

## **Undergraduate Council Minutes**

**Date:** April 28, 2026

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

**Minutes compiled by:** Ryan Winet and Google Gemini

**Attending:** Chris Sanderson; Abbie Sorg; Erin Riesgo; Michelle Halla; Joost van Haren; John Leafgren; George Watts; Ally Roof; Dereka Rushbrook; Alex Underwood; Katy Prudic; Melanie Madden; Esteban Hernandez Parra; Sharon Aiken-Wisniewski; Greg Heileman; John Kramkowski; Caleb Simmons; Eddy White; Stephanie Capaldi; Elizabeth Gharthey;

Joost called the meeting to order.

### **Approval of Minutes and Agenda**

The Chair confirmed that the agenda had been circulated via the listserv, though some members reported delays in receiving it. A link to the digital agenda was shared in the meeting chat to ensure all participants could follow the proceedings. Joost noted that this meeting would be his final session as presiding chair, expressing gratitude to the council before moving to formal business.

### **Reports and Updates**

#### **Academic Affairs Report – Greg Heileman, Vice Provost for Academic Affairs**

**Leadership Transition:** Greg announced he has accepted a position at another institution and will be transitioning over the next couple of months. He expressed gratitude for the council's service and noted that a call for a new chair for the upcoming academic year has been issued.

**Committee Continuity:** Greg discussed the process for filling vacancies on the subcommittee. He noted that colleges have the discretion to either elect or appoint representatives per their bylaws. For members filling unexpired terms, the length of service (typically three years) will be confirmed with the respective Deans to ensure compliance with faculty governance rules.

**Technical Orientation:** Ryan offered to meet with the incoming chair in the fall to provide a walkthrough of the meeting room's hybrid technology, specifically noting quirks with the camera system that require a manual reset if used by other committees previously.

### **Arizona Online Report – Caleb Simmons, Vice Provost for Arizona Online**

Caleb and Alex discussed the challenge of students who have 100% of academic requirements but haven't graduated due to technicalities. Alex provided deep insight into the "Helios Project." The data revealed a specific cohort of these "ghost students." By using a \$300,000 grant to "wipe the slate clean" for these individuals, the university can significantly boost its graduation rates almost overnight while providing a life-changing service to alumni.

### **Office of the Registrar Report – Alex Underwood, Registrar**

Alex Underwood provided a report from the Office of the Registrar. Key highlights included:

- Fall 2026 Enrollment: Registration is currently ongoing. As of the meeting date, just shy of 22,000 undergraduate students have enrolled for the Fall 2026 semester.
- Future Terms: Open scheduling for Winter 2026 and Spring 2027 is set to begin on May 4th.
- Advising Task Force: A task force is currently finalizing logistics for a new advising initiative. An initial kickoff is planned for August, which will include the distribution of an "advising syllabus" to students. Training for advisors will also take place over the summer.

### **Academic Advising Report – Sharon Aiken-Wisniewski, Assistant Vice Provost for Academic Advising**

Sharon reported on three important efforts:

- Advisor Master Classes: These courses are put on by the Advisor Resource Center (ARC) and have been very popular. The last Master Class will focus on all the changes to general education, spending considerable time on UNIV 101 and 301.
- 2026 Academic Advising Conference: Titled "Building Bridges: Advisors as Connectors for Student Success," the conference will take place on May 19th and 20th. Sharon reported 192 registrations on April 28 with a final goal of 250 registrations. 21 proposals have been accepted as of April 28. The keynote speaker is Dr. Kyle Reyes from Utah Valley University, who is going to talk about lenses of humanity.
- The A Center: The home for the no-major selected students that really are not sure where they want to land on campus. On April 14, the A Center celebrated Major Declaration Day. 52 students that came in to declare their Major and received a welcome bag from their college and department, and, were congratulated on making that decision

- Milestone Academic Advising: Sharon concluded her report with a reminder that mandatory milestone advising will begin next year.

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

Jeremy Vetter presented the final report of his tenure as Chair of the Gen Ed Committee. The committee is operating at "breakneck speed" to process course approvals before the end of the academic year.

- Course Approvals: The committee is reviewing a large docket of courses related to the new Civic Institutions category, as well as Building Connections and Exploring Perspectives courses.
- Civic Institutions: Currently, 17 courses have been identified for potential offering in Spring 2027.
- Attribute Streamlining: A simplified process is currently open for existing Gen Ed courses to add the "Civic Exploration" attribute. The new "Understand and Value Difference" (UVD) attribute will serve as the successor to the "Diversity and Equity" (DE) attribute.

### **Subcommittees**

#### **Academic Programs Subcommittee – Joost on behalf of Christopher Domin, APS Chair**

Joost presented two academics programs on the Consent Agenda, a new minor and a new program in East Asian Studies:

- New Minor: Forensic Anthropology Minor (SBS)
- New Program: BA in East Asian Studies, new subplans in Korean Language and Korean Culture (Humanities)

#### **Curriculum & Policies Subcommittee – Allyson Roof, CPS Chair**

The subcommittee confirmed that April 14 was the final deadline for curriculum and policy items for the current academic year. Items submitted after this date will be carried over to the fall semester.

#### **Undergraduate Council Report – Joost van Haren, UGC Chair**

##### **Multiple Use of Courses Policy**

A portion of the meeting was dedicated to a proposed housekeeping change regarding the "Multiple Use of Courses" policy. The issue involves allowing students to double-count up to three courses in Gen Ed, specifically including the new Civic Institutions category. The council reached a consensus that for the sake of student clarity, the change should

proceed as an administrative housekeeping item to align the new category with existing Gen Ed structures.

### **Biosphere 2 as Recruitment and Educational Tool**

The council discussed the unique value of Biosphere 2 to the University of Arizona.

- It was noted that the University President often highlights Biosphere 2 as a one-of-a-kind facility that distinguishes the UA from other institutions.
- Members shared experiences of student field trips and research projects involving soil science, astrobiology, and elementary teacher training.
- There is a standing invitation for faculty to coordinate with site researchers to provide students with "behind-the-scenes" access.

### **Discussion Items**

#### **Undergraduate Transfer Credit policy proposal**

Owing to scheduling, the Undergraduate Transfer Credit policy was discussed before Professor Kiser's presentation. A major highlight of the new policy is the inclusion of a provision where a completed associate's degree now automatically satisfies all Gen Ed requirements. This removes the need for students to transfer individual courses one by one, streamlining the process for incoming transfers.

Key administrative and structural changes include:

- **Civic Institutions:** Updated language to address how transferring students can fulfill the newly added civic institutions requirement.
- **Centralized Authority:** The Office of General Education now oversees Gen Ed transfer credits university-wide. Once a credit is approved, it is honored across all undergraduate programs, ensuring that a student's Gen Ed status remains "complete" even if they change their major.
- **Departmental Exceptions:** Evaluation for math, writing, and second language credits remains with their respective departments to ensure direct equivalency, though the committee hopes to eventually establish more "level-set" guidance to increase efficiency.
- **Organizational Naming:** References to the Office of Transfer Credit and Articulation have been updated to the Office of the Registrar due to recent restructuring.

The discussion also touched on the complexities of the Associate of Applied Science degree and how it interacts with major changes, identifying this as a topic for the upcoming year.

The council concluded the session by **unanimously approving the updated policy proposal.**

### **Sexual Assault / Violence Prevention on Campus with Lisa Kiser, Associate Clinical Professor, Nurse Midwife Program, College of Public Health**

The final portion of the meeting was dedicated to a presentation and discussion led by Lisa Kiser from the College of Nursing regarding sexual assault awareness and prevention on campus.

The key information from this segment is as follows:

- **High Prevalence:** National statistics show that 1 in 4 to 1 in 5 college students experience sexual assault. Kiser noted that at least one to two students in her own undergraduate courses report an assault every term.
- **Reporting Discrepancies:** According to 2025 reports, the University of Arizona (U of A) has higher rates of reported sexual assault and intimate partner violence than NAU or ASU. However, Kiser highlighted that roughly 80% of assaults on campus go unreported nationally.

#### **The Training Gap at U of A**

- **Current Voluntary Status:** Currently, the UA offers but does not require sexual assault awareness and prevention training for the general student body, faculty, or staff.
- **Comparison to Other Institutions:** Both ASU and NAU require this training for all incoming freshmen. Kiser specifically praised the ASU model for being online, trauma-informed, and providing clear resources and opt-out options.
- **Historical Context:** In the past, the UA required this training for all incoming freshmen and for students living in housing. This was considered critical because the majority of assaults occur during a student's first semester.

#### **Required Actions and Faculty Responsibilities**

- **Legal Accommodations:** Faculty were reminded that by law, they must provide academic accommodations (such as extra time, incompletes, or deferred exams) for students who have experienced violence.
- **Survivor Advocate Program:** Faculty should refer students to the U of A Survivor Advocate Program, which assists students in securing these safe accommodations and navigating the system.

- **Advocacy for Mandatory Training:** Kiser urged faculty to pressure the administration to reinstate mandatory, in-person training for freshmen (specifically those in Residence Life) and mandatory online training for all faculty and staff.

#### Comparison to Other Safety Training

- **Active Shooter vs. Sexual Assault:** A discussion emerged regarding the heavy emphasis on mandatory active shooter training (triggered by the murder of Professor Meitzner) compared to the lack of mandatory sexual assault training, despite the significantly higher number of people impacted by the latter.
- **Training Fatigue:** The council discussed the need for "comprehensive safety training" that rotates topics annually to avoid "training fatigue" and ensure the content remains evidence-based and engaging.

#### Active Shooter Training Concerns

- In the closing remarks, Greg shared personal concerns regarding the university's approach to safety training, specifically active shooter drills. He critiqued the current model and advocated for training that is "meaningful and purposeful." He pointed to evidence suggesting that certain traditional methods may not be the most effective and urged the council to consider the psychological impact on the university community.

#### **Adjournment**

Following the safety discussion and the conclusion of all agenda items, Joost adjourned the meeting for the final time in his capacity as Chair. He wished the council well for the upcoming year.