UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA ACADEMIC SENATE - Merced Division

Undergraduate Council (UGC)

Review and Approval of Undergraduate Degree Programs

I. General Policy:

According to the UCM by-laws, the Undergraduate Council (UGC) is charged on behalf of the Division to approve proposals from Schools and Colleges for new, or substantive change to existing undergraduate majors, minors, and certificates. UGC's primary responsibility is to review the academic merit, value, and contribution of new majors or substantive changes to existing majors to undergraduate education at UCM. Because the delivery of major degree programs entails use of university resources, the Academic Senate Committee on Academic Planning and Resource Allocation (CAPRA) consults on the resource implications of the proposed program or other significant change. Following WASC guidelines, for the purposes of this document *substantive change* includes: (1) new undergraduate majors, including joint degree programs; (2) new modalities of degree delivery; (3) use of new off-campus sites; or (4) change in duration of a degree program.

II. Format for Proposals for New or Substantive Change to Undergraduate Degree Programs:

Academic units proposing a new degree program or substantive change to an existing degree should follow the format below:

1. New or substantively revised program description and rationale: Describe the focus of the proposed program or revision and discuss the rationale for the program as proposed. Describe how the new or substantively revised degree program will contribute to undergraduate education at UCM. If pertinent, include job market demand, graduate education/professional school prospects for majors, and expected student demand. If this is not a standard major in name or program design, or it is an interdisciplinary program, describe the program elements and provide justification for them. Discuss overlaps with, or complements to, existing undergraduate degree programs.

2. Program requirements: List lower division and upper division course requirements, including lower division preparatory courses required outside the major and upper division course requirements outside the major field. Enumerate program learning goals and outcomes, and articulate how course requirements or program changes address intended learning outcomes. Discuss how outcomes assessment will be accomplished. Indicate the minimum and maximum credits allowable for major. The proposal must include the following:

- A sample program for a major, showing all requirements and examples of elective courses within and outside the major.
- Demonstrate how a student can complete major, including all prerequisites, in four years. Describe how transfer students will be able to satisfy degree requirements in two years.

- Indicate the availability of suitable preparatory courses at community colleges.
- Indicate any unique courses that will be required for completion prior to the junior year.
- Draft text for the catalog description.

3. Accreditation (if applicable): Describe requirements for programmatic accreditation and plans for achieving that accreditation, if required or desirable.

4. Resource needs and plan for providing them:
- Indicate faculty who will support the program, either current or under recruitment. The proposal should explicitly show how all required courses will be offered by faculty members and a course schedule for delivery.
- Indicate needs for specialized staff (FTE amount).
- Indicate amount of specialized space needed (e.g., teaching labs, studios, performance space, etc.) other than standard classroom or lecture space.
- Indicate library resources needed and include a statement from University Librarian on plans for providing resources for the program.
- If applicable, include needs for instructional computing resources.
- If applicable, describe resource needs for field studies or other off-campus activities.
- Include needs for any other specialized facilities or other resource needs, including special student support services.
- If the proposal is for a change to an existing program, the resource implications of the change relative to the existing program should be discussed.

If resources for the program are to be provided by units other than the Dean of the School housing the program (e.g., by the Chief Information Officer, Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs, off-campus or non-UCM affiliates), documentation of the resources to be provided should be included.

5. Potential for non-majors to participate: Describe how non-majors may participate in the program at the lower division or upper division.

6. Timetable for implementation: Include plans and a timetable for initiating and building the program. Will the program be implemented at both the freshman and junior levels or phased in over a period of time?

III. Approval Process:

1. Prior to submission of a program proposal for UGC approval, it must be included in the University Five Year Perspectives report (submitted annually by the university to the Office of the President). A brief program description should appear in the report at least one year, but preferably two years, before implementation.

2. Faculty are responsible for developing the degree program proposal, in consultation with the School Dean. The proposed program must be approved by the faculty of the School (or other designated faculty unit). A memo from the School faculty reporting the vote of the faculty and any faculty discussion pertinent to the proposal should be included with the proposal. The Dean

submits the proposal to the Academic Senate with his/her endorsement. Schools are encouraged to submit proposals for new degrees to UGC at least 9 months prior to the desired date of degree initiation to allow sufficient time for review and approval by both UGC and WASC.

3. The proposal is reviewed by UGC for academic merit, and by CAPRA, in consultation with the Executive Vice Chancellor/Provost, on resource implications. If needed, UGC may consult with individuals external to the committee to provide additional expertise or comment.

4. Undergraduate Council either approves or disapproves program.

5. If approved, the Registrar, the Academic Senate, and the Office of the President are notified.

6. If approved, UGC notifies the responsible School or College which must, in turn, notify the campus WASC Academic Liaison Officer (ALO) and WASC Substantive Change Specialist.

7. With the assistance of the ALO and Specialist, the responsible faculty must prepare and submit required Substantive Change documentation for WASC review. Until such time as WASC has completed the substantive change review process and approval has been received, all public publications or announcements regarding new degree programs should contain an asterisk or footnote indicating that the program is "pending the review of our accreditation agency, the Western Association of Schools and Colleges (WASC)."

8. The ALO will notify UGC, the Registrar, and the School when WASC review is complete.