**Undergraduate Council Meeting Minutes**

**September 10, 2024**

Voting members present: Karin Nolan, Jennifer Schnellmann, Michael McKisson, Lisa Rezende, Allison Lee, Allyson Roof, Joost Van Haren, Christopher Sanderson, Amanda Sokan, Caleb Simmons, Marie Wallace, Jeremy Vetter, Melissa Goldsmith, Dereka Rushbrook, Moe Momayez, John Leafgren

Non-voting members present: Sharon Aiken-Wisniweski, Alex Underwood, Kian Alavy, Cassidy Bartlett, Bonnie Taylor, Melanie Madden, Bryanna Andrade.

1. **Liza Rezende called meeting to order at 3:30 pm.**
2. **Guiding Principles of UGC Membership – Lisa Rezende, Acting Chair**
	1. The Undergraduate Council is part of shared governance, providing recommendations on policies, practices, and curricula related to undergraduates. The Council has two subcommittees: one focused on programs and the other on policies. After review by the subcommittees, all recommendations are brought to the full Council for a vote. It is crucial for members to attend meetings and review materials in advance, as well as to engage with their units to gather feedback and avoid surprises during the voting process. Members are responsible for ensuring proper representation and maintaining quorum. If a member is unable to attend due to sabbatical or scheduling conflicts, they should arrange for a substitute and inform the curricular affairs office if any issues arise.
3. **Subcommittee selection ([Roles/Responsibilities](https://academicadmin.arizona.edu/sites/default/files/2024-09/Responsibilities-of-UGC-Membership-8-11-2023.doc)):**
	1. Academic Programs – Lisa Rezende. Chair The Academic Programs Subcommittee deals with the creation, deletion, suspension or modification of undergraduate academic majors, options, minors, degrees, certificates, and programs of study.
	2. Curriculum & Policies – Joost Van Haren, Chair The Curriculum/Policies Subcommittee deals with undergraduate curriculum and academic policies recorded in the UA General Catalog, including creation, revision, and deletion of academic policies pertinent to instruction, majors, options, minors, degrees, transfer credits, general education, academic progress, and requirements for graduation.
		1. If you wish to join one of these committees, contact Curricular Affairs and inform them of your committee preference.
4. **Reports:**
	1. **Academic Affairs Report – Greg Heileman, Vice Provost, Undergraduate Education**
		1. We have a student team from various colleges across the University working to bring back the Hack Arizona event, which used to take place on campus. This university-wide hackathon is scheduled for January 24th to 26th, likely the second weekend of the spring semester. The team includes students from diverse fields such as global studies, computer science, software engineering, and journalism, all collaborating to plan the event. As the semester progresses, our outreach efforts will ramp up. We'll be calling on faculty and staff to serve as mentors, judges, and possibly assist with event-day logistics. Additionally, there will be opportunities for faculty to run workshops or showcase their labs. More details will follow.
	2. **Arizona Online Report – Caleb Simmons, Executive Director for Online Education**
		1. As many of you know, we're in a transition period as we work on integrating UAGC into the university. We're continuing to move forward in serving students, and enrollment is projected to grow by about 6-7% year-over-year in the census if trends hold. Meanwhile, we're also following up on the third-party report from the spring to explore the development of a shared service center for all online initiatives. While this will help optimize operations in the long term, it may cause some short-term disruptions in workflows. Additionally, we're focusing on formalizing online policies. Rather than keeping them informal within Arizona Online, we plan to include them in the academic catalog, going through the usual approval processes, including UGC review. This will provide greater transparency and be beneficial for the entire campus.

Q: What is the timeline?

A: Regarding the policy timeline, we recently met with Provost Marx, who gave us the green light to begin socializing and workshopping our internal policies. The goal is to develop something more broadly applicable that can gain support. We're just entering this phase and will first meet with our partners at UCATT to discuss the development process. After that, we'll reach out to advisors to continue the work. The earliest you'll likely see anything enter the pipeline is in the spring, but given the tight timeline, it's uncertain if we’ll complete it this academic year. As for the UATC-related matters, with the new president coming in, it's hard to say for sure what direction we'll take. We're continuing to develop our plan and will present it, awaiting his guidance on how to move forward.

Q: Arizona Online does not go through UGC or UCAAC, do they have their own separate system?

A: We follow the standard university process for formal policies, often referred to as "policies with a big P." However, we have many internal guidelines that are not easily accessible, which creates challenges for our large campus community, especially those advising and interacting with students. For example, I recently learned that first-time, full-time students are capped at 11 units, but when I asked where this policy was documented, I was given a Word document. This approach is inefficient and raises questions about who created the policy and whether it's in the best interest of our students. It would be much better to have everyone review it and include it in the official catalog for transparency and consistency. This is one area where we can improve by working together rather than in isolation.

* 1. **Distance, Continuing Education Report – Bonnie Taylor, Director of Outreach and Business Affairs and Aviva Doery, Assistant Director, Administrative Support and Strategy**
		1. In distance education, we're preparing to celebrate our 500th graduate from the Integrated Health Nursing program in Gilbert, and our enrollment is looking strong, up about 20% compared to last fall. We've exceeded our enrollment projections for this year. On the community side, we're working to establish better infrastructure for the community campus and dual enrollment programs. Our goal for this academic year is to solidify processes in these areas, as it currently feels a bit unstructured, almost like the "Wild West."

Q: Can you explain the difference between distance and online?

A: Distance education includes our on-site locations across the state, with campuses in Yuma, Gilbert, Chandler, Nogales, and Douglas. These locations primarily offer face-to-face instruction, but we are exploring synchronous online options, which we plan to implement over the next year.

* 1. **Registrar’s Report – Alex Underwood, University Registrar**
		1. As of this morning, we have 55,390 students at the University of Arizona, including 42,891 undergraduate students. These numbers are part of the official census for the university. We're also looking ahead to Spring 2025 Resolution Week, where our course scheduling team works with academic departments to secure classrooms and resolve any unassigned spaces. This process wraps up this week, and the schedule of classes will go live for students on October 1, with priority registration beginning on November 4. Though we haven't yet reached the fall census, we're already excited for spring, as well as for summer and fall 2025. Open scheduling for these sessions begins later this month, starting on September 23 for departments. In other updates, a task force is working to merge the International Direct offering, often referred to as a "campus," with Arizona Online. I'd like to thank Caleb, Sharon, and others involved in this complex process. We're excited to continue supporting these students through Arizona Online going forward.
	2. **Advising Resource Center/ Advising Community Report – Sharon Aiken-Wisniewski, Assistant Vice Provost, Academic Advising**
		1. This fall, we welcomed over 9,301 first-time students and another 2,700 transfer students. Additionally, you can expect around 5% more students that advisors will engage with—those who may have decided that the University of Arizona is not the right fit for them at this time. Please extend your thanks to our advisors for their hard work; they continue to support students through orientation, scheduling, and the Destination Arizona program.

This year, we also created a postcard for new students, which was included in the Destination Arizona welcome boxes for all first-time and transfer students. I have a copy here to share, and I apologize to my colleagues online for not being able to provide one for you. I will ensure it is included in the meeting minutes. The postcard serves as a reminder that advisors are available to support students and offers tips on what topics they might discuss with their advisors.

The postcard initiative was inspired by a survey conducted through the National Academic Advising Association in the spring, where students indicated a need for more advisors and better response times, particularly in late October and November. We aim to encourage students to engage with their advisors earlier to ensure they receive the necessary support for the upcoming registration cycle.

Additionally, we have the "Meet Your Major Fair," where advisors from across campus will collaborate with departments to help students explore majors, minors, and certificates. This event will take place on Wednesday, September 25, in the Union ballroom from 1 to 4 PM. We would greatly appreciate anyone willing to display a poster about the event in their area.

The advising community has historically utilized a strategic advising dashboard, but it was underused for various reasons. To address this, we have refreshed and rebranded the dashboard, which will launch on October 2. We will provide a program to introduce this new tool to advisors and conduct sessions on how different advising positions can effectively use it. We aim to make it more user-friendly, and anyone interested is welcome to join us on the morning of October 2 for this session.

* 1. **University-wide General Education Committee Report – Jeremy Vetter, UWGEC Chair**
		1. It has been a busy couple of years reapproving all the courses for the new General Education curriculum. While things are starting to slow down a bit, we are still maintaining a heavy schedule with bi-weekly meetings lasting almost two hours, in addition to subgroup meetings in the intervening weeks to review proposals. So far, we have held two full committee meetings and one subgroup meeting, with another scheduled for tomorrow.

Each summer, many proposals come back from faculty who had time to work on them, leading to a significant backlog when we return in the fall. We are committed to addressing this backlog while also considering policy issues and revisions related to general education. These policies are typically reviewed before being presented to the Academic Policy Subcommittee and then to the full committee, followed by the Faculty Senate.

One major change we anticipate this semester is the addition of a civic learning attribute or American institutions requirement to the General Education program. Discussions have leaned toward a civic learning focus. This new attribute will be added to the four existing ones: writing, quantitative reasoning, diversity and equity, and world cultures and societies. The rollout of the Civic Learning attribute is planned to coincide with Fall 2026, which is when the implementation of all attributes as graduation requirements has been delayed.

We understand that this change has caused some discussion, particularly within the advising community. Feedback has indicated concerns about the complexity of enforcing these attributes as graduation requirements. We will engage in conversations about both this general issue and the specific wording of the new civic learning attribute.

In the past, we have held faculty forums and formed a task force that proposed learning outcomes for the civic learning requirement. An advisory group convened by the Office of General Education is also reviewing this matter. We are now ready to move forward with a proposal through the faculty shared governance process. I hope to present a version of this proposal for initial discussion at our next UJEC meeting on September 18. This will not be a voting session; rather, it will serve as a starting point for discussion. If all goes well, the earliest we might vote on it would be October 2, or possibly at the following meeting. Afterward, it will proceed through the Undergraduate Council, starting with the Curriculum Policy Subcommittee.

Additionally, we have a smaller proposal related to "success courses," which historically have been under the purview of the General Education Committee, even though they are not part of General Education. These courses, limited to three units, focus on career planning and study skills rather than traditional academic subjects. A subcommittee of UJEC volunteers has been examining this and will present a proposal to the full UJEC. Their recommendation is to keep the review process within UJEC, although there have been questions about whether this responsibility should be transferred to the Undergraduate Council or another body.

If there are any feelings within this group regarding whether the Undergraduate Council is ready to take on the approval of success courses, I would be happy to relay that feedback. Some committee members have questioned the necessity of this task, given that it does not fall under General Education, while others believe it's manageable.

I have been collaborating with Susan Miller Cochran to ensure these proposals are properly formatted for the approval process. We expect to have a small update on success courses this semester.

Lastly, I am aware of various plans for policy changes related to the three existing foundation areas in General Education. These include discussions on the mid-career writing assessment, streamlining the math foundations requirement, and convening a committee to address second language requirements. However, no fully formed policy proposals have yet reached the UWGEC agenda, so I cannot provide a timeline for those discussions.

* 1. **UGC Report: Accomplishments in AY 2023-2024 – Lisa Rezende, Acting Chair**
		1. I wanted to highlight our accomplishments from last year, which will also give some insight into the various subcommittees and the scope of our work. Last year, we had an extensive list of approvals. We approved five new majors, all of which successfully made it through the board process. In addition, we approved three new minors, six new certificates, and two new emphases. We also handled nine modifications or substantial changes to majors and their sub-emphases.

Alongside those approvals, we managed 13 program disestablishments and five name changes. This gives you a sense of the kind of work we handle in academic programs, ensuring that our curriculum remains robust and up to date.

* + 1. From the Curriculum and Policy Subcommittee, we approved six new policies last year. Additionally, there are three more new policies currently in progress. These policies reflect our ongoing commitment to refining and enhancing the academic structure to better serve students and faculty alike.
	1. **Subcommittees:**
		1. **Academic Programs Subcommittee report on August 20, 2024 – Lisa Rezende, Chair**
			1. Refer to item g.i.
		2. **Curriculum & Policies Subcommittee report on August 20, 2024 – Joost Van Haren, Chair**
			1. Refer to item g.ii.
1. **Minutes from the UGC Meeting on May 7, 2024 was approved via Qualtrics vote with 11 yea votes.**
2. **Consent Agenda Items – Lisa Rezende, Chair**
	1. **New Minor: [Insights into Healthy Aging](https://academicadmin.arizona.edu/sites/default/files/2024-09/Proposal_UG-Minor-Insights-Healthy-Aging_rev08-20.pdf) (Science)**
		1. This minor complements the Healthy Aging Certificate program, and now it can be completed either as a certificate or as a minor, with small differences in course requirements between the two. It passed unanimously through the Academic Programs Committee, placing it on the consent agenda.

*Comment*: This is more for group awareness. I recently discovered that one of my own electives was included in the minor proposal, and I wasn’t aware of it. I'm fully supportive, but I learned something new about the process. It appears a course use form was sent to the Dean of the College of Medicine, with a note that if no response is received within 10 days, approval is assumed. While I’m okay with it, neither my department nor I, as the instructor, were informed. I think it’s helpful to know if students from this minor will be in my course, but I didn’t know this was how the process works.

*Response*: Due to the increasing number of interdisciplinary program proposals, there were complaints about delays in getting approvals from various departments. The Vice Provost suggested this streamlined process: if no response is received within 10 days, approval is assumed, and emails are sent to the Dean or Associate Dean.

*Joost Van Haren motioned to approve*. Karin Nolan seconded. The vote carried unanimously.

1. **Items for Discussion:**
	1. **Opening Subcommittee proposal presentations of the meeting to Senators and Associate Deans/UCAAC members.**
		1. The Academic Program Subcommittee invites representatives from the department proposing a new major to present their proposal and take questions from the subcommittee. Previously, this process involved a more extensive tour, where the proposal would go to us, UC, and then wherever else it needed to be, such as the Senate, allowing everyone to review it. Our subcommittee already examined these proposals closely.
		2. There’s now a proposal to allow Senators, Associate Deans, and UC members to either attend these presentations when they occur in the Academic Subcommittee or to make those presentations available in some format. We wanted to open this for discussion with the entire committee to consider the pros and cons and how we might want to implement this approach. This applies to both program proposals and policies, including curriculum-related presentations, ensuring broader accessibility.
		3. For academic programs, it makes sense to record the presentations, including any initial Q&A with the presenters, and make those available. We could apply a similar approach in the Curriculum Policies Subcommittee, but I suggest doing it on a case-by-case basis. If the General Education Committee, for example, presents on a major issue, we could decide to record and make that available.
		4. However, for policies where there isn’t a formal presentation, we wouldn’t need to bother, as there wouldn’t be anything equivalent to record. My suggestion would be to allow the Curriculum Policies Subcommittee to decide on a case-by-case basis. If there’s a significant policy with a formal presentation, we could record it, following the practice used for academic program reviews.
		5. This is still open for further discussion at the Academic Program Subcommittee meeting.
2. **Meeting adjourned at 4:36pm**

*Respectfully prepared by Bryanna Andrade*