

## **Undergraduate Council Minutes**

**Date:** March 31, 2026

**Presiding:** Joost van Haren, UGC Chair

**Minutes compiled by:** Ryan Winet and Claude Al

**Attending:** Joost van Haren, Allyson Roof, Esteban Hernandez Parra, Alex Underwood, Sharon Aiken-Wisniewski, Christopher Domin, Elizabeth Gharthey, John Leafgren, Ryan Winet, Michelle Halla, Dereka Rushbrook, Abbie Sorg, Lauren Acosta, Jeremy Vetter, John Kramkowski, Melanie Madden, Katy Prudic, Amanda Sokan, Christopher Sanderson, Kian Alavy, Greg Heileman, George Watts, Erin Riesgo, Justine Schluntz

### **Call to Order and Introductions**

Joost called the meeting to order after confirming quorum with Melanie. The meeting opened with brief technical difficulties related to the hybrid audio/video system, including audio source switching and camera connectivity issues, which were resolved prior to formal proceedings.

Joost noted that the agenda had not been received by some members, possibly due to a listserv delivery issue. The agenda link was shared via the meeting chat for participants to access on their phones or computers. Joost announced that one scheduled presenter had cancelled, which would allow for a slightly shorter agenda.

### **Approval of Previous Meeting Minutes**

Joost asked whether members had been able to review the previous meeting minutes. Several members indicated they had not received the email with the minutes, attributing this to the listserv issue. The link to the minutes was shared via the chat.

After allowing time for review, Joost asked for any concerns, comments, or questions. None were raised.

Motion: Esteban moved to approve the meeting minutes.

Second: Elizabeth seconded the motion.

Vote: Approved by unanimous consent.

## **Reports**

### **UGC Roster and Membership Update**

Kian presented this item on behalf of Greg, who was unable to attend. He opened by thanking all committee members for their service and provided the following update on the annual membership review:

- 13 members are in seats that are continuing; they will receive letters confirming where they are in their term cycle.
- 10 seats need to be either filled or renewed due to expiring terms. The majority are one-year appointments made by Faculty Senate or ASUA.
- A smaller group of three-year appointments are also expiring. Members in those seats who are interested in continuing should notify the committee; the renewal process follows the bylaws, routing through the dean or associate dean of their respective college or area.
- The committee will be in touch individually with members in expiring seats. Members who want information sooner may follow up with UGC staff.

### **Upcoming Curricular Calendar**

Kian also relayed a message from Greg regarding the upcoming curricular approval deadlines relevant to Spring 2027 program changes:

- April 30, 2026: Deadline for finalizing all curricular items going forward for Spring 2027.
- May 28, 2026: Subcommittee meeting in advance of ABOR.
- June 11–12, 2026: Upcoming ABOR (Arizona Board of Regents) meeting.

Members with outstanding curricular items were reminded to tie up any loose ends prior to the April 30 deadline.

### **Arizona Online / Online Initiatives Update**

In the absence of Caleb, John K. provided the following update regarding recent strategic shifts in online education at the University of Arizona:

- President Garimella issued an email on the prior Friday announcing a strategic shift in online initiatives.
- Frank Dooley has been appointed as Interim Senior Vice Provost of Online Initiatives to guide strategic and operational changes. Day-to-day operations continue under Caleb Simmons.
- AZO's strategic mandate remains focused on flagship programs from main campus, with a possible expansion of scope under consideration.

- The university is moving toward a unified service center model. Marketing communications (Marcom) operations have already been merged into the university's main system; other operations are under evaluation.
- Frank Dooley's appointment is anticipated to continue through September 2026, during which time a search for a permanent Senior Vice Provost of Online Initiatives will be conducted.
- The representative acknowledged there is significant uncertainty pending announcements, and noted that the existing portfolio will almost certainly experience some shrinking.

Joost thanked the presenter and noted questions would be addressed as more information becomes available.

### **Registrar Report**

Alex, representing the University Registrar, provided the following update:

- Enrollment for Summer and Fall 2026 opens Monday, April 1, 2026. Approximately 70,000 emails were sent the previous day to continuing students alerting them to their enrollment appointments, differentiated by academic level and whether they have holds.
- Summer registration opens simultaneously for all students. Fall registration is staggered by student type and status over a two-week period.
- The university currently has approximately 50,000 students registered; a similar number is anticipated for fall, though fall enrollment is typically larger.
- The emails targeted continuing students only. New incoming students are being matriculated and beginning their orientation and registration process separately.
- The university is planning for an incoming fall class of approximately the same size as Fall 2025, with strong engagement reported at admitted student days and similar events. Leadership will provide more specific details once confirmed.

During discussion, Joost asked about the yield from the email campaign. Alex clarified that outreach to new students is handled through the matriculation and orientation process, which is separate from the continuing student enrollment campaign.

### **Academic Advising Report**

Sharon provided the following updates:

- She expressed appreciation for advisors campus-wide who are supporting students in preparing for Summer and Fall 2026 registration, as well as assisting students in completing degree requirements in time for commencement.
- The University of Arizona Academic Advising Conference is scheduled for May 19–20, 2026. Proposals for conference presentations have closed, with 21 proposals

received from across campus. Sharon expressed enthusiasm about the quality and breadth of the program.

- A new advising initiative called Milestone Advising will launch in Fall 2026 for incoming students on main campus. The program creates structured touchpoints for students to engage with their academic advisor during their first two years. The Milestone Advising Task Force is currently meeting to work through implementation details.

In response to a follow-up question from Joost, Sharon confirmed that Milestone Advising will launch with the Fall 2026 incoming class, with outreach to advisors and departments forthcoming to ensure campus-wide alignment.

### **University-wide General Education Committee (UWGEC) Report**

Jeremy presented a draft version of UWGEC's April report to Faculty Senate, which was included in the agenda materials. He noted that the committee is meeting before Faculty Senate this cycle, rather than after, so the report is a near-complete draft rather than a final version.

Key updates from UWGEC:

- Despite the added workload of the Civic Institutions course rollout, the committee has been able to review courses in other Gen Ed areas without significant delays. Some agenda congestion is anticipated in the final three meetings of the semester, and a small number of items may roll over to fall.
- Civic Institutions Proposals: 14 total proposals were submitted by the March 1, 2026 target deadline for Spring 2027 course offerings. A small number of courses were fast-tracked for Fall 2026 to serve transfer students and others who need the requirement immediately.
- Additional proposals are expected but may not be available until Fall 2027 due to curricular approval timelines.
- Two new Gen Ed Attributes are being implemented: (1) Civic Exploration — a depth attribute requiring courses to address one of seven ABOR areas associated with American Institutions; and (2) Understand and Value Difference. Expedited processes are being developed to allow previously approved Gen Ed courses to add these attributes.
- A special Civic Exploration attribute window opened in December 2025 but had a very tight submission period. A new window has been opened through July 1, 2026 to allow more Gen Ed courses to add this attribute using a simplified proposal form. Faculty with existing Gen Ed courses touching civic themes are encouraged to apply.

## Subcommittee Reports

### Academic Programs Subcommittee

Christopher presented on behalf of the Academic Programs Subcommittee and noted Joost's service as acting chair during his absence. The subcommittee reviewed two main items and five disestablishments at its last meeting.

Items reviewed and acted upon:

- New Emphasis: BA in Design Arts and Practice — Medical Illustration and 3D Animation
- New Minor: Minor in Applied Design for Health and Public Health
- Five Program Disestablishments (continuation of the ongoing consolidation trend)

Discussion during the subcommittee focused significantly on artificial intelligence, ethics in AI, and how AI is impacting design and internet-related disciplines. The presentations were well-received, with thorough responses to all committee questions. Notably:

- The American Medical Illustrators accreditation question arose regarding the Medical Illustration program; program representatives confirmed this is already being considered.
- The presentation on Applied Design for Health was described as particularly thorough in contextualizing the program's importance and need.
- Members noted the title "Applied Design for Health" was vetted with a student focus group; students expressed a preference for the title.

Regarding the volume of disestablishments, committee members and Joost discussed that these reflect two primary dynamics:

- School of Global Studies Consolidation: A 2024 dean's initiative merged eight programs and centers — including Judaic Studies, Mid-Eastern and North African Studies, Near Eastern Studies, Southwest Center, Gender and Women's Studies, and Human Rights — into the new School of Global Studies. These programs continue to exist in some form within the new school, but older program designations are being disestablished as the curriculum is consolidated.
- ABOR Viability Requirements: ABOR guidance requires undergraduate programs to produce a minimum of 24 graduates over any three-year period to be considered minimally viable. Programs that were not consistently meeting this threshold are being consolidated under umbrella programs.

The committee acknowledged that while the topic of disestablishment can be sensitive, the underlying disciplines are generally not being eliminated, but reorganized under new structures.

## **Curriculum and Policy Subcommittee**

Ally presented on behalf of the Curriculum and Policy Subcommittee. The subcommittee is currently in a discussion and deliberation phase rather than a final voting phase, working on two policy topics:

- **Accelerated Master's Programs (4+1 Programs):** The subcommittee is reviewing policy around whether undergraduate students in their final year of a 4+1 program should be permitted to take 600-level courses or only 500-level courses. A representative from the Graduate College participated in the most recent subcommittee meeting, and discussions are ongoing. A policy proposal is anticipated for review and vote in coming weeks.
- **Transfer Credit Policy:** The existing transfer credit policy requires updating to reflect the changes made to the Gen Ed curriculum, including the addition of Civic Institutions and other new requirements. The revised policy is under final review by Greg and the Office of General Education and is expected to come forward to the subcommittee soon.

## **Chair's Report**

Joost provided the following updates on behalf of the full UGC:

- **Faculty Senate** has not yet met for April; the next meeting is the following week. Therefore, there is no Faculty Senate update to report at this time.
- **Consent Agenda for Next Meeting:** An item has been prepared for the consent agenda of the next UGC meeting — the Undergraduate Minor in Sustainable Business Consumption. No issues are anticipated with this item.
- **Member Service Letters:** Ryan confirmed that letters acknowledging member service and informing members of their term status will be going out to committee members in the coming weeks.

**Announcement — Chair Transition:** Joost announced that he has submitted a letter to Leila Hudson and Greg Heilman indicating that he will not be continuing as UGC Chair. He will chair one more meeting following this one, after which a new chair will be identified.

## **Consent Agenda**

Joost presented two consent agenda items that were unanimously recommended by the Academic Program Subcommittee. He noted that under consent agenda procedures there is no individual vote on each item, but a motion and second are required to approve the package.

Consent agenda items:

- BA in Design Arts and Practices — Medical Illustration and 3D Animation (New Emphasis)
- Minor in Applied Design for Health and Public Health (New Minor)

Joost opened the floor for any additions or comments. None were raised. He noted that these proposals were unanimously supported at the subcommittee level, with thorough presentations and rapid responses to any concerns raised.

A brief discussion ensued regarding the use of the word “design” in both program names, which touched on the broader question of curricular alignment and which colleges teach what disciplines. The committee acknowledged this as a recurring consideration at the university level.

**Motion:** A committee member moved to approve both consent agenda items.

**Second:** Katie seconded the motion.

**Vote:** Both items approved by unanimous consent.

### **Discussion Items**

#### **UNIV Advisory Group: Update on UNIV 101 and 301 Course Redesign**

Devon Thomas Jones, Interim Director of the Office of General Education, presented on behalf of the UNIV Advisory Group, a body co-chaired by Kian and Cindy Rankin, with members including Jeremy, Sharon, and representatives from across campus. The group was charged by the Provost to respond to feedback about the two bookend General Education courses: UNIV 101 (Introduction to General Education) and UNIV 301 (General Education Portfolio course).

#### **Background and Process:**

- The University is now in its fourth year of the General Education “Refresh,” making this a timely moment to evaluate what is working and identify areas for improvement.
- Feedback was gathered from hundreds of stakeholders, including a student survey of over 850 students, annual course surveys, focus groups, and faculty and staff interviews.
- The overall finding was that the scope and learning goals of the courses are largely being achieved; however, student satisfaction is a significant area for improvement, and stronger satisfaction and stronger learning are mutually reinforcing.
- A final report was compiled and presented to the Provost, whose feedback has informed the recommendations.

#### **Key Recommendations:**

- **Recentering the Course:** The primary shift is moving from centering General Education and asking students to apply it to their lives, to centering students and asking them to apply themselves and their learning to General Education. Students will be guided to develop a personal document that identifies their goals, interests, and how various undergraduate experiences (research, major/minor, Gen Ed, career) intersect.

- Reducing Assignment Load: Reflection assignments in UNIV 101 have already been reduced from 9 to 5. Out-of-class assignments have been reduced, with some activities moved in-class to promote peer-to-peer engagement.
- ePortfolio Platform: Dissatisfaction with the current ePortfolio platform was widespread across all stakeholder groups. An RFP is being developed to explore alternative campus-wide ePortfolio platforms.
- Instructor Support and Consistency: Due to the scale of the course (approximately 12,000–13,000 students per year, taught by around 160 instructors), ensuring consistent student experiences is challenging. Intentional partnership with UCATT (University Center for Assessment, Teaching and Technology) is being pursued to improve instructor preparation and confidence.
- Implementation Committee: A new implementation committee comprised of faculty from colleges and staff from support units will be established to inform curricular revisions and strengthen connections between UNIV courses and college-level advising and opportunities.

#### Current Spring 2026 Implementations:

- Reflection assignment count reduced from 9 to 5.
- Piloting field trips and in-class activities to connect students to campus resources (libraries, think tank, advising, etc.).
- A new extra credit option has been piloted: students can earn credit by visiting the Think Tank to meet with an academic coach.
- Work is underway with Sharon's team to create an additional incentive for students to meet with their academic advisor.

#### Fall 2026 Goals:

- Full launch of a redesigned UNIV 101 with new course materials and revised curriculum.
- Continued development of the ePortfolio RFP.
- Embedded peer mentoring pilot: Exploration of a peer mentoring model, potentially drawing from students who have completed UNIV 101 and/or 301, to provide specific support on ePortfolio creation and academic planning.

#### Fall 2027 Goals:

- Launch of the redesigned UNIV 301 course, informed by assessment data from Fall 2026.
- Full rollout of an embedded peer mentoring program.

#### During discussion, committee members raised the following questions:

- Who takes UNIV 101? The course is required for all first-year students admitted to main campus and Arizona Online. UNIV 301 is taken once students have completed most of their Gen Ed requirements.
- How does the course handle students at different levels of self-direction? Instructors noted that class sizes of 25 allow for meaningful individual engagement. Instructors are being equipped to ask deeper questions and to connect students

with the right campus resources (advisors, Think Tank, etc.) rather than simply answering the questions themselves.

- What is the peer mentoring model? Peer mentors would ideally be students who have already taken UNIV 101 and/or 301, embedded to support ePortfolio creation and academic planning conversations.
- Student perspective on discussions in UNIV 301: The student representative shared that while discussions are a frequent topic of student complaints, they can also be one of the most valuable elements of the course. The committee discussed how discussion-to-ePortfolio workflows are being refined to reduce redundancy and improve purpose.

Cindy Rankin, who was unable to attend, asked Devin to convey a request: as the courses are revised and improved, faculty, staff, and administrators are encouraged to serve as cheerleaders for UNIV 101 and 301, helping build campus enthusiasm for these courses as a core part of the Wildcat first-year experience. Faculty and instructors interested in teaching with the UNIV program in fall were encouraged to apply.

### **University Libraries Course Materials Presentation**

Cheryl Casey (Open Education Librarian) and Cheryl Gherkin (Course Content Initiatives Management) presented on behalf of the University of Arizona Libraries. The presentation covered the full range of library resources available for course materials, with a focus on reducing student costs and streamlining the adoption process.

Free-to-Use Course Materials Available Through the Libraries:

- Open Educational Resources (OER): Customizable, freely adoptable, adaptable, and shareable materials with no restrictions on printing, downloading, or sharing. The U of A offers the Pressbooks publishing platform; *Wildcat Perspectives* and *Wildcat Reflections* (used in UNIV 101 and 301) are among the most popular titles.
- Library-Licensed eBooks: Unlimited-user license eBooks are available for approximately 20% of submitted adoptions (due to publisher restrictions). Faculty were cautioned to avoid assigning eBooks with limited licenses (1-user or 3-user), which create access problems for students.
- Streaming Video Databases: Dozens of streaming databases are available for course use; streaming requests must be submitted each semester as licenses are term-specific.
- Journal Articles and Book Chapters: The library can typically supply 1–2 book chapters for a course, reducing the need for students to purchase entire textbooks.
- Special Collections: A large range of digital and physical primary sources are available for course use.
- Library AI Search Tool: An AI tool within Library Search is available for students, returning only library-licensed resources. However, it currently excludes Elsevier, JSTOR, and news sources, so it should be used as a starting point rather than a comprehensive research tool.

- Libby by Overdrive: The library provides access to over 6,000 magazines in approximately 20 languages through Libby, allowing specific issue assignment. Audiobooks are also available and popular.
- Technology Lending: Computers, Wi-Fi hotspots, cables, cameras, and other equipment are available for student loan. Specific software is also available on library computers; faculty should check the library software site before asking students to purchase software independently.

#### Pay One Price and Inclusive Access:

- Pay One Price applies to all main campus undergraduate courses; Inclusive Access applies to graduate and Arizona Online courses.
- The cost of Pay One Price is increasing from \$262 to \$275 per semester in Fall 2026, driven by increased adoptions and vendor courseware additions.
- When faculty adopt free-to-use materials (OER, library eBooks), it lowers the overall cost of Pay One Price for all students. Currently, free-to-use materials make up approximately 30% of the program.
- Faculty were warned that vendors sometimes falsely claim that adding their courseware to Pay One Price is free — any additional materials increase the program cost.

#### Course Adoption Process:

- Faculty are strongly encouraged to submit textbook adoptions to the campus store at least three weeks before classes begin. Late adoptions create challenges for the campus store and may prevent materials from being included in VitalSource/Brightspace.
- Even if using a library eBook, faculty should still submit an adoption to the campus store so that the library can verify the license type (unlimited vs. limited) and ensure it appears in the Pay One Price/Inclusive Access module.
- Streaming video requests must be submitted separately and renewed each semester.
- Some departments have a textbook coordinator who helps ensure adoptions are submitted; this model was recommended as a best practice.

#### Library Liaison Model Update:

- The Libraries have shifted from individual subject liaisons to a cohort model. There are now three cohorts: STEM, Humanities and Fine Arts, and Social Sciences. Faculty and departments can book consultations with the appropriate cohort team.

#### Upcoming Technology Changes:

- D2L Brightspace is upgrading to a new version; Fall 2026 will be the mandatory transition date for all users. The interface will look and function similarly to the current version.
- The interlibrary loan system has transitioned from Iliad to Rapido, which is integrated with the library search system.

#### Key Takeaways for Faculty:

- Adopt all course materials — even those sourced from the library — through the campus store adoption process.
- Reach out to the library proactively to request OER searches, check eBook availability, or explore alternatives to expensive textbooks.
- The library has created a one-stop-shop course materials page (developed in partnership with UCAT and the campus store) to guide faculty through the adoption process step by step.
- Faculty were encouraged to share library resource information with students at the start of each semester.

### **Adjournment**

There being no further business, Joost adjourned the meeting at approximately 5PM AZ time. The committee thanked all presenters for their time and contributions.