

Undergraduate Council (UGC)**Meeting Minutes****Thursday, April 3, 2025****10:30am – 12:00pm**

Pursuant to call, the Undergraduate Council (UGC) met at 10:30am on April 3, 2025. Chair Sharping presiding.

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

A. Today's Agenda

B. [March 20 Meeting Minutes](#)**Action:**

- The Consent Calendar was approved with a minor revision to swap items IV. and V. on the agenda.

II. April 1 DivCo Meeting Update – Lindsay Crawford – 10:35am – 10:40am

- The budget reduction discussions are ongoing. DivCo members agreed that the TAS budget should remain untouched.
- There are ten work stoppages on campus, with three in Public Health. These are mostly linked to subcontracts from other universities, and the impact on UC Merced from the various federal government actions is not yet as significant as other campuses.
- UC President Drake announced a UC hiring freeze.
- The Chancellor reported that the Regents approved UC Merced's new COB3 building, and the Promise Housing is moving forward.
- A special Assembly of the Academic Senate meeting was held during spring break to discuss pay raises and proposed changes to the academic calendar. A proposal for administrators to receive salary raises at the same time as faculty was voted down, and there was a recommendation for each campus to vote on whether they would like to adopt a common calendar for their campus or remain on their current calendar system.
- Divisional Council endorsed the Proposal for a Dual Degree Program Leading to a B.S. Degree from UCM and Doctor of Medicine from UCSF and shared minor recommendations for improvement.
- Divisional Council members held a consultation with Campus Legal Counsel Cesar Alvarado-Gil regarding his team's work in response to the recent federal government actions and executive orders. Counsel Alvarado-Gil's office is working with colleagues in the Association of American Universities (AAU) and other institutions across the country, conducting internal assessments on various issues, and providing advice to former students with visa issues.
- The University of California is under investigation due to actions taken by some employees during last year's protests, as well as issues related to admissions. UC Merced is conducting an internal risk review and taking initial

steps to identify potential risks that could affect individual programs.

III. March 21 [University Committee on International Education \(UCIE\) Update](#) – Greg Wright – 10:40am – 10:45am

Member Wright reported that some international students, particularly Palestinian and Pakistani students, have faced issues with their visas, with a few having them revoked or experiencing complications. Some students are now engaged in independent study or are waiting out the situation at their respective campuses. However, so far, there have been no reports of serious detentions or extreme consequences for these students, either in the U.S. or abroad.

The introduction of H.R. 2147 in Congress, which seeks to deny student visas to Chinese nationals, particularly those holding J and F visas, has stirred significant debate. While it is uncertain whether the bill will pass, institutions like UCLA have been involved in discussions, with some members proposing letters to oppose the bill. This has sparked a larger debate about the role of universities in taking political stances and whether such actions are strategically beneficial. The situation has become a focal point for discussions on international education and the potential impact on student exchange programs.

For students encountering legal issues, the University of California Education Abroad Program (UCEAP) offers a 24-hour hotline to provide assistance. However, a broader concern is the potential decline in international student enrollment in the U.S. due to fears of legal complications or other uncertainties. Study abroad programs are designed to be reciprocal; for U.S. students to study abroad in other countries, those countries need to send their students to the U.S. in return. If international students start avoiding the U.S. due to legal or political concerns, it could create a significant imbalance. Without students coming to the U.S., it becomes unclear how the reciprocal exchange model would work.

IV. [Registrar Request: In-Person Exam Sessions for Online Courses](#) – Chair Sharping – 11:05am – 11:15am

The Registrar's Office is seeking further clarification from UGC and GC on the scope of an instructional modality definition in their course approval policies. Both policy documents indicate that Online courses have 0% contact hours in person, that 100% of the contact hours are delivered remotely, and that there are no in-person meetings. This raises the following questions:

1. Does this definition extend to exam sessions, including midterms and finals, so that fully online course sections cannot offer in-person exam meetings and must hold them remotely?
2. Or are online sections allowed to offer in-person exams based on the preference of the instructor or departmental scheduling unit?

During their March 21 meeting, GC discussed the Registrar's request and members

agreed with point 1 above. Their feedback is available [here](#).

Deputy Registrar Reinhold summarized the request by noting that the Registrar is seeking clarification on whether an instructor can require an in-person exam for a fully online class. The key issue is whether students who enrolled in the class with the expectation of completing all of its content online, can be required to attend an in-person midterm or final exam.

Chair Sharping pointed out that UGC's response should align with GC's. He then summarized GC's feedback, highlighting their clarification that the definition of an online course includes all content to be delivered remotely, including exams. According to the policy, a fully online course cannot include in-person exams, including midterms and final exams, and all contact hours must be delivered remotely. If a course requires in-person exams, it must be classified as a hybrid offering rather than fully online. The policy specifies that if any part of a course, including exams, is held in person, it should be labeled as a hybrid course, and a fully online course should have no in-person components.

UGC agreed with GC's feedback and began discussing item V. of the agenda, which focused on updating the modality definitions. Members decided to add a specific definition for "online with in-person exams", and it was suggested to mention this is UGC's memo to the Senate Chair when responding to the Registrar's request. In the meantime, the term "hybrid" should be used to refer to any courses that include in-person content, including exams.

Action:

- Voting members unanimously agreed with GC's feedback with a note that UGC is currently modifying the course modality definitions, and a category for "online with in-person exams" will be included.
- The UGC Analyst transmitted a memo to the Senate Chair on April 4, 2025.

V. UGC's Revised Policies and Procedures – Chair Sharping - 10:45am – 11:05am

During the February 6, 2025 UGC meeting, members reviewed and approved proposed revisions to the Supplemental Questionnaire and the Procedures and Policies for Approval of New and Revised Undergraduate Courses. Following the meeting, Chair Sharping made additional edits to the two documents to further clarify the modality definitions. The edits are shown in tracked changes at the links below.

A. [Supplemental Questionnaire](#)

Former UGC Chair Viney and former member Gutierrez met during Summer 2024 and implemented revisions. UGC approved Chair Sharping's proposed revisions at the February 6, 2025 meeting, but additional proposed edits have since been added. All recommended revisions are shown in tracked changes at the link above.

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). Chair Sharping further edited the modality definitions on pages 4 and 5. All recommended revisions are shown in tracked changes at the link above.

Chair Sharping summarized the proposed revisions to both the Supplemental Questionnaire and the Procedures and Policies for Approval of New and Revised Undergraduate Courses. The updated modality definitions now state that if a course is delivered 50% or more online, it is considered an online course, while if it is delivered less than 50% online, it is considered in-person. Members also discussed further clarifying the definitions to include distinctions for asynchronous and synchronous courses, along with a new definition for “online with in-person exams”.

Deputy Registrar Reinhold expressed concern about the lack of alignment between the definitions in the policy document and those in the questionnaire. He noted that terms such as “hybrid in-person,” “hybrid online,” and “high flex” are not clearly reflected in the policy document and suggested that the policy document serve as the primary reference point for structuring the questionnaire. Deputy Registrar Reinhold also questioned whether UGC plans to eliminate “hyflex” altogether and pointed out that the definitions for “online” and “hybrid in-person” seem essentially the same. Chair Sharping responded that UGC would like to focus on simplifying the definitions while also making it as clear as possible for students in the course schedule.

Chair Sharping asked for the Registrar’s opinion on including “hyflex” in the list of modality definitions. Deputy Registrar Reinhold informed the committee that there have been 21 sections listed as “highflex” since 2023, with the majority scheduled in the summer semesters. One section is listed for Spring 2024, but it is still a relatively small number overall.

In the end, members agreed to further revise the modality definitions by adding sub-definitions under “online” and “hybrid” to cover categories such as synchronous, asynchronous, hybrid in-person, and hybrid online. Members also agreed to include a new category for “online with in-person exams”, as well as remove the definition for “hyflex”.

Additionally, members discussed the addition of prerequisites and whether they should go through the regular Curriculog review process or continue through the abbreviated process. The UGC Analyst noted the need to clarify whether this applies to requisites and restrictions or just prerequisites. Deputy Registrar Reinhold clarified that if UGC would only like for prerequisites to undergo the regular Curriculog review process, then changes to class level restrictions, major restrictions, or mutually exclusive courses (where students cannot take a course if it has similar content to another), what are often referred to as “requisites”, would still to go through the abbreviated process. While prerequisite changes would require more detailed review, adjustments related to class or

major restrictions and mutual exclusive courses can continue with the more streamlined approval process.

Members questioned the initial request to include prerequisites under the regular Curriculog review process, and the UGC Analyst clarified that this change was recommended by a prior UGC member last year. It was suggested that the rationale behind requiring prerequisites to go through UGC review might stem from concerns that some Schools feel that prerequisites are added without their knowledge, which could lead to unintended consequences. For example, one School may introduce a prerequisite that causes an influx of students from the other Schools, without those Schools being aware of the change. While the change may address this concern, a member pointed out the additional workload it would create for UGC, particularly since SSHA has many courses with frequent changes to prerequisites. Deputy Registrar Reinhold offered one final comment regarding the potential impact of removing prerequisites and other requisites, such as class level or major restrictions, from the abbreviated process. If these changes are made, the abbreviated review form would primarily focus on course title, maximum enrollment, and general education requirements, removing a significant portion of the form. This led to the question of what the abbreviated form would truly accomplish. A member suggested that it might be more effective to either eliminate the abbreviated form entirely or revamp it with additional options to ensure it remains useful. This is another factor for UGC to consider, and members agreed to continue the discussion in the executive session.

Action:

- The UGC Analyst and Chair Sharping will update both documents accordingly, and this item will be added to a future UGC agenda for further discussion and vote.

VI. Discussion: Non-Senate Faculty Voting Rights – Chair Sharping and Pooja Chopra – 11:15am – 11:30am

Chair Sharping received a formal request from Unit 18 Lecturer Pooja Chopra, seeking to initiate a discussion regarding the potential extension of voting rights to non-Senate members.

The Bylaws state that non-Senate members do not have voting rights on Senate Committees. More information is available [here](#).

Unit 18 Lecturer, and Vice Chair of Non-Senate members Pooja Chopra introduced herself and presented a request to grant voting rights to non-Senate faculty in UGC meetings. The main argument is that allowing non-Senate faculty, such as lecturers, librarians, and staff, to vote would bring more academic and administrative expertise into decision-making, particularly as these faculty members are closer to undergraduate students and can offer valuable perspectives on student needs.

She noted that this change would also improve collaboration between Senate and non-Senate faculty, contributing to a stronger academic environment. Additionally, she

emphasized that granting voting rights would not diminish the authority of senior faculty, who would still control major academic policies, including tenure decisions. The goal is simply to have a say in matters where students are involved, without undermining the roles of senior faculty.

Chair Sharping mentioned that the Faculty Senate plays a crucial role in the shared governance of the university, with specific rights and responsibilities. From the perspective of UGC, faculty members are empowered to design academic programs, but non-Senate faculty, such as lecturers and staff, have been playing an increasingly important role in student education, despite not having voting rights within the Academic Senate. Chair Sharping provided some context about the division between Senate and non-Senate faculty and acknowledged that while non-Senate faculty have a growing influence on student success, they currently do not have voting rights at the Senate level.

Unit 18 Lecturer Chopra clarified that non-Senate members would like to have voting rights on decisions related to courses and any policies that directly impact students. In response, Chair Sharping pointed out that other Academic Senate Committees do not allow non-Senate members to vote.

Chair Sharping referred to the Senate Bylaws, specifically pointing out language from Systemwide Senate Bylaw 35. Membership of Committees:

“Only members of the Academic Senate may vote in Senate agencies and their committees when those agencies or committees are taking final action on any matter for the Academic Senate, or giving advice to University officers or other non-Senate agencies in the name of the Senate. **Persons other than Senate members may be given the right to vote on other questions, such as those that involve only recommendations to other Senate agencies, but only by explicit Bylaw provisions.** [See [Legislative Ruling 12.75](#)]

Members decided to seek clarification from CRE regarding the bolded excerpt. A member also recommended consulting with Labor Relations and the Union since granting voting rights would essentially add additional duties for these members.

Action:

- The Bylaws state that non-Senate members do not have voting rights on Senate Committees. More information is available [here](#).
- Voting members agreed to consult with CRE to determine if the issue can be addressed at the campus level. If CRE provides a solution, members recommend then consulting with Labor Relations/Union because adding voting rights would essentially add additional duties. If the request cannot be fulfilled, members recommended inquiring whether an additional Unit 18 Lecturer/ex officio member can be added to the committee to advocate and engage in discussions related to undergraduate students.
- The UGC Analyst and Chair Sharping will draft a memo to CRE.

- Voting members will be invited to review the draft memo prior to transmittal to the CRE Chair.

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 will be updated accordingly:
 1. [HIST - 190 - History Capstone](#) (new; Fall 2025)
 2. [PHYS - 008HL - Honors Introductory Physics I for Physical Sciences Lab](#) (modify existing; Spring 2026)
 3. [PHYS - 009HL - Honors Introductory Physics II for Physical Sciences Lab](#) (modify existing; Spring 2026)

Action:

- The following courses were approved contingent upon minor revisions being addressed. Curriculog will be updated accordingly:
 1. [DSA - 102 - Interactive Data Collection & Visualization](#) (new; Fall 2026)
 - Request including PLO2 in the list of CLOs.
 2. [EH - 141 - Latin American Environmental Literature](#) (new; crosslisted with SPAN 141; Fall 2025)
 - Request including description of SPAN PLOs since they are listed in the CLO section.
 3. [SPAN - 141 - Latin American Environmental Literature](#) (new; crosslisted with EH 141; Fall 2025)
 - Request including description of EH PLOs since they are listed in the CLO section.
 4. [GEOG - 112 - GIS for World History](#) (modify existing; crosslisted with HS 112; Spring 2026) -
 5. [HS - 112 - GIS for World History](#) (modify existing; crosslisted with GEOG 112; Spring 2026)
 - Recommend spelling out "GIS" in title.
 - Request stronger justification for removing the word "Economic" from the title if the course description remains largely the same with a focus on trade and commerce.
 - Request revision for contact and non-contact hours. 4 contact hours are listed for the lab, but non-contact hours nor lecture hours are listed (and lectures are mentioned on the course's format as Weekly lecture and computer GIS lab, with equal split of

¹ RECUSALS
Jay - PHYS

instruction time)

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.

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

Attest: Jay Sharping, UGC Chair.