

UNDERGRADUATE COUNCIL (UGC)
ANNUAL REPORT
AY 2023-2024

To the Merced Division of the Academic Senate:

The Undergraduate Council (UGC) held a total of 15 regularly scheduled meetings via zoom and conducted some business via email with respect to its duties as outlined in UC Merced's [Senate Bylaw II.IV.6](#). The Chair of UGC attended Divisional Council meetings and provided regular updates at each UGC meeting.

The structure of UGC and the issues that the Council considered this year are described below.

Undergraduate Council Organization and Representation on Systemwide Committees

- Divisional Council: UGC Chair Heather Bortfeld (SSHA; Fall 2023), UGC Chair Christopher Viney (SoE; Spring 2024)
- University Committee on Educational Policy: UGC Chair Heather Bortfeld (SSHA; Fall 2023); UGC Chair Christopher Viney (SoE; Spring 2024)
- University Committee on Preparatory Education: UGC Chair Heather Bortfeld (SSHA; Fall 2023), UGC member Felicia Lopez (SSHA; Spring 2024)
- University Committee on International Education: UGC member Greg Wright (SSHA)
- Periodic Review and Oversight Committee Representative: UGC Vice Chair Valerie Leppert (SoE)
- CRF Subcommittee: UGC members Francois Blanchette (SNS; Fall 2023), Alexander Petersen (SoE), Felicia Lopez (SSHA); Elaine Denny (SSHA; Spring 2024), Greg Wright (SSHA; Spring 2024)
- Policy Subcommittee: UGC members Ryan Baxter (SNS) and Alejandro Gutierrez (SoE)

Ad-hoc subcommittees were formed for the reviews of nominations for the Undergraduate Distinguished Teaching Awards for Senate and for Non-Senate Faculty, and for the review of the AY 24-25 Catalog. The names of the Awards recipients are available here: https://senate.ucmerced.edu/Senate_Awards_23-24

UGC received regular updates on relevant systemwide activities from UC Merced faculty serving on the University Committee on Educational Policy (UCEP), the University Committee on International Education (UCIE), and the University Committee on Preparatory Education (UCOPE).

Another important function of the Undergraduate Council is to review and comment on all issues relevant to undergraduate education and occasionally on issues with a more general nature. Topics discussed and/or acted upon by the Council in consultation with other Senate committees, School leads, and/or the Administration throughout the year have included:

AY 24-25 Catalog and CRFs

- The SOE, SNS, SSHA, and GE substantive changes to the Catalog were approved by UGC in April 2024.
- UGC approved 198 courses (new and revised) in Curriculum.
- UGC approved 14 requests for revisions to course delivery for 36 courses.
- UGC approved 16 requests for an extension to the deadline to submit 53 course proposals.

Campus and Systemwide Review Items

UGC offered comments and/or acted on the following items:

- SNS Proposal for a Biology B.A. Degree Program (12/11)
- Proposed Bylaws for the Division of Undergraduate Education Executive Committee (2/2)
- Proposal for the Establishment of a Department of Medical Education (2/9)
- SoE Proposal for an Aerospace B.S. Degree Program (2/13)
- UC Regents Policy on Use of Administrative Websites (2/22)*
- SSHA Proposal for a Data Science and Policy Analysis Minor (3/20)
- SoE Proposal for a MIST B.A. Degree Program (4/3)
- SNS Proposal for a Biochemistry B.S. Degree Program (4/3)
- Report of the University of California Systemwide Advisory Work Group on Students with Disabilities (4/8)*
- SNS Proposal for an Ecology, Evolution, and Conservation Biology B.S. Degree Program (4/16)
- SSHA Proposal for a Science, Technology, and Ethics B.S. Degree Program (4/16)
- Proposed Academic Senate Statement on UC Quality (4/17)*
- UC Regents Policy on Public and Discretionary Statements by Academic Units (4/17)*
- Psychology Proposal for a B.S. Degree Program & Amendments to B.A. Degree Program (4/19)
- Proposal to Change the Name of the Materials Science & Engineering Department to Chemical & Materials Engineering (5/1).
- Five-Year Planning Perspectives 2024-2029 (5/6).
- SSHA Proposal for a Neuroscience Degree Program (5/14).
- SSHA Proposal for a Communication and Media B.A. Degree Program (5/15).

*Systemwide review items

Other:

- UGC endorsed former VPDUE Frey's proposal to delegate review and approval authority of "H" designated courses to the Honors/Division of Undergraduate Education Executive Committee (10/4).
- UGC endorsed former VPDUE Frey's proposal to authorize the Registrar's Office to make associated Catalog and degree audit updates to course prerequisites, major requirements, minor requirements, and GE requirements allowing for the "H" course to satisfy the same requirements as the underlying course (10/4).
- UGC proposed additional revisions to the UGC CRF Policy regarding modality definitions (10/10).
- UGC approved former VPDUE Frey's proposal to not academically dismiss students after their first semester, and consulted with the Committee on Rules and Elections (CRE) to ensure the change was in compliance with Senate Regulations (10/18).
- UGC reviewed former VPDUE Frey's proposal to delegate the review and adjudication of student petitions related to the Entry Level Writing Requirement (ELWR) to the Vice Provost and Dean of Undergraduate Education (VPDUE). UGC determined that the review and decision of ELWR student petitions should remain under the adjudication of UGC (10/31).
- UGC transmitted a memo to Department Chairs re: Deadline Extension for Requesting Summer 2024 Remote Instruction (10/31).
- UGC implemented the temporary practice of not academically dismissing students after their first semester until the Senate Regulations are formally revised in Spring 2024 (11/9).
- UGC approved a proposal for an exception to the Entry Level Writing Requirement (ELWR) for all first-year students who entered UC Merced in Fall 2023 and were unable to enroll in WRI 001 (2/8).
- UGC developed and transmitted to DivCo a policy regarding Conflict of Interest with Course Material Selection when the Instructor is the Author (2/29).
- UGC transmitted to DivCo proposed amendments to Senate Regulation I.2.B (Dropping a Course) and Senate Regulation I.1.E (Passed/Not Passed) in light of former VPDUE Frey's proposal to offer more opportunities to students struggling in their first year (3/15).

- UGC developed and transmitted to DivCo a policy for Online Instruction in Summer Session (3/20).
- UGC collaborated with the Registrar to update a chart to differentiate non-substantial versus substantial versus major revisions (4/2).
- UGC proposed amendments to Senate Regulation II.3.B. (Academic Dismissal) in light of former VPDUE Frey’s proposal to not academically dismiss students after their first semester (4/16).
- UGC offered additional comments on the proposal for a Data Science and Policy Analysis Minor in light of DivCo’s memo regarding their concerns related to the naming of the minor (5/15).
- UGC reviewed and approved the draft Academic Senate Handbook on University Extension (5/24).

Petitions

UGC reviewed 2 Entry Level Writing Requirement (ELWR) petitions and one American History & Institutions (AH&I) petition.

Guest Consultations

- On December 7, 2023, UGC was joined by Honors Director Holley Moyes to provide an update on the Honors/Undergraduate Division Executive Committee.
- On April 30, 2024, UGC was joined by University Extension Dean Annette Roberts Webb, University Extension Director Michael Pierick, and University Extension Associate Dean Fanis Tsoulouhas to discuss the review of Extension course proposals, specifically how they are similar/different from standard courses that UGC reviews.

Respectfully Submitted:

UGC Members (with thanks to the Senate Office for their indispensable support throughout the year):
 Heather Bortfeld, Chair, School of Social Sciences, Humanities and Arts, UCEP representative, UCOPE representative (Fall 2023)
 Christopher Viney, Chair, School of Engineering, UCEP representative (Spring 2024)
 Valerie Leppert, Vice-Chair, School of Engineering, PROC representative.
 Ryan Baxter, School of Natural Sciences
 François Blanchette, School of Natural Sciences (Fall 2023)
 Eileen Camfield, School of Social Sciences, Humanities and Arts
 Elaine Denny, School of Social Sciences, Humanities and Arts
 Alejandro Gutierrez, School of Engineering
 Bin Liu, School of Natural Sciences
 Felicia Lopez, School of Social Sciences, Humanities and Arts
 Alexander Petersen, School of Engineering
 Greg Wright, School of Social Sciences, Humanities and Arts, UCIE representative

Ex-Officio:

Sarah Frey, Vice Provost and Dean for Undergraduate Education (Fall 2023)
 Brian Utter, Interim Vice Provost and Dean for Undergraduate Education (Spring 2024)
 Charles Nies, Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs

Staff:

Melanie Snyder, Senate Senior Analyst