for flexibility specific to military students without altering policies for the broader student body.

Action:

- UGC unanimously approved option 2 of Registrar Webb's memo: "Grant authority to the Registrar's Office to make individual exceptions for military students who are called to active duty, training, or state service to ensure compliance with the law."
- UGC Analyst and Chair Sharping will draft a memo and transmit it to the Senate Chair.

V. UGC's Priorities – Chair Sharping – 2:40pm – 2:55pm

A. [Recommendations for changes to minor and double major policies](#)

At the November 8 and 22 UGC meetings, members discussed potential changes to UC Merced policies for minors and double majors, specifically for unit sharing. For double majors, only one lower division course can count for two majors or both a major and a minor. The UC Merced Advising Directors find this to be the main obstacle that prevents students from double majoring or acquiring a minor and believe it would be more useful for an upper division course to double count.

The Senate Policy on Multiple Majors is available [here](#).

The Campuswide Policy on Minors is available [here](#).

During UGC's previous discussions on the topic, the focus was on unit sharing for double majors and minors and making these academic pathways more achievable. The current policies for majors and minors have slight differences, and two main options were proposed for improving flexibility:

- 1. Align Minor Policy with Major Policy:** This would allow up to 12 upper-division units (about 3 courses) to count toward both a major and a minor, or

across two minors. This provides flexibility and consistency but could reduce the distinctiveness of each program due to the ability to double-count a significant number of courses toward a major and a minor or two minors.

2. **Remove Course Sharing Limitations for Minors:** This option would allow any course that satisfies the requirements of multiple programs (majors or minors) to count toward each program without restriction. This could reduce the distinctiveness of the programs and create administrative complexities.

Chair Sharping mentioned an additional more limited option:

3. **Allow Only One Upper-Division Course to Satisfy Two Minor Requirements:** This would restrict upper-division course sharing to just one course between minors, though lower-division courses could still overlap without limitation.

Chair Sharping asked for members' feedback on moving forward with one of these options or to maintain the current policy. Several members expressed a preference for the first option.

Action:

- Members were generally in favor of Option 1. Further discussion and a vote will take place at an upcoming spring UGC meeting.

B. Update on Academic Integrity and AI Initiatives

The Office of Student Rights and Responsibilities Policy on Academic Honesty is available [here](#).

Options for UGC to consider:

- Adopt the existing policy as is
- Recommend revisions to the existing policy
- Leave as is

Action:

- This item will be discussed at the first Spring 2025 UGC meeting.

C. End of Term Policy

No Requested Action.

VI. Approval of Courses¹ – Santosh Chandrasekhar, Haiyan Liu, and Maria Zoghbi -

¹ RECUSALS
Jay– PHYS

2:55pm – 3:05pm

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

Action:

- The following courses were approved, and Curriculog will be updated accordingly:
 1. [CEE - 110 - Engineering Hydrology](#) (modify existing; Fall 2025)
 2. [PHYS - 153 - The Physics of Radiology](#) (new; Fall 2025)
 3. [DSC - 100 - Advanced Data Science](#) (new; Spring 2025)
 4. [COMM - 109 - Topics in Professional Writing](#) (crosslisted with WRI 130; new; Fall 2025)
 5. [WRI - 130 - Topics in Professional Writing](#) (crosslisted with COMM 109; modify existing; Fall 2025)
 6. [COMM - 129 - Special Topics in Rhetoric](#) (crosslisted with WRI 122; new; Fall 2025)
 7. [WRI - 122 - Special Topics in Rhetoric](#) (crosslisted with COMM 129; modify existing; Fall 2025)
 8. [CRES - 022 - The Golden Road: California History as US History](#) (crosslisted with HIST 022; new; Fall 2025)
 9. [HIST - 022 - The Golden Road: California History as US History](#) (crosslisted with CRES 022; new; Fall 2025)
 10. [MSE - 151 - Materials Processing & Performance I: Materials Thermodynamics and Kinetics](#) (crosslisted with MBSE 212 [Grad]; modify existing; Fall 2025)

Action:

- Members agreed to ask for clarification on the following courses:
 1. [NSED - 180 - Critical Perspectives on the History of Science and Mathematics](#) (new; Fall 2025) – ensure the 2.5 contact hours was intentional (0.5 hour; not full number).
 2. [CRES - 012 - World Histories & World Geographies](#) (crosslisted with HIST 012; new; Fall 2025) – spell out GIS in the course description.
 3. [HIST - 012 - World Histories & World Geographies](#) (crosslisted with CRES 012; new; Fall 2025) - spell out GIS in the course description.

Action:

- A batch of courses will be reviewed via email prior to the first January UGC meeting.

VII. Any Other Business – All – 3:05pm – 3:10pm

Members held a discussion about indicating courses that have community engagement on the transcript, known as Carnegie Classification. This could potentially involve adding a marker or badge on transcripts for courses that include community engagement components. Chair Sharping asked Vice Chair Gutierrez for additional information, as he has been involved in discussions; however, he responded that he is unsure at the moment whether this is something that UGC needs to consider when reviewing courses but that he will keep members apprised.

VIII. Executive Session – Voting Members Only – 3:10pm – 3:30pm

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