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# Academic Senate

October 2020 Newsletter | [senate.ucmerced.edu](https://senate.ucmerced.edu)

## **Division News:**

**From the Senate Chair:** Welcome to the first Senate newsletter of the academic year! As in past years, you can anticipate receiving this newsletter on the first Friday of the month, October through June.

Senate Committees have articulated their goals for AY 2020-2021 and one of the ongoing priorities for the Senate is to continue to strengthen shared governance. Toward that end, in August, 2020 the Senate and administration held the fourth annual Shared Governance Retreat. It

was attended by the members of Divisional Council, the School Executive Committee chairs, and the campus's senior administrative leadership. Outcomes included refinement of Principles of Shared Governance developed in August 2018 to guide engagement in shared governance, discussion of decision making on campus, and some preliminary planning for initiatives that will necessitate Senate-administration collaboration. The refined principles of shared governance are currently undergoing review by the Senate leadership and will be posted on the Senate website for reference by the campus community.

**Valuing Black Lives at UC Merced:**

About a month ago, at the Shared Governance retreat, we made a pledge to racial equity and to specific actions we will take to combat Anti-Blackness. A Senate-specific action plan involves reviewing our Divisional Bylaws, policies, participating in the Valuing Black Lives at UC Merced Task Force, and generating specific recommendations for eliminating barriers. Beyond our campus, this year, the U.C. Academic Council will also continue to address systemic racism and related inequities.

**Responding to our Climate Crisis:**

U.C. Academic Council Chair Mary Gauvain addressed the urgent Climate Crisis in her inaugural remarks to the Board of Regents. The written remarks and a video clip can be found on the Academic Senate website: <https://senate.universityofcalifornia.edu/resources/regents-remarks.html>.

The key section from the remarks is:

“The Academic Senate will be committing much of its effort this year to figuring out how to use the vast resources and expertise of the university to address the climate crisis, both on our campuses and beyond. Our work will be guided by the Green New Deal developed by faculty at UC San Diego and it will be led by Vice Chair Horwitz who has been involved with the effort on his campus. We will not be creating a task force to do this work because a task force focuses on a single defined task or activity. The climate crisis is not a singular issue, it is the condition of life today – one that threatens our very existence. As such, we need to think about it from every angle possible including our teaching, research, campus environments, finances and budget, and, importantly, environmental justice.”

**COVID-19 Motivates Adaptations:**

The pandemic continues to impact the University of California including admissions processes and delivery of instruction. To inform instructional planning, the Academic Council issued the following recommendations regarding testing options to satisfy the Entry Level Writing Requirement (ELWR), the administration of the Analytical Writing Placement Exam (AWPE), and guidance related to flexibility for grading options for Fall 2020:

- [Recommendation](#) from the University Committee on Preparatory Education (UCOPE) to extend the temporary modification of the passing requirement for the ELWR in Senate

Regulation 636.C that Council approved for Spring and Summer 2020 sessions, to fall 2020 sessions.

- [Recommendation](#) from the University Committee on Preparatory Education (UCOPE) to accept an ACT English + Reading score of 63 or higher as a new method of satisfying the ELWR permanently effective for new students applying for UC admission in November 2020 and enrolling in Fall 2021.
- [Recommendation](#) from the University Committee on Preparatory Education (UCOPE) related to the administration of the systemwide AWPE.
- [Extension of Guidance on Divisional Flexibility for Grading Options for Fall 2020.](#)

We look forward to updating you about Academic Senate activities through this Newsletter, through our Friday Senate Digests, and the [Senate website](#). We encourage you to contact us with any questions or comments. You may write to [senatechair@ucmerced.edu](mailto:senatechair@ucmerced.edu).

- Robin DeLugan

## Committee Highlights

[The Admissions and Financial Aid Committee](#) (AFAC) is a new stand-alone Senate committee. It held its inaugural meeting on 9/14. AFAC:

- Endorsed revisions to the rubric used for ranking potential Regents' Scholars recipients. This revision was prompted by the UC Regents' vote in May 2020 to approve the suspension of the SAT/ACT.
- Offered comments on draft publications for admissions
- Is reviewing, in consultation with the School Executive Committees, the Office of Admissions' proposal for modified first year selection criteria and amendments to the guidelines for Admissions by Exception.
- Offered comments on the proposed revisions to Systemwide Senate Regulation 630.

[The Committee on Academic Personnel](#) (CAP) continues to conduct business as usual.

[The Committee on Academic Planning and Resource Allocation](#) (CAPRA) is preparing for the review of Schools' and Divisions' draft academic plans under phase II of academic planning. The committee also consults with Associate Provost for Academic Planning and Budget (APAPB) Schnier on strategic planning and the budget.

[The Committee on Faculty Welfare and Academic Freedom](#) (FWAF) met on 9/17 and 9/28, and discussed committee priorities for AY 20-21, COVID mitigation measures, and continued lack of viable childcare options. FWAF consulted with Associate Vice Provost for Faculty (AVPF) Valdez on the use of diversity and research statements in the “first round” evaluation for faculty searches, and has commented on a proposed campus COVID mitigation plan at Vice Provost for Academic Personnel (VPAP) Matlock’s and EVC/Provost Camfield’s request. FWAF sent a list of childcare questions to the administration, and held a meeting with the EVC/Provost Camfield on 10/1.

[The Committee on Research](#) (COR) is reviewing a proposal to establish a new Organized Research Unit (ORU) and is reviewing the Senate’s policy on establishing core facilities. The committee regularly consults with interim Vice Chancellor for Research & Economic Development (VCORED) Zatz on research relaunch and the restructured pre-and-post award process. The committee also consulted with Associate Provost for Academic Planning and Budget (APAPB) Schnier on indirect cost return.

[The Graduate Council](#) (GC) met on 8/31, 9/14, and 9/28. GC updated its Conflict of Interest Policy, discussed its priorities for AY 20-21, and approved further revisions to Graduate Groups Policies & Procedures Policy and Template. GC also reviewed systemwide and campus review items, discussed the charge from DivCo anti-racism workgroup, proposed revisions to the Emergency Course Continuity Policy, and consulted with Graduate and Undergraduate Deans on spring instruction delivery.

[The Undergraduate Council](#) (UGC) met on 9/14 and 9/28. General Education (GE) Executive Committee Chair Leppert attended the meeting to provide a summary of proposed plans for GE realignments.

Members/representatives have been identified to represent UGC on the following: for the following committees/work groups:

- Periodic Review Oversight Committee
- Support Services for Undocumented Students Work Group
- University Committee on Preparatory Education

UGC will issue comments on the Proposed Revisions to [systemwide Senate Regulations 630](#) and [544](#) and on the SNS proposal to change the name of the Chemistry and Chemical Biology department.

[The Committee on Rules and Elections](#) (CRE)'s held its inaugural meeting on 9/29. CRE's main priority this academic year is to finalize its review and amendments of the UCM Bylaws. The

committee is currently reviewing proposed revisions to systemwide Regulations 544 and 630.

[The Committee for Diversity and Equity](#) (D&E) held its inaugural meeting on 9/14. D&E members discussed the committee's priorities for AY 20-21, and ways in which the DivCo workgroup on equity and inclusion could ensure Black faculty participation. D&E also consulted with Associate Vice Provost for Faculty (AVPF) Valdez on Faculty Equity Advisors (FEAs) and the new Administrative Equity Advisors (AEAs), and provided comments on AEAs' role and appointment process.

[The Committee on Committees](#) (CoC) has approved a set of new Principles that will guide the work of the committee. CoC has appointed a senate faculty representative to the Police Advisory Board and approved nominations for Graduate Student Association (GSA) representatives to CAPRA and LASC.

The committee is currently pursuing Senate representatives for the following:

- Public Health Work Group
- Vice Chancellor of the Division of Finance and Administration Search Committee
- UC Free Speech Center Advisory Board
- Knowledge Transfer Advisory Committee (KTAC)
- UCM Strategic Planning Governance Committee
- GSA and Associated Students of UC Merced (ASUCM) Representatives on Senate Committees

[The Committee on Library and Scholarly Communication](#) (LASC) held its first meeting of the semester on Wednesday, September 16. Chair DePrano shared the following list of goals and priorities for AY 20-21 with LASC members:

- Continue to work with UGC, GC, and CAPRA to ensure and/or encourage authors of proposals for new programs, schools, Organized Research Units (ORU) to consult with library leadership early in the process of writing their proposals.
- Monitor the recently reopened UC negotiations with Elsevier, give input via University Committee on Library and Scholarly Communications (UCOLASC) as needed, and update the UC Merced community as appropriate.
- Support the University Library through the program review process.
- Communicate about open access and transformative agreements with the university community.
- Support the Library in establishing the Sierra Nevada / Central Valley Archival Hub as appropriate.

- Address Library support for research, teaching, and learning within the context of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic.

[Divisional Council](#) (DivCo) convened on 9/14 and 9/25. Members endorsed an action plan to address structural racism. In response to a request from EVC/Provost Camfield, members are currently considering an extension to the Emergency Educational Continuity Policy through the Spring semester. General Education (GE) Executive Committee Chair Leppert attended the last DivCo meeting to present a proposal for realigning the GE program.

## October Meeting Schedules

**AFAC** - OCT 12  
**CAP** - OCT 2, 9, 16, 23, 30  
**CAPRA** - OCT 13, 27  
**CoR** - OCT 19  
**CRE** - OCT 27  
**D&E** - OCT 19  
**DIVCO** - OCT 9, 23  
**FWAF** - OCT 15  
**GC** - OCT 12, 26  
**UGC** - OCT 12

**ACSCOLI** - OCT 29  
**BOARS** - OCT 2  
**CCGA** - OCT 7  
**COUNCIL** - OCT 28  
**EDIT** - OCT 23  
**UCAADE** - OCT 8  
**UCACC** - OCT 15  
**UCAP** - OCT 14  
**UCEP** - OCT 5  
**UCFW** - OCT 9  
**UCIE** - OCT 16  
**UCOC** - OCT 20  
**UCOPE** - OCT 28  
**UCORP** - OCT 12  
**UCPB** - OCT 6

## Contact the Chair

Questions, concerns, or issues you would like to see addressed? Contact Senate Chair DeLugan at [senatechair@ucmerced.edu](mailto:senatechair@ucmerced.edu).



## Review Items:

**NEW:** A webpage on the UCM Senate website is now available and will be updated regularly. Please click [here](#) to view the items that are currently discussed and reviewed locally and at the systemwide level.



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