

**DIVISIONAL COUNCIL**  
**Minutes of Meeting**  
**Wednesday, March 18, 2020**

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**Attendees:** Chair Tom Hansford, Vice Chair Robin DeLugan, Christopher Viney, LeRoy Westerling, Jay Sharping, Michael Scheibner, Roummel Marcia, Linda Hirst, Erin Hestir, Patti LiWang, Michael Dawson, Asmeret Asefaw Berhe, Carolin Frank, and Josué Medellin-Azuara.

**Absent:** Nella Van Dyke

I. Consultation with EVC/Provost

EVC/Provost Camfield began his remarks by thanking Division Council members for their dedication in keeping the Academic Senate functioning. He also expressed thanks for the memo that CAP issued to all Senate faculty about the committee taking into account the potential negative impact of the spread of COVID-19 on faculty research productivity. A Division Council member asked if there were any additional areas of concern with regard to policy. EVC/Provost Camfield replied that the APM and the MAPP allows for accommodations for faculty members in the case of extenuating circumstances, such as stopping the tenure clock.

EVC/Provost Camfield also stated his appreciation for the memo from GC to all Senate faculty about the health and safety of graduate students during the outbreak of COVID-19. However, he acknowledged that there is concern over graduate student compensation. He suggested that faculty members identify areas of work that can be completed remotely by undergraduate and graduate students so the students can maintain their normal hours and receive their pay. Faculty members should also try to reassign tasks for post docs to allow them to work remotely. A Division Council member pointed out that if a graduate student or post doc is being paid from a faculty member's extramural grant, it may not be legal to assign them remote work tasks that are not approved by the grant. EVC/Provost Camfield agreed and stated that the administration is trying to find campus sources of money from which to pay graduate students and post docs so that faculty are not in violation of the terms of their grants. He added that the Merced campus remains open and he will try to provide faculty members with enough notice as the situation evolves.

Division Council members discussed the situation at another UC campus that has shut down due to the spread of COVID-19. That campus made an exception for mission critical personnel; but they defined "mission critical" as research staff and not faculty members who keep the research enterprise going. A Division Council member suggested that the campus needs to be cognizant of the long-term consequences on students, not only the immediate crisis. EVC/Provost Camfield agreed and pointed out that there are still many unknown factors about COVID-19 as it is an unprecedented virus. He encouraged campus employees to review the emergency information on the front page of the campus website which is updated regularly. He added that faculty can submit questions on the website which will be answered by appropriate campus personnel.

UGC Chair Sharping mentioned that the emergency course continuity policy will likely be extended to the end of the spring term. He asked whether the policy should extend into the summer. EVC/Provost Camfield responded that he is unsure what will happen to summer session as the situation is quickly evolving. He encouraged the Senate to reflect on the current policy and

use the next few weeks to consider modifying it as necessary.

## II. Chair's Announcements – Tom Hansford

Chair Hansford thanked Division Council members for their work during this difficult time, especially for being flexible and available for consultation with minimal notice. He also thanked the Senate office staff for their dedication.

### A. Meeting with EVC/Provost Camfield (March 9, 2020)

- i. Senior leadership team discussed contingency plans if spring Commencement cannot occur due to the concerns over the spread of COVID-19. A decision has not yet been reached, but ideas from senior leadership include holding a virtual ceremony, or a physical ceremony at a later time.
- ii. There is much concern over the cost of COVID-19 on the UC system. For example, the UC system is providing refunds for dorm fees; those funds either get returned to the students or to their sources of aid. The estimated cost to the UC system of COVID-19 are estimated in the hundreds of millions. Another cost concern is the uncertainty of the enrollment of international undergraduate and graduate students. These students may either opt not to enroll at UCs or will be unable to enroll. Finally, Proposition 13 was rejected by voters in the March primary election, leading many in the UC to predict that the May Revision of the state budget will be quite negative as state revenue decreases.
- iii. Interviews of candidates for the position of UC Merced Chancellor were held last week in the Bay Area. Eight candidates were interviewed over a two-day period. The new Chancellor will be announced in May at the Regents Meeting.
- iv. Chair Hansford thanked Division Council members for their feedback on the Respondus Monitor software for remote proctoring of exams. Members' feedback will be sent to IT.

## III. Vice Chair's Report – Robin DeLugan

Vice Chair DeLugan announced that she and Chair Hansford are participating in meetings three times a week with campus senior leadership on COVID-19. The meetings are attended by various campus stakeholders including emergency personnel, IT, and Communications. Topics include emergency operation updates, coordination of information to the campus community, remote instruction, student affairs issues, staff telecommuting policy, ECEC, and discussion of major campus events that will have to be postponed or cancelled. She stated that the May 7 Merced Meeting of the Division will be held via Zoom, and more information is forthcoming. She asked Division Council members to let her know of any other campus events that may need to be cancelled or postponed.

## IV. Consent Calendar

- A. The Agenda
- B. March 4, 2020 Meeting Minutes

**Action:** Due to time constraints, this item was tabled for the next meeting.

## V. Systemwide Review Items

## A. Report of the Academic Council's Standardized Testing Task Force (STTF) and Additional Statement

In January 2019, at the request of President Napolitano, former Senate Chair May empaneled the STTF to examine the University's current use of standardized testing for admissions and consider whether the University and its students are best served by UC's current testing practices, a modification of current practices, another testing approach, or the elimination of testing.

Prior to this meeting, Division Council members were given access to the comments received from Senate committees and School Executive Committees.

UGC Chair Sharping briefly summarized the report and the recommendations contained therein.

Division Council members praised the carefully written report. A motion was made and seconded to endorse the report. The motion was unanimously endorsed.

**Action:** Transmit Merced Division comments to the systemwide Senate Chair together with a cover memo from Division Council that states its support of the STTF report.

## B. BOARS Proposal to Eliminate ACT/SAT Essay Writing Test Requirement

BOARS has engaged in a narrower review of the requirement for all applicants to the UC system to submit scores from the SAT Essay or ACT Writing Test and recommends that the UC eliminate this requirement as soon as is feasible.

Prior to this meeting, Division Council members were given access to the comments received from Senate committees and School Executive Committees.

UGC Chair Sharping summarized the comments received from Senate committees and School Executive Committees.

Division Council members had no more comments and agreed with the BOARS recommendation that the ACT/SAT Essay Writing Test Requirement be eliminated as soon as feasible. A motion was made and seconded to endorse then BOARS proposal. The motion passed unanimously.

**Action:** Transmit Merced Division comments to the systemwide Senate Chair along with a cover memo from Division Council that states its support of the BOARS proposal.

## VI. Campus Review Items

## A. Amendments to UCM Senate Bylaw I.III.5-Divisional Representatives

CRE proposes to amend UCM Senate Bylaw I.III.5 pertaining to Divisional Representatives.

Division Council members held a discussion about the benefits of asking faculty to submit a nomination form with signatures versus CoC selecting divisional representatives. Some members believed that gathering signatures for the form is too onerous and creates a barrier to serving on the Senate. Other members did not view the form as a significant obstacle and stated that gathering signatures is a good filtering process. Members who advocated for eliminating the form pointed out that faculty have realized it is easier to simply self-nominate to CoC members, thereby circumventing the form.

The discussion then turned to whether a minimum number should be established for the election ballot, e.g. the number of fillable positions plus one. Some Division Council members disagreed, stating that the larger the number of faculty on the ballot, the more likely it is that CoC will end up selecting representatives since candidates will not receive the required number of votes in an election.

**Action:** Given the lack of consensus, the CRE Chair will draft revised bylaw language for Division Council to review and discuss via email.

B. UGC's Proposal to Establish Admissions and Financial Aid as a Stand-Alone Senate Committee

Last semester, members of UGC unanimously endorsed the establishment of AFAS as a stand-alone Senate Committee (AFAC). The three Senate faculty who serve on AFAS are also members of UGC and had the opportunity to discuss and vote on the proposal.

Members of CRE discussed the proposal at their February 25 meeting and offered comments related to the term of service for the Chair of AFAC/BOARS representative (two years instead of one); and the Chair's compensation.

UGC Chair Sharping briefly summarized the proposal. Division Council members agreed to move the proposal forward for campus review but recommended removing the dollar amount of the compensation for the AFAS chair, as that is a separate issue.

**Action:** With the aforementioned edit, UGC's proposal to establish AFAS as a stand-alone Senate committee will be sent to Senate committees and School Executive Committees for review.

C. UGC's Proposal for a Reading, Review, and Recitation (RRR) Week – UGC Chair Sharping

The policy is proposed in response to a request from the ASUCM. Division Council members were provided with the background and context in UGC's August 29, 2019 memo. The proposed policy was discussed by UGC members in the Fall and most recently, in February.

UGC Chair Sharping summarized the proposal. He stated that not all UGC members were in support, as they did not comfortable creating this policy that would affect all faculty.

Division Council members confirmed that the semester will not be extended, rather, the RRR week is embedded in the current semester length. Some Division Council members were concerned about losing one week of instruction to RRR and the impact on fitting in all the required course material. A Division Council member pointed out that the RRR week works well at UC Berkeley, however, that campus dedicates resources to make RRR week useful for

students such as extending library hours and computer lab hours. Another Division Council member stated that an RRR week is useful as it creates flexibility in instruction in the case of unforeseen events or illness of instructors. RRR week would also be useful in encouraging students to take examinations seriously and review the material thoroughly.

Division Council members agreed to move the proposal forward for campus review.

**Action:** Issue the proposal to Senate committees, School Executive Committees, Registrar, VPDUE, and VCSAE for review along with a cover memo from UGC that guides the review.

#### D. Summer Session Faculty Compensation

Chair Hansford recused from this portion of the meeting. Vice Chair DeLugan led the discussion.

Last year the joint Senate-administration Budget Working Group (BWG) reviewed the summer session compensation and revenue-sharing models for the campus and compared it to peer UC institutions. The group's analysis concluded that the campus should consider a) replacing the current salary cap of \$10,000 on summer session instructional remuneration to Senate faculty with a model that would incentivize Senate faculty participation in summer session teaching, and b) reevaluating the distribution of summer session revenues to better serve the campus mission, principally by increasing summer session support for academic operations.

The EVC/Provost has asked the Senate to comment on the Working Group's proposed model for summer session faculty compensation. The intention is to implement the new model in time for faculty to consider their participation in the 2020 summer session.

Prior to this meeting, the comments from Senate committees and School Executive Committees were made available to Division Council members.

Senate Vice Chair DeLugan summarized the comments received. Division Council members shared the same concern raised by Senate committees with regard to equity and potential salary discrepancies between a course with 15 or more students and the same course with one fewer students enrolled. A Division Council member agreed with the alternative formula proposed by the School of Natural Sciences Executive Committee which ensures that the larger the number of students that enroll in a course, the higher the compensation will be. This alternative proposal would also avoid the salary discrepancy between lower and higher paid faculty in courses with 15 students. Another Division Council member asked whether Council should suggest to the EVC/Provost instituting a flat compensation rate that will be made known to all faculty prior to their agreeing to teach a summer course.

**Action:** Due to time constraints, Vice Chair DeLugan asked Division Council members to send any additional comments via email. All comments from Senate committees and School Executive Committees will be transmitted to the EVC/Provost.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 10:45 am.

Attest: Tom Hansford, Senate Chair

Robin DeLugan, Senate Vice Chair