

Undergraduate Council Meeting Minutes

Date: March 3, 2026

Presiding: Joost van Haren (Chair)

Minutes Recorded by: Ryan Winet and Claude Al

Attending: Joost van Haren, Allyson Roof, Stephanie Capaldi, Esteban Hernandez Parra, Alex Underwood, Sharon Aiken-Wisniewski, Christopher Domin, Elizabeth Ghartey, John Leafgren, Ryan Winet, Michelle Halla, Dereka Rushbrook, Abbie Sorg, Caleb Simmons, Lauren Acosta, Jeremy Vetter, John Kramkowski, Melanie Madden, Claire McLane, Katy Prudic, Paul Wagner, Amanda Sokan, Christopher Sanderson, Eddy White, Kian Alavy, Greg Heileman, George Watts

Call to Order and Introductions

Chair Joost van Haren called the meeting to order. New members were introduced, including George Watts (Pharmacy), Katie Prudic (CALES), and Erin Riesgo (Office of the Registrar), who joins the committee in a capacity previously held by Cassidy Salazar.

Approval of February Meeting Minutes

The February meeting minutes were presented for approval. A motion to approve was made by Christopher and seconded. There were no concerns or objections raised. The minutes were confirmed as approved.

Standing Reports

Academic Affairs Report (Greg Heileman)

The Academic Affairs report covered several ongoing initiatives:

- **Strategic Imperatives and Academic Success Goals:** Action plans are being developed to realize the institution's newly published academic success goals. Several involve advising and direct student support.
- **Graduation Project (Year 2):** This initiative identifies students who are 75% or more complete toward degree requirements and works to ensure they graduate. This year's opportunity cohort comprises 327 students who have not yet applied to graduate. The university has achieved record 4- and 6-year graduation rates and aims to build on that momentum.
- **Transfer Student Success Services:** The newly established office has an advisor actively seeing prospective and newly admitted transfer students, primarily from Pima Community College. Director Shelly McGrath is retiring this week; the unit will move under Sharon Aiken-Wisniewski going forward.

- Second Language Task Force Update: UCAAC recommended that the Second Language Task Force be reconvened to work through sticking points in the proposed Second Language policy changes. Chantelle Warner and Devon Thomas Jones were in attendance to discuss the Second Language conversation later in the meeting.

Arizona Online Report (John Kramkowski)

The Arizona Online report highlighted two key updates:

- Program Onboarding Process: The onboarding cycle, which experienced delays from its usual October schedule, has concluded. A strategic shift has occurred: the process is now more selective, prioritizing programs with strong market demand, scalability, and long-term sustainability rather than simply approving investment requests. Of eight proposals received, one — the InfoSci MS — was approved for Arizona Online investment, and the Human Rights and Social Movements program was approved to move as a BA emphasis under Global Studies.
- Coursera / Non-Credit Initiative: Arizona Online has launched a partnership with Eller College to build MOOC-format courses on Coursera as a lead generation pipeline into degree programs. Courses are designed so that upon completing a “specialization,” learners become eligible for credit-by-exam if they matriculate. A webinar showcasing the strategy will be offered to department heads and above. InfoSci is next in line to participate after Eller’s initial courses launch.

Office of the Registrar Report (Alex Underwood)

Two items were reported:

- Syllabus Policy Referral: The Faculty Senate approved several policies previously passed by UGC. However, UCAAC requested that the Council reconsider the syllabus deadline provision, proposing that syllabi be required by the first day of the specific class (not the semester). Discussion on this item was deferred to the main agenda.
- Schedule of Classes Launch: The Summer and Fall schedule went live March 1. Approximately 55,000 student notification emails were sent, resulting in over 23,500 classes saved to student shopping carts. This tool is designed to help students plan their enrollment before their April registration appointments open.

Academic Advising Report (Sharon Aiken-Wisniewski)

Sharon presented an overview of the forthcoming Milestone Academic Advising Program, which has been reviewed and approved by the Provost for implementation beginning Fall 2026. Key components include:

- An advising syllabus distributed to all first-time incoming students over the summer, outlining expectations and campus navigation resources.
- A required one-on-one advising appointment with a primary major advisor during the first semester, targeting approximately 7,100 main-campus first-time freshmen in Fall 2026.
- Participation in at least one group advising experience per semester (e.g., student success courses, UNIV 101, registration labs).

- A second required one-on-one appointment in Year 2, when students are expected to be settled in their major and preparing a multi-year plan.

The program is designed to front-load advising engagement so that juniors and seniors shift naturally toward deeper faculty mentorship. Participation incentives are being coordinated across offices, including potential early registration access and UNIV 101 credit. Sharon noted current advising contact rates range from 25% to 95% across units, underscoring the need for a structured program. She offered to return with a more detailed presentation at a future meeting.

University-Wide General Education Committee (UGWEC) Report (Jeremy Vetter)

Jeremy provided the Gen Ed Committee report (linked on the agenda for the January and March Faculty Senate cycles):

- **Course Approvals:** The committee has continued reviewing and approving gen ed courses throughout the spring, with no significant slowdown despite the volume of Civic Institutions submissions.
- **Civic Implementation Progress:** Seven courses for the new Civic Institutions required category have been approved. Three more are on the agenda for the following meeting, and four more had just been submitted. The committee anticipates reviewing approximately 14–20 proposals in the near term. A March 1 deadline was set for Spring 2027 course proposals.
- **Parallel Review Process:** A UAccess IT update has slowed routing of proposals through Curricular Affairs. The committee has worked around this by reviewing in parallel, and proposers were encouraged to notify the Office of General Education directly upon submission to expedite the process.
- **Rollout Timeline:** Civic Institutions courses are being soft-launched in Fall 2026; a fuller menu is expected for Spring 2027. Advisors with questions about Civic Institutions were directed to Sharon Aiken-Wisniewski for consistent messaging.

In response to a question from Katy Prudic about advising guidance for the Civics requirement, Sharon noted that two advising workshops had already addressed this, and follow-up questions should be directed to Sharon.

Subcommittee Reports

Academic Program Subcommittee (APS)

The APS report covered four new items, one item of old business, and two program disestablishments:

- **BS in Public Health with AI Emphasis (Modification):** Discussion focused on ensuring the curriculum meaningfully requires engagement with AI-focused content. The program has since added two core course options addressing this concern and is moving to the consent agenda.
- **BS in Neuroscience and Cognitive Science Modification:** Developmental Aging and Philosophy of Mind Emphases will be disestablished. The remaining emphases, including a General emphasis, will continue. This will be a notification-only item as a disestablishment.

- BIS and BA in Interdisciplinary Studies — Black and Integrative Studies Emphasis (New): Two new emphasis options — a BA with a language requirement (currently ~25 students) and a BIS— are moving to the consent agenda.
- BA in Global Studies (Substantial Change — Returning Item): Previously tabled due to concerns about courses being removed from the emphasis, this item returns with three previously dropped course titles reinstated. The subcommittee discussed the broader challenge of interdisciplinary programs drawing courses across college boundaries. The item is now moving to the consent agenda.

Recurring subcommittee themes included the lack of core introductory courses in some new emphases, questions about the role of advising in interdisciplinary majors, ethical dimensions in curricula, and the wide variation in capstone structures (ranging from 1 to 9 credit hours).

Two program disestablishments were also reviewed. No unresolved concerns were identified.

Curriculum and Policy Subcommittee

The most recent subcommittee meeting focused on accelerated master's programs (4+1 programs). Three existing policies reference these programs and contain conflicting language. The Registrar's Office is working to clarify and harmonize the language with input from the Graduate College.

A key point of disagreement is whether seniors may enroll in 600-level graduate courses. The Graduate College has suggested they should not; some policies currently allow it. The subcommittee had mixed feedback, and the matter is returning to the Graduate College. Council members in units with accelerated master's programs were invited to submit input to the subcommittee. The second language policy was also discussed in the subcommittee; that discussion is captured separately below.

Chair's Report (Joost van Haren)

Joost noted that Faculty Senate had approved the course substitutions policy, which now routes through the Office of General Education, and the posthumous degree and certificate policy, both without significant debate. He also noted that a presentation on Sexual Violence and Assault prevention from the College of Nursing (originally delivered at Faculty Senate) will be brought to UGC at the next meeting. Members with concerns about building safety or facilities were encouraged to bring those forward for relay to Faculty Senate.

Consent Agenda

Four items were presented on the consent agenda. A motion to approve was made and seconded. As motioned and seconded, the consent agenda was approved.

- Modification to the BS in Public Health — AI Emphasis
- New Emphasis — BIS in Interdisciplinary Studies: Black and Integrative Studies
- New Emphases — BA and BIS in Interdisciplinary Studies: Black and Integrative Studies
- Substantial Change — BA in Global Studies (returning item with course reinstatements)

Discussion and Action Items

Syllabus Posting Deadline — Policy Revision Vote

UGC reviewed the syllabus policy update previously approved in a prior meeting. The policy as voted on had required syllabi to be posted to Brightspace either by the first day of class or within two days of the course drop/refund deadline. UCAAC requested UGC reconsider and tighten this to the first day of the class.

The discussion brought up several considerations: the flexibility some instructors desire to co-construct syllabi with students; the student need to review syllabi before the drop deadline; complications for Monday-only classes that may not meet until the drop deadline in spring semesters due to MLK Day; and the unique circumstances of 7-week online courses with 3-day drop windows. Participants generally agreed the cleanest standard is “the first day of the class” (meaning the first scheduled meeting of the specific class section), with the understanding that a draft syllabus satisfies the requirement and content may be updated thereafter in accordance with the existing “subject to change” policy language.

A concern was also raised about Brightspace’s dual upload locations (the student-facing content area versus the syllabus repository not visible to students). The Registrar’s Office confirmed that the intent is for syllabi to appear in the student-accessible content area, and that implementation guidance will be communicated clearly upon policy adoption. A suggestion was made to advocate for a dedicated syllabus tab in Brightspace’s standardized navigation bar.

A motion was made and seconded to amend the syllabus policy deadline to require posting by the first day of the class. The motion passed unanimously (17–0, no abstentions).

Second Language Policy — Task Force Recommendations Vote

Chantelle Warner and Devon Thomas Jones, representing the Second Language Task Force and the Office of General Education respectively, presented a summary of the Task Force’s recommendations. The proposed policy changes include:

- A General Education foundation second language requirement at the second-semester competency level (similar to the current non-BA requirement), applicable to all students including those entering with transfer packages (AGEC, etc.).
- Expanded pathways for satisfying the requirement, including study abroad, multilingual learning experiences, proficiency exams, AP/IB/CLEP exams, etc.
- A Bachelor of Arts second language degree requirement at the fourth-semester competency level, shifting from a gen ed requirement to a degree requirement to close the AGEC transfer loophole.
- A new option allowing students to complete two years of language study across two different languages (rather than four semesters of the same language).

A primary sticking point, as identified by the Curriculum and Policy Subcommittee (which unanimously voted down the proposal) and echoed in UWGEC discussion, is the provision that would allow high school coursework to satisfy the requirement without a proficiency exam. Members raised concerns about the wide variability in high school language instruction

standards and the risk of students arriving at university with transcript credit but limited demonstrated competency.

Jeremy suggested that UGC communicate its endorsement of all provisions except the high school seat-time clause so the Task Force could focus its work. After procedural discussion, Greg (the sponsor) clarified that the Council must vote on the proposal as submitted. A motion to approve the Second Language Task Force recommendation as presented was made and seconded.

The motion failed. The vote was 0 in favor, 17 opposed, with no abstentions. The proposal is not approved as submitted. The Task Force will reconvene to address the outstanding sticking points, supported by documentation from the subcommittee's deliberations. Greg noted that Provost and Dean-level involvement will likely be needed to resolve the remaining issues. Meeting minutes from this session will be forwarded to the Task Force.

Adjournment

With no further business, Joost adjourned the meeting.

Minutes recorded from meeting transcript • UGC, March 3, 2026