

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

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

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

- A. Today's Agenda
- B. [February 20 Meeting Minutes](#)
- C. [Request from SNS Request for UGC to consider NSSED 25/26, 45/46, and 65/66 course consolidations effective Fall 2025.](#)
- D. [Request from SoE for an exception to UGC's October 14, 2024 deadline to modify the contact hours in several courses, effective Fall 2025, as well as an exception to UGC's February 3, 2025 deadline to submit several courses for Spring 2026 implementation.](#)

Action:

- Today's agenda and the February 20 meeting minutes were approved as presented.
- The requests from SNS and SoE were approved. The UGC Analyst notified the SNS and SoE Curriculum Managers respectively.

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

- A. February 25 DivCo Meeting
 - UC Merced is seeking a four-year extension of its MOU with UCOP. As with the current MOU, UC Merced would have to meet certain targets to secure additional funding from UCOP. These funds are critical for UC Merced's fiscal health.
 - Celebrations are being planned to honor UC Merced's achievement of R1 designation.
 - Vice Chancellor for Enrollment Management (VCEM) Hagg reported that admission offers and financial aid packages were distributed relatively early this year. He asked for volunteers for an April 4th and 5th recruitment event in Southern California. Chair Sharping asked UGC members to contact him if they are interested.
- B. March 3 UCEP Meeting
 - Members continued their discussion on the faculty discipline process. An Academic Senate-Administrative work group has been created to focus on streamlining the investigation phase of misconduct cases. A presentation from this group will be given at the May Regents' meeting.

- Ongoing budget discussions were held regarding a new development where UCLA, UC Berkeley, and UC San Diego are expected to admit more international students. This is a shift from the previous UC-State compact that prioritized California residents, which may impact the number of in-state students that are admitted.
- The Senate and UCOP are creating a standing task force to address UC adaptations to disruptions, which is expected to continue for the next several years.
- A new report on the academic calendar has been distributed, which focuses on the potential shift from quarters to semesters. UGC plans to opine on this review item.
- Provost Newman provided an update on developing assessment principles for both online and in-person programs to create common assessment standards; however, a deadline has not yet been determined.
- There is a systemwide review of revisions to Senate Bylaw 170 and the recession of Senate Bylaw 192, which concerns the University Committee on Preparatory Education (UCOPE). UGC is a lead reviewer for this item, and the item is included on today's agenda (item V.B.).

III. Vice Chair's Report – Alejandro Gutierrez – 10:45am – 10:55am

A. [Update on the Curriculum Advisory Board \(CAB\)](#)

Vice Chair Gutierrez reported on a meeting he attended with the Graduate Council leadership regarding CAB and the Professional and Continuing Education (PACE). There is concern regarding the lack of faculty participation in extension programs. These programs, including teacher credentialing and cannabis-related curricula, are being developed and managed with limited input from faculty, which goes against the principle that UC curricula should be faculty-driven. GC leadership proposes that representatives from UGC, GC, and CRE form a task force to review and draft policies that ensure faculty participation in the PACE curriculum.

Vice Chair Gutierrez highlighted several potential risks, including the possibility of significant differences between the standards of UC Merced programs and those set by PACE, despite both using the UC Merced name. This could result in confusion or reputational damage. Furthermore, the absence of faculty involvement leads to missed opportunities for collaboration and synergy across different programs, which could benefit both the curriculum and faculty.

Members expressed concerns about the absence of a formal program review or annual assessment by the Periodic Oversight Review Committee (PROC), which makes these programs difficult to evaluate for quality and consistency with UC standards. Members discussed the importance of understanding the differences between certificate programs, credentialing, and degree programs when considering faculty oversight. There was recognition that while faculty involvement in these programs is crucial for ensuring collaboration and synergy, these programs may not need to go through the

same type of review process as degree programs. It was suggested that the task force clarify the distinct standards for each type of program.

A question was raised about the nature of the PACE courses, specifically whether they are tied to degree completion or stand-alone certifications. It was clarified that while some PACE programs are related to teaching credentialing, there are also other programs offering certifications, credentials, and stand-alone courses, but none of them lead directly to degrees.

Members emphasized the importance of faculty participation and agreed to the proposal of forming a group that includes UGC representation to weigh in on decisions related to curriculum and the drafting of relevant policies.

Action:

- UGC agreed to the proposal to form a task force.
- The UGC Analyst notified the GC Chair and Vice Chair.
- Please let Chair Sharping know if you are interested in serving as the UGC representative of this group.

IV. [Request from GC – Proposed Amendments to GC's Policy for Establishing Hybrid Undergraduate/Graduate Degree Programs](#) – 10:55am – 11:05am

On February 11, 2025, GC invited UGC to review proposed amendments to GC's Policy for Establishing Hybrid Undergraduate/Graduate Degree Programs (HDP) and the Procedures for Submitting Graduate Programs and Hybrid Undergraduate/Graduate Degree Programs, which aim to allow for an exception to the number of units from the graduate level course work to count toward undergraduate degree requirements.

The proposed amendments are noted below in bold, underlined font:

“HDP programs allow for 12 units of graduate level coursework to count toward undergraduate degree requirements. Each HDP program sets its upper limit of graduate level units which can be counted towards the Bachelor's degree, but the upper limit should not exceed 12 units, **unless otherwise approved by exception by the Graduate Council (GC).**”

Chair Sharping summarized the proposed revisions to the policy, and a member inquired about why the specific limit of 12 units was set, questioning the rationale behind the restriction. The UGC Analyst clarified that the proposed revisions only pertain to the bold, underlined portion of the existing policy. The 12-unit restriction itself has already been part of the policy since AY 23-24, and the current discussion focuses on revising certain details within the existing framework, rather than altering the 12-unit limit.

Members shared no concerns with allowing exceptions to the 12-unit limit.

Action:

- Voting members voted in the executive session and unanimously approved GC's proposed amendments to the Policy for Establishing Hybrid Undergraduate/Graduate Degree Programs.
- The UGC Analyst drafted and transmitted a memo to GC.

V. Campus and Systemwide Review Items – 11:05am – 11:20am**A. [Proposal for a Dual Degree Program Leading to a Bachelor of Science \(B.S.\) Degree from UCM and Doctor of Medicine Degree from UCSF](#) (Campus)**

Lead Reviewers: Jay Sharping and Lindsay Crawford

The lead reviewers' draft memo was shared with voting members.

Chair Sharping highlighted that UGC has received several updates over the past three years and students are already enrolled in this program. Member Crawford offered small suggestions, mainly focused on clarifying support systems for students, particularly around the financial aid process, given the complexity of combining both a BS and MD program. She also raised concerns about freshmen meeting with a financial aid advisor and the potential confusion surrounding the MD financial aid package, especially for first-generation students. She emphasized that her concerns are minor and not intended to impede the approval of the program.

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.

B. [Proposed Amendments to Systemwide Senate Bylaw 170 and Rescission of Systemwide Senate Bylaw 192](#) (Systemwide)

Lead Reviewer: Susan Varnot

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

Member Varnot summarized her assessment highlighting that the proposed amendments primarily revolve around the dissolution of the University Committee on Preparatory Education (UCOPE) and the redistribution of its duties into the University Committee on Educational Policy (UCEP).

She highlighted several concerns:

- How first-year preparatory duties, such as placement for writing, math, and other disciplines, would be addressed.
- While there was mention of the Educational Credit Committee (ECC) overseeing first-year writing and the Entry Level Writing Requirement (ELWR) placement, there seemed to be a gap in the discussion for other

subjects, particularly math and chemistry. UCOPE was concerned about how these areas would be handled in terms of placement and student achievement.

- Whether UCEP would have enough support and bandwidth to take on the additional responsibilities that would come with the shift of duties from UCOPE.
- Some campuses, like UC Merced, try to minimize the financial burden on students for self-directed placement assessments, whereas other UC campuses may charge students significantly. This leads to disparities in the financial support for these programs and may create reporting challenges for campuses with fewer resources.

Overall, the amendments focus on reassigning responsibilities to UCEP and ensuring that the new structure is adequately supported while addressing concerns about clarity, consistency, and financial equity across campuses.

Members agreed to include the following language at the end of the draft memo:

UGC recognizes that divisions and their students have unique circumstances. Members also recognize that without UCOPE there is no dedicated place to raise concerns with preparatory education.

Action:

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

VI. AY 26-27 Catalog Revisions – Jay Sharping, Santosh Chandrasekhar, and Lindsay Crawford – 11:20am – 11:30am

1. Critical Race and Ethnic Studies:
<https://ucmerced.box.com/s/55jlozoms0rz5gjk2plz8t7id22qjnsy>
2. History: <https://ucmerced.box.com/s/55jlozoms0rz5gjk2plz8t7id22qjnsy>
3. Cognitive and Information Sciences:
<https://ucmerced.box.com/s/flsvjf7jccewq0h4bzxmmul0s26l0cu>.

Chair Sharping summarized the Catalog revisions, noting that new emphasis tracks fall under major revisions but do not require campus review. Rather, emphasis tracks are reviewed and approved by UGC through Catalog revisions. The Catalog Review Committee did not have any concerns with the three revised Catalogs and recommended approval.

Action:

- Voting members voted in the executive session and unanimously approved the three AY 26-27 Catalog revisions.
- The UGC Analyst updated Curriculog accordingly.

VII. Approval of Courses¹ – Santosh Chandrasekhar, Haiyan Liu, and Maria Zoghbi - 11:30am – 11:40am

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

Action:

- The following courses were approved, and Curriculog was updated accordingly:
 1. [COMM - 018 - Introduction to Communication Theory](#) (new; Fall 2025)
 2. [HS - 167 - Buddhist Art and Architectural Heritage](#) (new; Spring 2026)
 3. [PH - 107H - Food Policy & Politics](#) (new; Fall 2025) – UGC approved request for late submission on January 23, 2025.
 4. [ROTC - 061 - Army Doctrine and Team Development](#) (new; Spring 2026)
 5. [ROTC - 150 - Training Management and the Warfighting Functions](#) (new; Spring 2026)
 6. [ROTC - 160 - The Army Officer](#) (new; Spring 2026)
 7. [ROTC - 161 - Company Grade Leadership](#) (new; Spring 2026)
 8. [ROTC - 162L - Senior Leadership Lab](#) (new; Spring 2026) – add a note to revise course description to read “leadership development” instead of “leader development”.
 9. [ROTC - 163 - Cadet Advanced Camp](#) (new; Spring 2026)
 10. [ROTC - 192 - Military History](#) (new; Spring 2026) – add a note to fix minor typo in “participation”.
 11. [ROTC - 199 - Independent Study](#) (new; Spring 2026)
 12. [SPAN - 050 - Introduction to Literary Analysis](#) (modify existing; Fall 2025)

Action:

- The following course was approved contingent upon minor revisions being addressed. Curriculog was updated accordingly:
 1. [ESS - 159 - Insect Ecology and Evolution](#) (modify existing; Spring 2026) – non-contact hours and the syllabus are missing.

A member expressed concern about several courses that mention culminating experience. ESS 159 has no prerequisites and could technically be taken by an incoming freshman, even though it is labeled as a culminating experience course. This raises the question about whether the course is designed appropriately for a culminating experience, which generally assumes students have accumulated enough knowledge or

¹ RECUSALS
Lindsay – PH

experience by the time they take it.

Another member noted that it is possible that the course was intended to be accessible to students from other departments or to fulfill a broad educational goal. If the course is meant to be flexible and open to students at different stages, it could be less about fulfilling specific program prerequisites and more about offering a final, integrative experience for students in their final years.

The General Education Executive Committee might need to weigh in on whether these types of courses can truly be labeled as culminating experiences without fulfilling the expected prerequisites. It may be worth revisiting the course's learning objectives and how it fits into students' overall progression through the program.

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

No other business was discussed.

IX. 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 noted in items IV, V, and VI above.

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

Attest: Jay Sharping, UGC Chair.