To: Members of the Undergraduate Studies Committee
From: Ankit Srivastava, Chair, University Faculty Council
Date: September 28, 2026
Re: What last year's minutes show about how the UGSC spends its time

---

I am writing to share a review of the UGSC's 2025–26 minutes and some suggestions that follow from it. I have tried to stay close to the record.

Last year the UGSC carried an unusually heavy load, much of it brought on by the coming restructuring and the push to get new and revised programs into the bulletin. I am grateful to the committee and its members for getting that work done. The numbers below should be read with that in mind: they describe how the procedures held up under that load.

The UGSC's procedures are the committee's to set. Section VIII of the Standard Operating Procedures allows the UFC to propose changes, and I offer these suggestions in that spirit.

What the minutes show

The UGSC met 18 times in 2025–26, including 4 special meetings (December 9, February 17, March 3 and May 5). Regular meetings are scheduled from 12:45 to 1:45.

Meetings ran long, and the load was uneven. 13 of the 18 meetings ran past 1:45, by a combined 217 minutes. Every meeting from January 27 onward ran over, by 6 to 51 minutes. Between September and mid-January, 5 meetings ended 17 to 27 minutes before 1:45. The work bunched up ahead of the April 3 bulletin deadline, which is also why 2 of the special meetings were called.

Quorum was lost 4 times. On January 27, February 10, March 10 and April 28, the committee lost quorum late in the meeting, and votes had to be deferred to a later meeting or to an e-mail vote. At 3 other meetings the chair had to stop and confirm quorum before proceeding. On March 24 four voting members had to hand over to substitutes when the meeting ran past 1:45.

Routine items took the same path as everything else. On March 24 the committee took up 27 minor changes one at a time. Each was described, moved, seconded and voted on. All 27 passed without objection or abstention. Apart from a policy note at the start and one further item withdrawn because it was not yet in CIM, the only recorded comment was a presenter correcting their own CIM entry. The meeting, which also took up the course numbering policy and an update on co-terminal programs, ended at 2:36.

Most items brought back for a vote drew no further discussion. I counted 25 items that were voted on at a meeting after being presented at an earlier one. At the meeting where the vote was taken, the minutes record no questions and no discussion for 16 of them, and only brief questions or comments for 4. The 5 that drew real discussion were the core pilot framework, the two catalog changes on dual and joint degrees and on co-terminal programs (the second failed 4–5–1), the course numbering policy, and the Biochemistry revision described below. Four of the 5 were university-wide policies.

Electronic votes were used successfully. The March 17 e-vote handled 8 major proposals, with 13 members responding, and the UFC approved all 8 by its own e-vote before the committee next met. In October, 10 of 18 members responded to an e-vote (9 in favor, 1 abstaining), and because it was unclear whether that turnout was enough, the committee voted again in person on October 28. In May, 2 proposals passed 10–0, which "just met" the requirement that more than 50% of all eligible members vote in favor. On January 27, Jeff Wereszczynski of Academic Affairs suggested the UGSC might copy the UFC's electronic voting system to speed up approvals.

Some items arrived before they were ready. Examples from the minutes:

- The Biochemistry program revision was presented before it was in CIM and before the Biology department had approved it (January 27). It came back on March 3, revised and approved by both departments, and passed.
- A specialization update was placed on the agenda before it was in CIM and had to be removed (March 24).
- Assessment plans that were missing or not yet in CIM came up at the table on March 3 and March 10.
- The Critical AI minor was presented and approved twice because of an agenda error (February 17 and March 3).

What discussion at the table accomplished

The minutes also show that discussion mattered. In addition to the Biochemistry revision noted above:

- The proposal to eliminate the Policy and Ethics minor was tabled on January 27 after its effect on Architecture students was raised. On February 10 HASS reported that it still wished to eliminate the minor and was interested in creating a separate Ethics minor, and the elimination passed.
- The discussion of separating Chemistry lectures and labs (February 10) confirmed that approving it would also change every program that requires CHEM 124, and settled the default prerequisite.
- The Chemical Engineering specialization update (April 14) drew comments that the CIM entry was unclear and that a listed Biology course may be discontinued.
- An error in the student count for the ITM transfer program was caught on September 9.

In each of these cases, what the discussion surfaced was an effect on another department's courses or students, or an error in CIM. Apart from the co-terminal catalog change, which failed 4–5–1, no proposal was rejected at any meeting last year. This suggests the value of presentation lies in catching cross-department effects and errors, and that it can be kept by making sure those are visible before the meeting.

Suggestions

1. A consent agenda for routine changes. A consent agenda lists routine items that are expected to pass without discussion, and the committee approves them together in one vote. To keep the value of presentation:

- Every item on the consent agenda appears with its CIM link and a short written summary from the proposer, circulated with the agenda. Members see every change, as they do now.
- Any voting member may remove an item from the consent agenda, before or at the meeting, and that item is then presented and voted on as it is today.
- Items that affect another department's courses or requirements are not placed on the consent agenda.

The UGSC already works this way for core designations: under Section V.5 of its procedures, a subcommittee's recommendation on a core designation needs no vote "unless objections to the recommendation are voiced." On March 24, a consent agenda would have moved most of the 27 separate votes onto a single vote.

2. Faster second readings. Keep two readings for significant changes. The procedures already allow the second to be completed by electronic vote (Section IV), as the committee did in March, and this could become the usual practice. When no member asks for further discussion, the second reading could also be waived by unanimous consent.

3. Electronic voting on the UFC model. The UFC's standing rules on electronic voting provide:

- An e-vote is valid when at least 50% of members take part.
- Every e-vote asks whether the matter needs more discussion. If 25% or more of voters say yes, the vote is set aside and the item goes to the next meeting.

- For items the chair judges highly routine, the chair may ask for unanimous consent by email, with a stated period for objections, such as 48 hours. A single objection defeats the request, and the item may then go to a formal e-vote or to the next meeting.

The UGSC's rule, adopted in April, instead requires more than 50% of all eligible members to vote in favor, so a member who does not respond has the same effect as a vote against. In May a 10–0 vote only "just met" it.

4. A readiness check before an item goes on the agenda. An item would be placed on the agenda once:

- it is in CIM and has reached the UGSC queue, as the procedures already require;
- the home unit has approved it;
- any department whose courses or students it affects has been consulted, with a short cross-impact statement; and
- an assessment plan is attached where one is required.

One more consideration

Last year the committee had 18 voting members. Under By-Laws Article V.D.2, each academic unit elects one, and the academic units are now the schools, so the committee is much smaller, and a single absence moves it much closer to losing quorum or failing an e-vote. That alone is a reason to revisit the procedures this year.

I would be glad to discuss any of this with the committee.

Ankit Srivastava

Appendix: meeting-by-meeting record, 2025–26

Date	Type	Adjourned	Minutes past 1:45	Notes from the minutes
Aug 26	Regular	1:46	1	Business school item postponed for time
Sep 9	Regular	1:19	—	
Sep 23	Regular	1:20	—	Oct 14 meeting cancelled; 2 second readings, no discussion
Oct 28	Regular	1:21	—	E-vote repeated in person (10 of 18 had responded)
Nov 11	Regular	1:56	11	Presenter postponed for time
Nov 25	Regular	1:53	8	Pilot vote tabled 10–3; grade-appeal vote deferred for time
Dec 9	Special	1:28	—	Pilot approved 10–0
Jan 13	Regular	1:18	—	
Jan 27	Regular	2:02	17	Quorum lost (5 voting members present); pending item taken up Feb 10
Feb 10	Regular	2:13	28	Quorum lost; vote deferred
Feb 17	Special	2:09	24	Called to clear backlog before bulletin deadline
Feb 24	Regular	2:03	18	5 second readings with no questions; remaining items moved
Mar 3	Special	2:06	21	Called to clear backlog; minor approved a second time in error
Mar 10	Regular	1:55	10	Quorum lost (one short); remaining items moved
Mar 24	Regular	2:36	51	27 minor items voted one by one, all without objection; 4 members replaced after 1:45
Apr 14	Regular	1:52	7	
Apr 28	Regular	2:00	15	Quorum lost (7 present, 9 needed); items sent to e-vote
May 5	Special	1:51	6	E-vote passed 10–0, "just met" threshold

Source: UGSC minutes for 2025–26, posted at ugsc.iit.edu.