

Undergraduate Council (UGC)**Meeting Minutes****Thursday, February 20, 2025****10:30am – 12:00pm****Zoom**

Pursuant to call, the Undergraduate Council (UGC) met at 10:30am on February 20, 2025. Chair Sharping presiding.

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

- A. Today's Agenda
- B. [February 6 Meeting Minutes](#)

Action:

- The Consent Calendar was approved as presented.

II. Chair's Report – Jay Sharping – 10:35am – 10:45am

- A. December 16, January 28, and February 11 DivCo Meetings
 - DivCo endorsed GC's proposed revisions to the *Graduate Students Teaching Graduate Students Policy* with a minor modification to remove GC as an approver for Instructor of Record (IoR) requests.
 - DivCo endorsed three non-degree certificate programs proposed by the Division of Professional & Continuing Education (PACE).
 - DivCo continues its discussions on speech and bias in student evaluations, which VPDUE Bergerson will discuss later in today's meeting.
 - Budget discussions are ongoing, and there are rumors that several other UC campuses may consider enrolling more out-of-state students as a strategy to help alleviate financial strain.
 - The Posthumous Degree Policy is still under discussion and has not been fully approved yet. The reasons for the delay are not clear. The policy is still being worked through, and further discussions are expected before it is finalized.
- B. January 6 and February 3 UCEP Meetings
 - UCEP members expressed concerns about the Regents of the University of California's increased interest in faculty discipline. An Academic Senate-Administrative work group has been created to focus on improving processes. Some feel that the Academic Senate's discipline process is too slow, leading to tension between maintaining due process and the need for more timely action. A report will be presented at the May Regents' meeting.
 - There is ongoing work on the Academic Calendar, focusing on the future of graduate education. Reports on these efforts are expected to be released soon.
 - Budget reductions remain a significant topic of discussion, with ongoing cuts occurring at all levels.

- A town hall was held on February 5, 2025 to discuss two memorials being considered, which were introduced by UCSF. UC Merced will allow all faculty members to vote on them. These memorials focus on expanding Senate membership to include a broader range of teaching and clinical faculty associated with healthcare and the new medical school.
- A 9.9% tuition increase has been approved for new cohorts under the new tuition model. This model ensures that once students enroll, their tuition will remain the same throughout their time at the institution.
- Discussions regarding Artificial Intelligence (AI) are continuing, with a focus on how to best navigate and use AI in academia. There are currently no definite solutions.
- The Regents continue to discuss housing projects that are being considered at various UC campuses.
- The Regents also held discussions regarding healthcare. UC operations are increasingly tied to healthcare, with UC providing close to 10% of California's healthcare. This is a key factor motivating UCSF's memorials, especially since UCSF focuses on graduate and medical degrees and has a unique role in the Faculty Senate compared to other UC campuses.

Chair Sharping also provided an update on the UC Online Advisory Council, which met last week. Block grants have been issued, and UC Merced is now working on how to best utilize those funds. The strategic use of these funds is crucial and could be an important point to raise during business discussions.

He also reported that the Philosophy Program Review was conducted last week, which offers two majors. The department has four faculty members and are undergoing reorganization. The review itself was not well received by the administration, particularly since the department is so small. The leading suggestion was to add another faculty member, but this was quickly dismissed due to a lack of support. There was some pushback on this because the reviews are meant to be long-term evaluations, not a snapshot of the present. The next review could take place in 7 or 8 years, so it is important for the department to build a solid case for adding faculty over time, especially as the availability of faculty lines may change. On the positive side, the administration appreciated the suggestion to reword the program's learning outcomes.

Lastly, the memorial vote is forthcoming. Chair Sharping noted that it is important for everyone to participate. Some of the major challenges being discussed across committee meetings include threats and uncivil behavior in course evaluations and other communication pathways, as well as the role of AI in academia.

III. Vice Chair's Report – Alejandro Gutierrez - 10:45am – 11:00am

A. [February 11 Undocumented Students Work Group Meeting](#)

The Undocumented Students Work Group has been actively developing and providing resources and guidance for students. Some of the work is carried out by the group

itself, while other efforts are conducted systemwide. Several resources are included in the report linked above. The UC system has developed a central resource page with guidance on immigration policy matters, including international students and faculty. This page will be updated regularly with new information and is the primary source for guidance on these matters. It is housed under International Affairs but serves everyone, not just international students.

The [toolkit](#) that Provost Dumont distributed has also been shared. One important item to highlight is the "Know Your Rights" card, which is a useful tool for undocumented students or immigrants who may not be aware of their rights. These cards can be kept on one's person and are available through the UC Merced Office of Legal Affairs. Faculty and staff are encouraged to distribute these cards to students.

The Monarch Center, which supports undocumented students, is primarily focused on UC Merced students and does not have the bandwidth to assist faculty or staff. Faculty and staff should seek legal advice on immigration matters from Campus Council, not the Monarch Center. The exception is for faculty supervising undocumented students through the Opportunity Fellows Program, where specific training is required. The Monarch Center primarily serves undergraduate students, but there may be some undocumented graduate students, though they are less common due to funding challenges.

The ["What to Expect" document](#) provides detailed information on legal aspects of immigration matters. Vice Chair Gutierrez noted that this document should not be posted on public-facing websites for reasons related to Campus Council rules. It can be shared among faculty, printed out, or kept on desks, but should not be shared on social media or department websites.

Provost Dumont has informed the campus that it is highly unlikely for Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) to show up unexpectedly, and if they do, campus police will be aware in advance. However, U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) is responsible for conducting site visits for individuals on work visas (such as J-1, H-1B) and can show up unannounced. The University of California offers resources through the Immigrant Legal Services Center, which assists undocumented and immigrant students and their families.

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

A. Update on Task Force for Uncivil Discourse

VPDUE Bergerson reported that she and the Senate Chair are drafting a charge for a task force to examine issues related to disrespectful behaviors between students and instructors. The two main areas that the task force will focus on are student course evaluations and civil discourse. Additionally, the group will examine campus policies and processes to see if they might be unintentionally enabling behaviors that go against the community principles the campus aims to uphold. The task force will have

a complex charge, but the goal is to make the scope clear to ensure the work can be effectively completed. UGC will be invited to review the draft charge once it is drafted.

A member suggested gathering data to determine how many faculty members are reporting such issues and to assess how widespread it is, as this information could help in implementing effective policies. VPDUE Bergerson agreed and will relay this information when developing the charge for the task force.

B. Block Grants

VPDUE Bergerson reported that UC has asked for a change in the process for distributing Block Grants. Instead of simply focusing on online education, the grants will now center around foundational themes or ideas that the campus wants to prioritize. The campus will solicit applications based on these selected themes.

Senior Associate Dean and Vice Provost of Undergraduate Education James Zimmerman and Senior Instructional Designer, Office of Information Technology Joan Holmquist, who have previously managed this process, met earlier this week to discuss potential ideas. These ideas will be reviewed by UC Online Chair Roland, UGC Chair Sharping, and Registrar Webb, who are part of the UC Online Advisory Committee. This review will take place in March, after which the final focus areas for the grants will be determined, and a process will be created for people to apply for them.

V. **Proposed Revisions to Campus-wide Policy on Minors – Chair Sharping – 11:10am – 11:20am**

At the November 22 and December 6 UGC meetings, members discussed [recommendations for changes to UC Merced's minor and double major policies](#), specifically for unit sharing. Members agreed to modify the minor policy to align with the existing major policy, allowing a more flexible unit-based course-sharing limit.

The proposed revisions to the Campus-wide Policy on Minors are shown in tracked changes, [here](#). The Multiple Major Policy is available on page 2 for reference.

Chair Sharping summarized the proposed revisions to the policy. The key change would be to allow up to 12 upper-division units (excluding those required for general education) to be counted toward all majors and all minors simultaneously.

Registrar Webb pointed out that minors cannot be printed on a student's diploma and recommended removing this language from the current policy. UGC agreed to this minor revision and had no further concerns.

Action:

- Voting members voted in the executive session and unanimously approved the

proposed revisions with the additional edit to remove the statement that the minor will appear on the student's diploma.

- The UGC Analyst will work on the next steps for implementation.

VI. Campus Review Item– 11:20am – 11:30am

A. [Interim Policy on Consensual Relationships](#) (Campus wide)

The policy is intended to clarify expectations and support faculty and staff in avoiding professional conflicts of interest related to consensual relationships.

Lead Reviewers: Bin Liu and Greg Wright

The lead reviewers' draft memo is available [here](#).

Member Liu summarized his and member Wright's assessment, highlighting that this policy is intended to clarify expectations and to support staff and faculty in avoiding professional conflicts of interest related to consensual relationships. This policy is applicable to the entire university community and aims to prevent power imbalance between two parties where one holds professional responsibility over the other.

The Director of the Office for the Prevention of Harassment & Discrimination (OPHD) and Title IX Officer are designated as the primary resources for resolving complaints under this policy. Any issues may be referred to the appropriate bodies for further action, including potential disciplinary actions or termination. This interim policy serves as an additional measure to mitigate risks related to academic fairness. It complements the [Faculty Code of Conduct \(APM 15\)](#), which originally applied to faculty members who have direct academic responsibility over undergraduate students. This policy now extends beyond faculty members to cover additional roles such as postdocs, teaching assistants, and others in positions of power over students, to ensure fairness and address power imbalances.

The lead reviewers identified some redundancies in the policy and recommended minor modifications for clarity. A key suggested revision concerned dating apps and social media platforms for consensual relationships. While members understand the intent, UGC believes that the policy should focus more on the core issue (consensual relationships) rather than delving into specifics about one's personal life. It was suggested to simplify this section by clarifying that relationships initiated on dating apps are subject to the policy. Members agreed and shared no concerns with the draft memo.

Action:

- Voting members voted in the executive session and unanimously approved the draft memo.
- The UGC Analyst transmitted the final memo to the Senate Chair.

VII. Approval of Courses¹ – Santosh Chandrasekhar, Haiyan Liu, and Maria Zoghbi - 11:30am – 11:45am

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

Action:

- The following courses were approved, and Curriculog will be updated accordingly:
 1. [BIO - 173 - Teaching for Learning: Instructional Learning Assistant Pedagogy Course](#) (new; crosslisted with NSED 172, CHEM 173, PHYS 173, MATH 173; Spring 2025)
 2. [CHEM - 173 - Teaching for Learning: Instructional Learning Assistant Pedagogy Course](#) (new; crosslisted with NSED 172, BIO 173, PHYS 173, MATH 173; Spring 2025)
 3. [MATH - 173 - Teaching for Learning: Instructional Learning Assistant Pedagogy Course](#) (new; crosslisted with NSED 172, BIO 173, PHYS 173, CHEM 173; Spring 2025)
 4. [NSED - 172 - Teaching for Learning: Instructional Learning Assistant Pedagogy Course](#) (new; crosslisted with MATH 173, BIO 173, PHYS 173, CHEM 173; Spring 2025)
 5. [PHYS - 173 - Teaching for Learning: Instructional Learning Assistant Pedagogy Course](#) (new; crosslisted with MATH 173, BIO 173, NSED 172, CHEM 173; Spring 2025)

Action:

- The following courses were approved contingent upon minor revisions. Curriculog will be updated accordingly:
 1. [COGS - 124 - Introduction to Neural Networks in Cognitive Science](#) (modify existing; Spring 2026) – list CLOs with corresponding PLOs.
 2. [ECON - 163A - Economics of Investments: Stocks and Bonds](#) (new; Spring 2026) – include PLO 5 in the CLOs. Also include a note to recommend updating the prerequisites in the syllabus, as well as include “weekly short quizzes” in the syllabus to align with Curriculog.
 3. [PH - 185 - Introduction to Health and Biomedical Ethics](#) (modify existing; UGC approved for Summer 2025) - include BA PLO 6 in the CLOs.

VIII. Any Other Business – All – 11:45am – 11:50am

No other business was discussed.

¹ RECUSALS

Jay – PHYS

Greg – ECON

Lindsay – PH

Aurora - CHEM

IX. Executive Session – Voting Members Only – 11:50am – 12:00pm

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

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

Attest: Jay Sharping, UGC Chair.