

UGC Full Meeting Minutes  
September 22, 2026  
Bear Down 302 and Zoom

Minutes compiled by Ryan Winet and ChatGPT (from Zoom transcript)

**Attending:** David Garcia; Katie O'Brien; Alex Underwood; John Kramkowski; Erin Riesgo; Allison Lee; Allyson Roof; Christopher Domin; Chris Sanderson; Nya Fludzinski; Ariane Kometa; Stephanie Capaldi; John Leafgren; Michelle Halla; Emily Jo Schwaller; Esteban Hernandez Parra; Kian Alavy; Amy Kimme Hea; Justine Schluntz; Tejal Parikh; Melanie Madden; Andrew Kemp-Wilcox; Claire McLane; Katy Prudic; Abbie Sorg; Lauren Acosta; Kirssa Cline-Ryckman

**Call to Order**

UGC Chair Allyson Roof (hereafter “Ally”) calls the meeting to order at 3:30. Online participants confirm they can hear.

**Approval of August & April Minutes**

The first order of business is the approval of meeting minutes from the August 25 full committee meeting. The August 25 minutes were approved with one correction (adding Esteban’s full name as an attending member).

Additionally, Ally explained that while reviewing UGC materials, she discovered that the April 28 full committee minutes from the previous semester had never been formally approved. An email was sent out to returning UGC members (a total of ten people). Returning UGC members voted to approve the April 28 minutes.

**Welcome from Chair**

Ally welcomed two newly appointed student representatives and emphasized the importance of student participation in the committee’s work. Members were encouraged to ask questions and contribute their perspectives throughout the meeting.

The committee also noted that UGC meets regularly and that its work includes reviewing proposed additions and changes to the University’s General Education curriculum, considering relevant academic policies, and providing input on matters that may eventually move forward through Faculty Senate and other university governance processes.

**Reports**

**Academic Affairs Report (Amy Kimme Hea, Interim Vice Provost for Academic Affairs)**

Amy provided an overview of the university’s broader academic curricular process, particularly the role of the Academic Council meetings involving the University of Arizona, Arizona State University, and Northern Arizona University.

The Academic Council provides an opportunity for the three universities to exchange information about curricular proposals that may be moving through their respective processes. The purpose is, in part, to identify potential duplication, overlap, or other concerns early enough for the institutions to discuss them.

Amy explained that her role in this process is primarily informational. Proposals discussed at this stage are not approved proposals. Rather, they represent preliminary concepts, proposals, or ideas that units may subsequently decide to advance through the formal curricular process. Consequently, some items discussed at this stage may never reach UGC or other formal approval bodies.

The committee was given an overview of several potential curricular initiatives that had been discussed, including:

- A potential new Scottsdale location for a degree program associated with Eller.
- Three proposed centers associated with the Office of Research:
  - Clinical and Translational Science Institute.
  - International Center for Arid Soil Health.
  - Arizona Center for Future Energy.
- Five potential undergraduate degrees:
  - Bachelor of Science in Agricultural Science.
  - Bachelor of Science in Fashion Industry and Technology.
  - Bachelor of Science in Economics.
  - Bachelor of Science in Integrated Business and Healthcare.
  - Bachelor of Science in Actuarial Science.
- Three potential graduate degrees:
  - Master of Science in Digital Health and Health Informatics.
  - Master of Education in Data Literacy and Education.
  - Master of Arts in Arts Administration.

Amy emphasized that the names and details of these proposals remain subject to change and that the list represents potential curricular activity rather than approved programs.

Committee members expressed appreciation for receiving this information earlier in the process. Members noted that advance notice can provide departments and units with additional time to identify appropriate stakeholders, gather feedback, and prepare for formal review once proposals reach UGC.

### **Arizona Online Report (John Kramkowski, Director of Learning Programs, Arizona Online)**

A new mandatory instructor training program has been introduced for Arizona Online instructors beginning in Fall 2026. The training focuses on developing and delivering high-quality online learning experiences.

The committee discussed whether the training would be a one-time requirement or an ongoing requirement. The current plan under discussion is a one-time training requirement accompanied by a refresher approximately every three years, while new instructors would complete the training as part of onboarding. The final structure remains under discussion.

An update was also provided concerning the university's distance campuses:

- The Nogales campus closed earlier in the year.
- The Chandler campus will not be renewed, and programs currently located there are being considered for relocation.
- The Yuma distance campus has hired a new leader.

Enrollment information remains preliminary because recruitment and enrollment-management activities continue into the early fall period. Current trends indicate somewhat lower undergraduate enrollment and somewhat higher graduate enrollment for Arizona Online, although final numbers were not yet available.

#### **Office of the Registrar Report (Alex Underwood, University Registrar)**

The Registrar reported that approximately 38,379 undergraduate students were enrolled at the University as of the date of the meeting. This figure remains fluid until the official fall census is finalized and released.

A significant update was the elimination of the graduation fee for both undergraduate and graduate students. The change applies beginning with Fall 2026 graduates. The former undergraduate fee was \$50 and the graduate fee was \$35, with other programs having varying amounts. The Registrar reported that approximately \$100,000 had been refunded during the preceding week to students who had already paid the fee for Fall 2026 graduation.

The committee was also informed that preparation for Spring 2027 registration was underway. The Spring 2027 schedule of classes and student shopping carts are scheduled to become available October 1. Registration appointments have been published, with a new Monday-Wednesday-Friday release schedule rather than the previous twice-weekly schedule. Registration itself will begin on the first Monday in November.

An October 8 open house was also announced for the renovation of Modern Languages 350, a lecture hall renovation. Committee members were invited to attend.

Members discussed the relationship between Arizona Online and main-campus enrollment. Alex explained that Arizona Online operates as part of the University and therefore shares university-wide enrollment processes, catalog structures, and academic dates, although the experience and delivery of courses differ by modality.

The committee discussed whether changes in online enrollment might correspond with changes in the number of students physically present on the main campus. It was noted

that, while the two enrollment populations can move differently from year to year, current trends appear broadly similar.

The Registrar later provided a more detailed undergraduate enrollment breakdown:

- Approximately 29,355 undergraduate students were enrolled on the main campus.
- Slightly more than 6,600 undergraduate students were enrolled through Arizona Online.
- Additional students were enrolled through micro-campus locations.

The committee also noted that online education represents a larger proportion of graduate enrollment than undergraduate enrollment and that the percentage of the overall university population studying online has been increasing over time.

**Academic Advising Report (Sharon Aiken-Wisniewski, Assistant Vice Provost for Academic Advising)**

No representative from advising was available to provide a report at the meeting. The committee therefore moved to the next agenda item.

**University-Wide General Education Committee (Kirssa Cline-Ryckman as proxy for Rob Groves, UWGEC Chair)**

The committee continues to review courses proposed for inclusion in the General Education curriculum and is currently working through a backlog of course proposals that accumulated during the summer. Progress on the backlog was described as steady.

The Office of General Education is also considering whether previously approved General Education courses should periodically undergo review. Under the concept discussed, a course approved for General Education several years earlier could be reviewed again after a defined period to determine whether it remains current and continues to meet the applicable General Education criteria.

The committee discussed this as a potential future policy issue rather than a finalized policy.

### **Subcommittee Reports**

**Academic Programs Subcommittee (Christopher Domin, APS Chair)**

The Academic Programs Subcommittee reported that it held its kickoff meeting approximately two weeks before the current meeting.

The subcommittee reviewed its responsibilities and discussed the importance of documentation and accurate meeting minutes. Members also participated in an introductory exercise intended to identify their backgrounds and areas of expertise, with the goal of helping the committee understand what perspectives and experience members bring to the table.

The subcommittee reviewed one modification to a certificate in public safety. The proposal raised several questions, which were sent back to the presenter. Responses were subsequently provided, and the subcommittee reviewed the resulting information.

The subcommittee also discussed four proposed program disestablishments. Members sought additional background information concerning the reasons for the proposed disestablishments, particularly because such proposals can have implications for students and academic units.

Based on the information available, the subcommittee understood the proposals to be primarily administrative. The programs generally had very low enrollment, and the subcommittee did not identify concerns requiring further action.

### **Curriculum & Policies Subcommittee (Christopher Sanderson, CPS Chair)**

The Curriculum and Policies Subcommittee also held its kickoff meeting and reviewed its responsibilities and procedures.

The subcommittee discussed proposed changes involving academic petitions and related academic policies. The materials were extensive and included changes concerning areas such as:

- Leaving the University.
- Changes to schedules.
- Adding and dropping courses.
- Grading systems.
- Undergraduate leaves of absence.
- Retroactive withdrawal.
- Other related academic petition procedures.

Rather than moving immediately toward a recommendation, the subcommittee decided to circulate the materials to its members and consult further with academic advising and relevant departments. The goal is to ensure that the committee has sufficient information before making a recommendation.

The subcommittee also continued its discussion of Accelerated Master's Programs (AMPs), an issue carried over from the previous academic year.

A major concern involves graduate programs that offer certain courses on a two-year cycle. Undergraduate students participating in an AMP may need to take graduate-level coursework, but the timing of course offerings can create difficulties if a needed 600-level course is not available during the student's undergraduate period.

The subcommittee has asked the Graduate College for additional information, including:

- How many AMP programs may be affected.
- How many students are affected by the issue.
- Data concerning student performance or difficulty in 600-level courses.
- How AMP requirements interact with graduate-level coursework.
- Whether alternative approaches could be developed at the individual program level.

A representative from the Graduate College was expected to provide additional information but was not available for the meeting. The subcommittee will continue the discussion after receiving responses to its questions.

Members also raised a related concern involving students who complete an AMP and later pursue a Ph.D. Questions were raised about whether coursework or credits completed through the AMP can be applied toward a subsequent doctoral degree or whether students may be required to repeat coursework or complete additional unique credit hours.

The discussion suggested that this issue may involve Graduate College policies concerning the use of credits across multiple degree levels. Members noted that the uncertainty could affect students' decisions about whether to pursue an AMP when they are also considering doctoral study.

The subcommittee will seek additional clarification before making recommendations.

### **Undergraduate Council Report (Allyson Roof, UGC Chair)**

Ally explained that the UGC chair traditionally attends Faculty Senate meetings to report on the committee's work. Because of a scheduling conflict, Ally cannot regularly attend Faculty Senate, so Chris Sanderson has been attending and reporting on UGC's behalf.

The committee discussed the importance of resolving questions and gathering adequate information before proposals reach Faculty Senate. Because Senate meetings may provide limited time for extended discussion, UGC should conduct sufficiently thorough deliberation before forwarding matters to Senate.

Members were encouraged to raise unresolved questions early rather than unnecessarily delaying proposals later in the process.

Ally also stated that a written UGC report would be provided to the Faculty Senate chair each month.

The committee formally welcomed two student representatives.

One student representative is a junior in the College of Engineering studying Intelligence and Information Operations. The student is also involved in student organizations and other campus activities.

The second student representative serves as the senator for the College of Social and Behavioral Sciences and is studying law with a minor in philosophy. The student is involved in university housing and other campus organizations.

Ally emphasized that student representation has been valuable to UGC and encouraged the new representatives to participate actively and share student perspectives.

The two student representatives were assigned to subcommittees and had already connected with their respective subcommittee chairs.

Ally reported that President Garamella and the Provost had invited leaders of shared-governance groups to provide input regarding a Department of Education “call to action” issued in August.

Ally is scheduled to meet with the President and Provost and will represent UGC. Ally requested that committee members provide any thoughts or concerns they would like conveyed at that meeting.

The questions identified in the federal call to action include topics such as:

- Transparency in admissions criteria.
- Protection of free exchange of ideas and open campus discourse.
- Intellectual pluralism within academic units.
- Access to affordable, high-return degrees.
- Academic rigor in the context of artificial intelligence.
- Grade inflation.
- Excellence in teaching and learning.
- Protection of academic programs and research from foreign influence.
- The role of universities and faculty in advancing national security and economic prosperity.

The committee discussed the breadth and complexity of these questions. Members noted that some topics, particularly intellectual pluralism and free speech in undergraduate education, require substantial consideration and cannot necessarily be addressed meaningfully through a rapid response.

Ally clarified that the President was seeking input and ideas rather than necessarily requesting a finalized written response to each question from UGC. Members were encouraged to send comments directly to Ally by email so they could be considered in the upcoming discussion.

Ally specifically identified rigor and grade inflation as issues of relevance to undergraduate education, while also noting that meaningful approaches to these issues may require appropriate classroom resources.

### **Program Disestablishments**

The committee reviewed four proposed program disestablishments as informational items.

The Academic Programs Subcommittee had previously discussed the proposals with the appropriate administrative representatives. The proposals appeared to be primarily administrative, and several of the programs had very low or no current enrollment.

One program had apparently been restructured before enrolling students, while the other programs had no current students and had experienced low enrollment for an extended period.

Because no current students would be affected, no teach-out plans were necessary. The stated rationale was to allow academic units to focus resources on areas with greater enrollment.

The committee confirmed that these items were notification items rather than matters requiring a formal vote or motion. No questions or concerns were raised, and the committee proceeded.

### **Additional Discussion and Closing**

Before concluding, Ally invited members to raise additional concerns or suggestions.

Members were invited to communicate with Ally by email or through another preferred method before Ally's meeting with university leadership.

There being no further questions or concerns, the meeting was adjourned at 4:30PM.