

Undergraduate Council (UGC)**Meeting Minutes****Thursday, February 6, 2025****10:30am – 12:00pm****ADMIN 345**

Pursuant to call, the Undergraduate Council (UGC) met at 10:30am on February 6, 2025. Vice Chair Gutierrez presiding.

I. Consent Calendar – 10:30am – 10:35am

- A. Today's Agenda
- B. [January 23 Meeting Minutes](#)
- C. [Request from SoE for an exception to UGC's November 29, 2024 deadline to offer ENGR 057 fully remote and EE 060 via hybrid modality in Summer 2025.](#)

Action:

- The Consent Calendar was approved as presented.
- The SoE Curriculum Manager was notified regarding SoE's request for exception.

II. Chair's Report – Chair Sharping – 10:35am – 10:50am

- A. Welcome VCSAE Tonantzín Oseguera

Vice Chair Gutierrez welcomed Dr. Tonantzin Oseguera, who introduced herself and shared that she has been in her new role for two weeks. She expressed her excitement about joining UC Merced, highlighting her previous experience at UC Riverside and her return to the UC system after a decade working in the CSU system. She expressed a strong desire to collaborate with faculty and other partners to address key issues, including student engagement and academic integrity. Dr. Oseguera emphasized the importance of fostering a sense of belonging on campus for students, both undergraduates and graduate students, and mentioned that faculty play a crucial role in identifying challenges. Dr. Oseguera encouraged open communication with faculty and invited them to reach out with any concerns or suggestions.

Following her introduction, members introduced themselves and shared thoughts on student attendance and engagement in the classroom. One member noted the challenges with students missing classes, sometimes due to employment conflicts. Dr. Oseguera acknowledged the complexity of these issues and emphasized the importance of working together to support students in balancing their academic and personal responsibilities.

- B. December 16 and January 28 DivCo Meetings
- C. December 16 Meeting of the Division

D. January 6 and February 3 UCEP Meetings

The December 16 DivCo minutes are available [here](#). The January 6 UCEP meeting minutes are available [here](#). The minutes for all the other meetings mentioned above are still in draft form and therefore cannot be shared at this time.

Action:

- Due to Chair Sharping's absence, the Chair's Report was tabled for the February 20 UGC meeting.

III. VPDUE Bergerson's Report – 10:50am – 11:00am

A. Academic Advising Program Review

The university will be conducting a comprehensive review of its academic advising program over the next few months, in partnership with the National Academic Advising Association (NACADA). The process will begin mid-spring with surveys sent to students, faculty, and staff across campus who experience advising in different ways. These surveys will include both standardized questions and additional open-ended questions for detailed feedback.

In the summer, NACADA will assist in analyzing the survey responses, and in early Fall 2025, a NACADA team will visit UC Merced for follow-up discussions. Their aim is to provide recommendations for improving advising effectiveness and efficiency for students, programs, and departments without hiring additional staff.

The review process has the support of the three School Deans, who have agreed to fund and support this initiative. Everyone across campus is encouraged to participate in the surveys when they are released.

B. Task Force for Uncivil Discourse

The Senate recently transmitted a memo to VPDUE Bergerson regarding the student evaluation process. There is growing concern about harmful student behaviors on third-party platforms, particularly Discord, which have negatively impacted faculty, often through anonymous and abusive comments. These issues are not only about student evaluations but also about helping students understand the importance of our community and addressing problematic behaviors that can arise inside and outside of the classroom.

To address these challenges, VPDUE Bergerson will collaborate with the Senate to form a group that includes both Senate members and individuals from Student Affairs. The group will work on refining the student evaluation process, improving student understanding of evaluations, and educating both students and faculty on how to effectively handle these concerns. In addition to evaluations, the group will focus on managing inappropriate student behavior on platforms like Discord, where students

may make harmful, personal comments about faculty members, often during the course of their classes.

VPDUE Bergerson stated that she will work with EJIE Education Trainer Specialist Nick Mundwiller to offer training for students in bystander intervention and de-escalation techniques. There is also a need to provide faculty with strategies for de-escalating situations.

IV. Update on December 9 and January 30 [PROC](#) Meetings – Catherine Keske – 11:00am – 11:10am

Member Keske provided an update on the following programs:

- **Interdisciplinary Humanities (IH):** shared a draft of their plan with Vice Provost and Dean of Graduate Education (VPDGE) Hratchian.
- **Merritt Writing Program (MWP):** the MOU was returned to the program for further revisions, as more work needed to be done to address concerns related to climate for both students and the faculty.
- **Community Research and Service (CRS):** A meeting with SSHA Dean Arriola took place in December.
- **Economics and Business Management (EBM):** This program is nearing the conclusion of its review process.
- **Cognitive and Information Science (CIS):** There were revisions to their review, and it was noted that the program will not be joining the Gallo initiative as previously considered.
- **Public Health (PH):** This program is in the process of drafting an MOU with SSHA Dean Arriola.
- **Physics:** Their review plans are underway.
- **Anthropology:** The program requested an extension for their review until May 1, 2025.
- **Environmental Systems (ES):** The faculty had until earlier this week to respond to suggestions made during their review.
- **Natural Science Education (NSEd):** The program is working on recruiting reviewers, though there have been some challenges.
- **Psychology:** The program plans to submit their review in early February.
- **Biology:** Their site visit is scheduled for this month.
- **Chemistry:** Their site visit is scheduled for next month.
- **Electrical Engineering and Computer Science (EECS):** Their site visit is scheduled for September.
- **Global Arts Studies Program (GASP0):** The program is attempting to move forward with three members.
- **Mechanical Engineering:** Their site visit scheduled for Fall 2025.
- **Philosophy:** Their site visit is scheduled for next week.
- **Sociology:** Their site visit is scheduled for next month.

- **Political Science:** The program is in the process of submitting their review team candidates.
- **Spanish:** The program is in the process of meeting with SSHA Dean Arriola.
- **Master of Management:** The program has been paused and will not be moving forward with their review.

V. **UGC’s Revised Policies and Procedures – Chair Sharping, Vice Chair Gutierrez, and Members Varnot and Pribram-Jones – 11:10am – 11:25pm**

The AY 23-24 UGC membership recommended several revisions to the Supplemental Questionnaire for online/hybrid courses and the Procedures and Policies for Approval of New and Revised Undergraduate Courses.

A. [Supplemental Questionnaire](#)

Former UGC Chair Viney and former member Gutierrez (current Vice Chair) met during Summer 2024 and implemented revisions. Chair Sharping proposed additional revisions. All recommended revisions are shown in tracked changes at the link above.

Vice Chair Gutierrez summarized the proposed changes:

- Updated definitions to align with those in the glossary provided by UCEP.
- Moved the Questionnaire to the beginning of the document and moved the planning guide to the end as an appendix to clarify what is expected in the proposal.
- Added a planning list in section 6 of the planning guide to align with the items in the questionnaire.

Registrar Webb asked about ‘hybrid in-person’ versus ‘hybrid-online’ and whether UGC would like for these to be differentiated in the course schedule. Members agreed that it may cause confusion for the students to include both, and it was decided to only include ‘hybrid’.

Registrar Webb emphasized that tracking online modality over time is important for monitoring whether students are taking more than 50% of their degree online. Because ‘hyflex’ is defined as a mode where students can choose to attend in-person or online, it is difficult to track how students are attending hyflex courses. From a reporting perspective, when reviewing substantive changes for Western Association of Schools and Colleges (WASC) review, the focus is typically on the broader categories of course modalities rather than the specific attendance method for each individual student. Registrar Webb stated that if a faculty member’s course is approved for ‘hyflex’, then the course can be offered as ‘hyflex’, allowing students to choose whether to attend in-person or online. However, from a reporting and tracking perspective, the Registrar will classify a hyflex course as an online course for every student that is enrolled in it because there is no way of identifying whether they attended the entire class in-person or online. In order to

clarify this point, members agreed to remove the end of the revised ‘hyflex’ definition: “...as long as the online students will receive less than 50% of instruction in-person.”

Action:

- Voting members voted in the executive session and unanimously approved the proposed revisions to the Supplemental Questionnaire with the additional edit to remove part of the last sentence of the Hyflex definition: “...as long as the online students will receive less than 50% of instruction in-person.”
- UGC Analyst will notify the Senate Chair once the revisions to the Procedures and Policies for Approval of New and Revised Undergraduate Courses and to the Academic Degree Programs: UGC's Review/Approval Policy are finalized and approved.

B. [Procedures and Policies for Approval of New and Revised Undergraduate Courses](#)

An AY 23-24 UGC member recommended including any changes to prerequisites for a course to undergo the full Curriculog process (currently included in the abbreviated process, which UGC is not required to review).

Member Pribram-Jones summarized the proposed revisions, highlighting that the main edit was to include ‘prerequisites’ under the standard Curriculog review process. Currently, when a faculty member proposes changes to a course’s prerequisites, they follow an abbreviated process that does not require UGC review. Last academic year, UGC members felt strongly that they should be informed of and required to review prerequisite changes.

Member Pribram-Jones also noted several minor grammatical revisions to the current policy. The UGC Analyst confirmed that she will add the new definitions from the Supplemental Questionnaire in the modality section of the policy.

Action:

- Voting members agreed to update the policy to include the new definitions from the newly revised Supplemental Questionnaire.
- UGC Analyst will notify the Senate Chair once the revisions to the Procedures and Policies for Approval of New and Revised Undergraduate Courses and to the Academic Degree Programs: UGC's Review/Approval Policy are finalized and approved.

C. [Academic Degree Programs: UGC's Review/Approval Policy](#)

The AY 23-24 UGC membership, as well as the AY 23-24 AFAC Chair, recommended revisions to UGC’s policies and procedures for reviewing and approving academic degree programs. Member Varnot, Senate Executive Director Paul, and UGC Analyst all proposed revisions, available in tracked changes at the link above.

Member Varnot summarized the proposed edits to the policy:

1. Clarifying existing content
2. Updating links for reference
3. Providing a more detailed explanation of emphasis tracks within degree programs
4. Adding several new resource requirements.

Registrar Webb noted that the document outlines the format for proposals related to newer substantive changes to undergraduate programs, but it does not cover major revisions that do not qualify as new programs or substantive changes, such as emphasis track changes. Emphasis track changes are considered major revisions but are not classified as new programs or substantive changes, so they fall outside what is addressed in the policy. She recommended further revising the policy to clarify the distinction of major revision from substantive change.

Action:

- Voting members agreed to update the policy to include additional information to differentiate major revision versus substantial revision.
- UGC Analyst will notify the Senate Chair once the revisions to the Procedures and Policies for Approval of New and Revised Undergraduate Courses and to the Academic Degree Programs: UGC's Review/Approval Policy are finalized and approved.

VI. Approval of Courses¹ – Santosh Chandrasekhar, Haiyan Liu, and Maria Zoghbi - 11:25am – 11:40am

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

Action:

- The following courses were approved, and Curriculog will be updated accordingly:
 1. [COMM - 119 - Topics in Communication](#) (new; Fall 2025)
 2. [ECON - 102 - Managerial Economics](#) (new; Spring 2026)
 3. [SPAN - 121 - Spanish Early Modern and Modern Emotions](#) (modify existing; Fall 2025)
 4. [SPAN - 123 - Race and Gender in Contemporary Spanish Literature](#) (modify existing; Fall 2025)
 5. [SPAN - 140 - Indigenous and Latin American Colonial Literature and Culture](#) (modify existing; Fall 2025)
 6. [SPAN - 143 - Nation and Identity in Contemporary Latin American Literature](#) (modify existing; Fall 2025)
 7. [SPAN - 144 - Race and Gender in Caribbean Cultural Production](#)

¹ RECUSALS
Greg – ECON
Susan - WRI

- (modify existing; Fall 2025)
8. [SPAN - 146 - Environmental Violence in Latin American Film and Literature](#) (modify existing; Fall 2025)
 9. [SPAN - 147 - The Boom and Post-Boom as World Literature](#) (modify existing; Fall 2025)
 10. [COMM - 120 - Rhetorical Theory](#) (new; crosslisted with WRI 120; Spring 2026)
 11. [WRI - 120 - Rhetorical Theory](#) (modify existing; crosslisted with COMM 120; Fall 2025)
 12. [COMM - 123 - Seminar in Professional Writing](#) (new; crosslisted with WRI 155; Fall 2025)
 13. [WRI - 155 - Seminar in Professional Writing](#) (modify existing; crosslisted with COMM 123; Spring 2026)
 14. [COMM - 156 - Race & Visual Representations in Art and Media](#) (new; crosslisted with GASP 158A; Spring 2026)
 15. [GASP - 158A - Race & Visual Representations in Art and Media](#) (modify existing; crosslisted with COMM 156; Spring 2026)

Action:

- The following courses were approved contingent upon minor revisions. Curriculog will be updated accordingly:
 1. [COGS - 191 - Cognitive Science Thesis](#) (modify existing; Spring 2026) – Request the proposer provides syllabus.
 2. [ECON - 050 - Introduction to Business Analytics and Spreadsheets](#) (new; Spring 2026) – include PLO 5 in the CLOs. Also add a comment to encourage the proposer to encourage them to reduce reliance or eliminate exams for assessment and consider other options to prevent cheating.
 3. [ECON - 163B - Economics of Investments: Options and Derivatives](#) (new; Spring 2026) – Include PLO 3 and PLO 5 in the CLOs.
 4. [PHIL - 119 - Core Texts in the History of Science](#) (modify existing; Fall 2025) – Update PLOs and CLOs to clarify how they correspond to each other (refer to the example provided in Curriculog).

VII. Any Other Business – All – 11:40am – 11:45am

No other business was discussed.

VIII. Executive Session – Voting Members Only – 11:45am – 12:00pm

No minutes were recorded during the executive session. The action items were shared with UGC voting members and included above in item V.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 12:00pm.

Attest: Alejandro Gutierrez, UGC Vice Chair.