

GRADUATE COUNCIL (GC)**MEETING MINUTES****Friday, April 18, 2025****11:30am – 1:00pm****ZOOM**

Documents available in [Box](#)
[Graduate Council Duties](#)

Pursuant to call, the Graduate Council met at 11:30am on April 18, 2025. Chair John Abatzoglou presiding.

I. Executive Session – Voting Members Only

No minutes were recorded during the Executive Session. The action items were shared with GC voting members.

II. Consent Calendar – Chair Abatzoglou**A. Today's Agenda****Action:**

- Today's Agenda was approved as presented.

B. [April 4 Draft Meeting Minutes](#)**Action:**

- The April 4 Meeting Minutes were approved as presented.

C. Petitions for Graduate Students to Teach Upper Division Courses

[Ahmed Muhammad ME 137 202520](#)

[Ozkazanc Guc Gokce ENGR 130 202520](#)

[Byun Eujean MIST 211 202520](#)

[Li Anqi ECON 105 202530](#)

[Rosa Jose ECON 140 202530](#)

Actions:

- The petitions were approved as presented.
- The GC Chair signed the petitions, and the GC Analyst notified VPDGE Hratchian.

D. Courses**Actions:**

- GC approved the following courses, and Curriculog was updated accordingly:
[EDUC - X315.2 - Single Subject Methods - English Language Arts](#) (New; Summer 2025)
[EDUC - X316.2 - Single Subject Methods - History & Social Sciences](#) (New; Summer 2025)
[EDUC - X317.2 - Single Subject Methods – Mathematics](#) (New; Summer 2025)
[EDUC - X318.2 - Single Subject Methods – Science](#) (New; Summer 2025)
[EDUC - X380 - Bilingual Authorization - Spanish BLA Fieldwork Experience](#) (New; Summer 2025)

- GC agreed to approve the following courses contingent upon the proposers changing the course modality to Hybrid Flexible. Curriculog was updated accordingly:
 - [EDUC - X315 - Single Subject Methods: English and Language Arts](#) (Modify Existing; Summer 2025)
 - [EDUC - X316 - Single Subject Methods: History and Social Science](#) (Modify Existing; Summer 2025)
 - [EDUC - X317 - Single Subject Methods: Math](#) (Modify Existing; Summer 2025)
 - [EDUC - X318 - Single Subject Methods: Science](#) (Modify Existing; Summer 2025)
 - [EDUC - X320 - Foundations of Education in PK-3](#) (New; Fall 2025)
 - [EDUC - X321 - Education and the Inclusive Classroom](#) (New; Fall 2025)
 - [EDUC - X322 - Child Development and Learning: Conception through PK-3](#) (New; Fall 2025)
 - [EDUC - X323 - Health and Wellness: Educating the Whole Child for PK-3](#) (New; Spring 2026)
 - [EDUC - X330 - Integrated Literacy, ELD, and Humanities in the P-TK Classroom](#) (New; Spring 2026)
 - [EDUC - X331 - STEAM in the P-TK Classroom](#) (New; Spring 2026)
 - [EDUC - X332 - Equity, Inclusion, and Diversity](#) (New; Spring 2026)
 - [EDUC - X333.1 - Teaching Performance Assessment Support Seminar 1](#) (New; Spring 2026)
 - [EDUC - X333.2 - Teaching Performance Assessment Support Seminar 2](#) (New; Spring 2026)
 - [EDUC - X334 - PK-3 Practicum](#) (New; Spring 2026)
 - [EDUC - X340 - Integrated Literacy, ELD, and Humanities in the K-3 Classroom](#) (New; Spring 2026)
 - [EDUC - X341 - STEAM in the K-3 Classroom](#) (New; Spring 2026)
 - [EDUC - X342 - Data Driven Decision Making IFSPs, IEPs, and Transitional Plans](#) (New; Spring 2026)

Following the meeting, the proposer reached out to the GC Analyst and provided clarification that there is one instructor per course per modality. The courses were then approved with the original modality.

III. Chair's Report – John Abatzoglou

A. April 8 Divisional Council Meeting

Chancellor Muñoz reported on the recent challenges the university is facing and discussed how leadership is working to address them.

B. April 9 CCGA Meeting

A State Senator is working to establish a state bond initiative that would effectively function similarly to a state National Science Foundation (NSF) or National Institutes of Health (NIH) grant. This effort aims to support science given the shortfall in governmental support.

CCGA members discussed the challenges that international students are facing. Even before recent federal actions, there had already been an 11% decline in international applications across the UC system this year.

CCGA members discussed the sizing of graduate programs and the potential use of UC Online as a resource for programs to share courses across universities. Chair Abatzoglou noted that while this may apply more so to campuses with steady-state graduate programs, it

may be less relevant to UC Merced, which is still growing its graduate programs.

CCGA is exploring existing mechanisms to support students who have had their visas revoked, aiming to ensure they can still complete their degrees. Possible solutions include allowing remote thesis or dissertation defenses, using exceptions within current policies to allow for the completion of degrees, and offering “Master’s Along the Way” options.

IV. Vice Chair’s Report – Irene Beattie

A. April 7 PROC Meeting

PROC members discussed the review of the Sociology program, which was the first conjoined review that included both the graduate and undergraduate programs. Several members found the report to be more focused on graduate education, while others believed it to be more focused on undergraduate education. This led PROC members to discuss the Combined Review Work Group and the review method moving forward. Vice Chair Beattie reminded GC members that GC had provided feedback on the work group’s charge, and noted that UGC had also provided feedback. UGC supported departmental review, as they believed it would provide a more robust review. One of PROC’s concerns with conjoined reviews is the potential for undergraduate programs to be overlooked in the review process. To avoid this, PROC members are working on developing valuable guiding questions for review teams.

Action:

- An update on the Combined Review Work Group will be added to the May 16 GC agenda.

V. Missed Class Policy – Chair Abatzoglou

The draft guidelines were developed collaboratively with Professor Walle, David Dunham (Director of Recreation & Athletics), and Payton Williams (Associate Director of Recreation & Athletics). This important document aims to establish clear guidance and expectations for students and faculty in cases where students must miss classes or assignments due to extracurricular commitments, such as athletic competitions, professional conferences, or performances.

VPDGE Hratchian provided background information regarding the need for such a policy, noting that while it will primarily impact undergraduate students, it is expected to impact more graduate students in the coming years. In Division II athletics, more students may choose to redshirt, leading them into a fifth year of collegiate athletic eligibility as a graduate student.

One noted concern regarding the draft policy was the repeated use of the phrase “reasonable accommodation”, which could create confusion with Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and Student Accessibility Services (SAS) processes that involve legally protected rights and individualized assessments. GC members suggested using alternative terminology to avoid a misunderstanding and overlap of these terms.

GC members also noted that the draft policy does not address its applicability to student employment obligations, such as Graduate Student Researchers (GSRs) or Teaching Assistants (TAs), which is particularly relevant for graduate students, as well as undergraduates with student jobs. As currently written, the policy appears to be limited to classroom-related adjustments, but GC members believed this should be made explicit.

Actions:

- The GC Analyst drafted a memo containing the committee's comments and circulated it to voting members for review and approval.
- The GC Analyst will transmit the approved memo to Senate Chair Mitchell and Executive Director Paul.

VI. Consultation with AI Workgroup Member Lisa Yeo

A. Update on the [Academic Senate AI Workgroup \(AI-WORKGROUP\)](#)

Professor Yeo introduced herself as a member of the [University Committee on Academic Computing and Communications \(UCACC\)](#), which led to her involvement in the Academic Senate Artificial Intelligence (AI) Workgroup. The work group is tasked with reporting back to the Academic Senate in May, focusing on assessing AI adoption across campuses, identifying areas of concern, and formulating best practices and recommendations. The scope of the work includes admissions, instruction, research, and service elements. To efficiently manage these tasks, the work group divided into subgroups: instruction, research, admissions, and data stewardship. Professor Yeo added that she was part of the data stewardship subgroup. The work group has met four times since November and is scheduling a fifth meeting soon.

Based on the information gathered across campuses, the work group identified flexibility, faculty agency, and shared decision-making as key emerging themes. The work group also identified the need for transparency and operational control. Specific recommendations from the instruction subgroup focused on academic integrity, highlighting the need for clarification beyond enforcement. Specific recommendations for research included codifying guidelines for AI use within disciplines and departments, managing research data as a public good, and addressing tensions around data access and commercial use.

The work group also discussed the Elsevier contract, which allows researchers access to data for computational research. There has been pushback, as access was initially intended to be provided without additional costs; however, Elsevier is seeking to alter the terms of the contract.

Chair Abatzoglou informed Professor Yeo that GC had several discussions this semester about the role of AI in graduate education, particularly after it was raised in relation to a graduate group's policies and procedures. He added that GC plans to survey the graduate group chairs to solicit their input on the opportunities and challenges AI presents in their programs. Based on the feedback, GC plans to develop guidance for AI use for graduate groups that can be codified within their disciplinary norms. Vice Chair Beattie added that one challenge is that the use of AI may eventually conflict with the university's obligation to educate students and defining when that is going to be different in each discipline. Furthermore, it is unclear when AI use becomes unacceptable to the institution, specifically in distinguishing between graduate education and simulated learning. Another concern is how AI use can be detected, as the university does not provide adequate detection tools for plagiarism.

VPDGE Hratchian stated that he is the Graduate Dean representative on [the University Committee on Library and Scholarly Communication \(UCOLASC\)](#). He added that it may be useful for a member of the work group to meet with UCOLASC, as there have been discussions about how the university can ensure that once its data is in the public domain it remains public domain.

VPDGE Hratchian noted that the Graduate Student Association (GSA) is very interested in engaging in discussions about AI use and have voiced the desire for guidance from the campus on AI use in graduate education.

VII. VPDGE Hratchian's Report**A. Graduate Admissions Update**

VPDGE Hratchian informed members that enrollment management appeared to be working effectively, with only three more students admitted than originally projected. He added that projections were aggregate, meaning some departments admitted more students than expected, while others admitted fewer. Overall, however, the numbers appear balanced.

VPDGE Hratchian stated that, although there has been a decrease in international applications systemwide, both UC Merced and UC Berkeley have seen a disproportionately high fraction of international students confirming their Statement of Intent to Register (SIR).

VPDGE Hratchian reminded GC members that, due to new state law, all first-time university employed students will be required to complete a misconduct attestation process, which cannot be part of the admissions process. The Graduate Division will provide a list to the graduate group chairs of students who have SIREd yes. Chairs must identify which students will be funded under employment. APO will then begin the attestation process for those students. Students that are to be fully funded by a fellowship are exempt. If a student is found as ineligible for employment due to a prior misconduct issue, their funding-based employment is revoked.

B. Future of Doctoral Education Update

VPDGE Hratchian and other administrators will attend a one-day retreat in downtown Merced to focus on a number of high-level items, including the Future of Doctoral Education Report. The Graduate Division is currently reviewing each of the key recommendations and will share a draft with GC and the graduate group chairs for comments.

C. Commencement Update

VPDGE Hratchian stated that faculty seating at Commencement is nearing capacity. The Graduate Division is currently seeking a scalable solution that would allow seating for all faculty who wish to attend. One potential solution is to place the hooding faculty near the students.

One member noted that at other universities, graduations are held by department, and as UC Merced grows, it may be beneficial to adopt this model.

VIII. Any Other Business

Chair Abatzoglou informed members that the May 2, 2025 GC meeting is cancelled, leaving one remaining committee meeting for the academic year.

Action:

- The GC Analyst will cancel the meeting invitation.

Chair Abatzoglou provided an update on the Qualtrics survey to solicit input from the graduate group chairs on AI use. He plans to send the survey to Vice Chair Beattie for review before distributing it to GC members for their review.

Action:

- Chair Abatzoglou will send the AI Qualtrics survey to GC members for review before it is distributed to the Graduate Group Chairs.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 1:00pm.

Attest: John Abatzoglou, GC Chair