***Undergraduate Council Meeting Minutes***

***November 5th, 2024***

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

**Non-voting members present**: Sharon Aiken-Wisniewski, Aviva Doery, Alex Underwood, Cassidy Bartlett, Kian Alavy, Greg Heileman, Melanie Madden, Bryanna Andrade.

1. **Joost Van Haren called meeting to order at 3:32pm.**
2. **Approval of Minutes from the**[**UGC Meeting on October 8, 2024**](https://academicadmin.arizona.edu/sites/default/files/2024-10/UGC-October-2024-Minutes.docx)**- Joost van Haren, Acting Co-chair**
   1. Caleb Simmons motioned to approve. Melissa Goldsmith seconded. Vote carried unanimously.
3. **Reports:**
   1. **Academic Affairs Report – Greg Heileman, Vice Provost, Undergraduate Education**
      1. We've been working throughout the term to refine policies related to Gen Ed, focusing on clarifying and cleaning up various aspects. This includes a deep dive into the Gen Ed policies, primarily within the Foundations area, but also reviewing other policies that may impact our students. In the Math area, we're working to establish a clearer distinction between what falls under Foundations and what is part of the major, especially in our administration system. This will help reduce confusion. In the Writing area, we believe that the Mik Law may no longer be necessary, given the current assessment approach we use for Writing Across the Curriculum. For the second language requirement, we have formed a task force at the provost’s request to review this requirement in comparison to practices at other institutions. We hope to have a recommendation ready by the end of the term, which will be presented to this group and the provost. Additionally, Sharon is leading a project to identify "near completers"—students who are about 75% done with their degree and could potentially graduate this year. We’ve identified about 7,000 of these students and are working with the colleges to ensure they can finish their degrees. We’re committed to continuing this initiative and can share updates whenever Sharon is ready to proceed. We've also been collaborating with Associate Deans to track these students and help them complete their programs.

Q. Once you find those names, what do you do? And once it goes to a department, what is the responsibility?

A. One of the first things we’re focusing on is understanding what departments and colleges are doing to support near completers, as some colleges have their own funds or programs to help students finish their degrees. I’ve asked Rodney’s team to help identify any common themes across departments and colleges. For instance, in some colleges, missing courses may be in math, while in others, students may need different courses or credits. If we identify enough students in similar situations, we could explore the possibility of providing funding for summer courses to help them graduate on time. Our initial goal is to pinpoint these common challenges, which would allow us to create large-scale interventions. We want to get the names of near completers out to the colleges, and from there, pass them along to the departments. The departments know best what their students need, and that’s where we hope to see action. When I worked at the department level, I often didn’t know which of my students were 80% done, but there might be a course they needed that wasn’t offered until the following semester. Additionally, the Directors of Academic Advising, through the Academic Advising Council, have been engaged in this initiative all year. We’ve been reviewing data from Craig's team to identify any policy barriers that may hinder students from graduating. For example, we’ve discovered issues with the second language requirement: students can earn a D in a language class like 101, and proceed to 102, but if they get a D in 102, they still don’t meet the graduation requirement because a C is required. Similar issues exist in other areas, like math and writing, where a passing grade (D) doesn’t always meet graduation standards, even though the student has technically passed. Another issue we’ve been addressing is the UWGEC policy. We’ve been telling students that they’ve met their Gen Ed requirements, but we weren't honoring that commitment when it came to the second language requirement. We’re working to fix that inconsistency. In terms of next steps, we’re also mindful of the challenges that low-income students face. Sometimes they take on a job to address an immediate financial need, only to find they can't finish their internship or other requirements because they haven’t registered for the last few credits they need. Addressing these issues with targeted financial assistance could make a big difference in helping students graduate on time. Overall, we’re making good progress. I’ve worked on similar programs at other institutions, and we were able to see significant improvements in both four- and six-year graduation rates. This effort is ongoing, and I believe we’re headed in the right direction

* 1. **Arizona Online Report – Caleb Simmons, Executive Director for Online Education**
     1. We’ve received our latest census data for Arizona Online. I wanted to highlight a few key points. First, our retention rates showed a significant drop, which might seem alarming at first glance. We went from nearly 70% to 54%. However, it's important to keep in mind that this is based on a small cohort. Last year, the numbers were based on 60 students, while this year’s data is based on 79 students. So, even a small change in retention can cause a dramatic swing in these results.To get a clearer picture of our overall population, we need to consider the full context—this includes not just first-time students, but also transfers, as well as both full-time and part-time students. When we look at this broader group, the retention from fall to fall is similar, at 54%. However, when we look at spring to fall retention, the number is higher, at 67%. This is slightly ahead of the benchmark for peer institutions. While the overall retention rate may seem low in comparison to the rest of the institution, for online education, particularly with adult learners, this is pretty much in line with expectations. Of course, we want to improve, but we’re seeing progress.One of the reasons I bring this up is that we recently had a conversation with the provost about what we can do systematically to improve retention and student success in online education. We've determined that we need to create policies specifically tailored for the online modality. The provost has encouraged my office to work with UCAP and our instructional designers to develop these policies. We’re focused on undergraduate students and will go through the shared governance process to introduce these policies, aiming to improve outcomes for online students.Another interesting trend we’ve noticed is that students are taking more courses per session. While enrollment has grown by about 12% year-over-year, the actual number of students has only increased by 6%, which is still significant. However, what's even more notable is the increase in our Full-Time Equivalent (FTE) and Student Credit Hours (SCH) per student. This suggests that students are becoming more comfortable with online learning, and we’re seeing a shift toward more students taking on a traditional, full-time college experience—but in an online format.With that shift in mind, it's the right time for us to think strategically about policies that are inclusive of these learners, ensuring we continue to support their success.
  2. **Distance, Continuing Education Report – Bonnie Taylor, Director of Outreach and Business Affairs and Aviva Doery, Assistant Director, Administrative Support and Strategy**
     1. First, our Continuing and Professional Education offerings are expanding across our five distance locations. We’re starting with a PMP program in Chandler, located in Maricopa County. Next, community enrollment is on the rise, particularly in our dual enrollment programs. We currently have 641 students enrolled across six different programs. Most of these students—393—are in the Engineering 102 program, with another 130 students enrolled in Philosophy. Additionally, we’ve seen an increase in enrollment for our nursing programs, specifically the Bachelor’s and master’s in nursing (BSN and MSN) in Gilbert.
  3. **Registrar’s Report – Alex Underwood, University Registrar**
     1. We’re currently preparing for the spring, summer, and fall semesters. The summer and fall schedules are due from departments by December 1st, so if there are any room requests or other scheduling needs, please submit them by then for the best options. Speaking of rooms, we were fortunate to engage with an architectural firm to explore potential renovations for a couple of key spaces: Modern Languages 350 (the large lecture hall) and Capital 103 (the large lecture hall on the first floor of Capital). The firm has provided some initial ideas, and the Classroom Committee has given feedback. Next, they’ll give us cost estimates, which will help us determine if large lecture hall renovations are feasible in the near future. I’m excited to see the possibilities for improving these spaces. While we’ve done a great job creating collaborative learning environments across campus, there’s still a need for well-designed, accessible lecture halls. Abbie and I will also be attending the Pacific Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers (PACRAO) conference next week. It’s always a great event. This year, we’ll be doing a presentation on the policy work we’ve been doing here, particularly the collaborative efforts within this group. We’ll be sharing how we’ve created "side-by-sides" and marketing pieces, thanks to Cassidy's critical contributions. Our goal is to help other institutions explore similar best practices. I just want to thank everyone here for their openness to collaboration—your efforts are making a big impact.
  4. **Advising Resource Center/ Advising Community Report – Sharon Aiken-Wisniewski, Assistant Vice Provost, Academic Advising**
     1. This time of year, many of you contributed nominations for the Academic Advising Excellence Awards, recognizing individuals who have made significant contributions to academic advising. In September, we reviewed all the nominations, and I’m excited to announce this year's recipients. For **Primary Role Advisor**, the 2024 recipient is **Jasmine Acosta** from the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences. Jasmine does an outstanding job, and we’re thrilled for her to receive this recognition. The **Certificate of Merit** in this category goes to **Kristen** from the College of Social and Behavioral Sciences, Public Policy area. Both Jasmine and Kristen received glowing nominations, particularly from students and faculty. We also have a **New Advising Professional Award**, and the 2024 recipient is **Brian Pierce** from the College of Medicine, within Physiology. I met Brian through a parent who was so pleased with his advising that they reached out to me personally. Our **Certificate of Merit** in this category goes to **Matt Emery** from the College of Science—another exceptional advisor. The **Academic Advising Administrator Award**goes to **Alison Ewing Cooper**, Director of Academic Advising in the College of Social and Behavioral Sciences. Many of you know Alison, who has been a valuable presence on campus for years. These primary award recipients will now move on to the regional and national levels of the Academic Advising Awards, and we’ve had great success in recent years with our nominees advancing to win at both the regional and national levels. Please be sure to congratulate them for all their hard work and dedication to our students.
     2. A few other updates: The **Academic Advising Council**, which is made up of the directors of academic advising from all colleges on campus, wants to thank you for including us on several important committees this year. We’ve had the opportunity to contribute to the **Second Language Requirement Committee**, the **Civic Learning and Civic Engagement Committee**, and the **Math Placement and Orientation** committee. We truly appreciate these opportunities to provide input. Finally, the University of Arizona has been invited to participate in a **NACADA** initiative to define academic advising as a field. Currently, there is no formal definition, and NACADA has reached out to us to help shape this definition. We’re actively engaging in this important work.
  5. **University-wide General Education Committee Report – Jeremy Vetter, UWGEC Chair**
     1. UWGEC has continued to meet on its regular bi-weekly schedule. We hold full UWGEC meetings every two weeks, with subgroups meeting in the off weeks. As expected, we have a significant backlog of course proposals to review, especially since many faculty members work on their proposals over the summer. We handle the proposals in the order they are received by the General Education office, though this doesn’t always match the order of submission due to departmental or cross-listing delays. We aim to maintain fairness by adhering to the order in which they are officially received. In addition to reviewing course proposals, we've also been tackling a few policy issues, which I think are relevant to the Undergraduate Council. One such issue involves **success courses**. These are courses designed for career preparation or transitions into higher education or graduate school. They are separate from general education but were assigned to UWGEC for review in 2010, and this responsibility has remained with us since. While we don’t review many of these, they do occasionally come through, and recently, we've been discussing whether we should continue this responsibility. An ad-hoc task force within UWGEC has looked into whether we should still be reviewing success courses and if the criteria for these courses need updating. To my surprise, the task force recommended that we continue reviewing them. However, some committee members disagree. If there's interest from the Undergraduate Council (UGC), I could bring the proposal to the committee to consider taking over the review of these courses. Success courses are unique in that they are limited to 3 units toward graduation, which makes them different from general education courses, which typically count towards graduation without restriction. We’ve also considered adding more criteria to the success course definition, such as the use of library resources or information literacy. However, this raises complications, as we don’t want to unintentionally classify research methods courses as success courses. The other major issue we're tackling is **Civic Learning**, which is a key component of general education that was deferred during the Gen Ed refresh. We’re now at a point where we need to decide how to incorporate civic learning into the curriculum. We’ve been looking at several implementation models and have narrowed it down to four. An advisory group, which includes faculty and staff across campus, met in early October to review these models and gather input. Some additional hybrid models have emerged, combining different aspects of the four original models, such as integrating civic learning with major-specific courses or offering a menu of options. Given the ongoing discussions and differing opinions, we may need more time before a formal proposal is ready for UWGEC review. The timeline we had hoped for would have UWGEC voting on the proposal in mid-November, followed by the Curriculum and Policy Subcommittee and then the Undergraduate Council in early December. However, it’s important to prepare for possible delays, as proposals often undergo revisions and may not be ready to move forward as originally planned.
        1. [OGE November Report](https://emailarizona.sharepoint.com/:b:/s/WNC-AcademicAdministration-CurricularAffairs/EaQ2KCEwcppBpTTx__TYsOcBpJJ61CZnJIEvbF0MdhM97w?e=bsSpbI).
  6. **Subcommittees:**
     1. **Academic Programs Subcommittee report on October 22, 2024 – Lisa Rezende, Chair**
        1. Look to item IV.
     2. **Curriculum & Policies Subcommittee report on**[**October 22, 2024**](https://academicadmin.arizona.edu/sites/default/files/2024-11/CPS-Minutes-10-22-24.docx)**– Joost van Haren, Chair**
        1. Look to item V.
  7. **UGC Report - Joost van Haren – Acting Co-chair**
     1. I received an email from the Honors representative in ASUA, introducing herself and letting everyone know she’s the new Honors representative in student governance. I responded, letting her know that I’m currently in Honors and serving as the Interim Chair for the Undergraduate Council (Ugc). I also mentioned that students have been notably absent from our meetings. She was surprised to hear that, and it turns out that the students who were supposed to be attending our meetings have classes at the same time. Unfortunately, the ASUA committee didn’t take further action on this, but hopefully, they’ll resolve the scheduling conflict soon and appoint new student representatives. So, fingers crossed, we’ll have students back in our meetings soon. One question she raised, which I wanted to bring up here, was whether Honors could have dedicated representation on this committee. This got me thinking about whether we should have more student representation overall. My immediate concern is that if we include Honors, we may need to offer representation for every college, which could potentially expand this committee significantly. On the other hand, it’s in the interest of students to have a voice in decisions made through this process. So, the question is: should we consider increasing student representation in a way that ensures their perspectives are included? I just wanted to bring this up for thought. It might be worth discussing whether this is something we want to pursue or should consider down the road.

1. **Consent Agenda Items – Lisa Rezende, Chair**
   1. **New Major:**[**BA in Public Relations**](https://academicadmin.arizona.edu/sites/default/files/2024-10/Proposal_BA-in-Public-Relations.pdf)**(SBS)**
      1. This proposal is for an expansion of an existing minor that is already very popular. It’s a robust proposal, and while it does require additional resources, the department has a plan in place in case those resources aren’t available now. This was the primary concern raised during our committee discussion. Currently, the minor has about 300 students enrolled, so the expansion would address a clear and growing demand among students.
   2. **New Minor:**[**English Applied Linguistics**](https://academicadmin.arizona.edu/sites/default/files/2024-10/Proposal_Minor-in-EAL.pdf)**(SBS)**
      1. This minor combine English and linguistics courses. It’s a straightforward program with no new hires required, as it will use existing classes. There were few concerns raised, and the department has agreements in place with the other departments whose classes they will be utilizing.
   3. **New Certificate:**[**Signals Intelligence and Electronic Warfare**](https://academicadmin.arizona.edu/sites/default/files/2024-10/Proposal_Cert-in-SIEW.pdf)**(CAST)**
      1. They’ve received funding from the Army to develop the program, focusing on the defensive aspects of Signal Intelligence and Electronic Warfare. This program will offer non-classified training, accessible to both military personnel and civilians. Military branches will be able to conduct classified training separately, as needed. The program aims to address scenarios involving large-scale cyber threats, such as concerns about hacking during major events like the Super Bowl. They were able to answer all the questions we had about the initiative.
   4. **Modification:**[**BAS-IIO Emphasis**](https://academicadmin.arizona.edu/sites/default/files/2024-10/New-UGRD-Emphasis_Existing-Subplan_SIGINT.pdf)**(CAST)**
      1. This is a major modification to add a new emphasis to their degree program in Intelligence, Information, and Operations. The new emphasis will focus on Signals Intelligence and Electronic Warfare.

All items passed unanimously.

1. **Items for Discussion and/or vote:**
   1. **Curriculum & Policies Subcommittee – Joost van Haren, Chair**
      1. **Undergraduate Transfer Credit policies:**[**Proposal**](https://academicadmin.arizona.edu/sites/default/files/2024-10/Transfer-Credit-Policies-Amendment_2.docx)**and**[**Benchmarking**](https://academicadmin.arizona.edu/sites/default/files/2024-09/undergraduate-transfer-credit-benchmarking.docx)
         1. The discussion focuses on revising the undergraduate transfer credit policies, particularly around eliminating the 64-unit cap on transfer credits from community colleges and consolidating multiple policies into a unified framework. The goal is to allow more flexibility for transfer students, especially those coming from community colleges, by recognizing transfer credits without the previous restrictions. One area that remains unresolved is the second language requirement for general education, with ongoing discussions about its role in transfer credits. The policy changes also aim to clarify the distinction between "transferable" versus "applicable" credits and to include students pursuing second bachelor's degrees. While there are concerns about ensuring flexibility in transferring credits and maintaining academic integrity, the intent is to make the transfer process smoother and less restrictive. Furthermore, there is an effort to address the excess unit surcharge issue, which charges students more if they accumulate too many credits. Lastly, questions were raised about the calculation of GPAs for transfer students, particularly how community college credits are factored into the final degree requirements.
         2. While some members argue that the second language requirement should be considered fulfilled upon completing UWGEC, others, particularly from public health, emphasize the importance of second language proficiency for fostering collaboration, enhancing research, and promoting linguistic diversity. Additionally, there is concern that waiving the second language requirement could leave too much room for general electives in certain degree programs, potentially diluting the educational experience. A key issue is the challenge of aligning different transfer systems, such as how language requirements are handled in transfer credits, with the need for a comprehensive, unified policy that maintains academic rigor. The group proposes that the second language requirement might be better placed at the major level or made a degree requirement, ensuring that it aligns with program-specific learning goals. The policy is seen as a work in progress, with ongoing discussions to reconcile these concerns.

Caleb Simmons motioned to approve. Travis Spence seconded. Vote carried unanimously with 16 yeas.

* + 1. **Bachelor's Degree Requirements, Multiple Majors & Degrees policy and Major Declaration policy:**[**Proposal**](https://academicadmin.arizona.edu/sites/default/files/2024-10/BA-Degree-Candidacy-Related-Info-policy-amendment_0.docx)**and**[**Benchmarking**](https://academicadmin.arizona.edu/sites/default/files/2024-04/second%20bachelors%20degree%20benchmarking.docx)
       1. Will be discussed in next meeting.
  1. **Updates to Degree Search & Trellis - Meredith Aronson, Director, CRM and Digital Experience Services**
     1. Will be discussed in next meeting.

1. **Meeting adjourned at 5:08 pm.**

*Respectfully prepared by Bryanna Andrade.*