

**GRADUATE COUNCIL
ANNUAL REPORT
2015-2016**

TO THE MERCED DIVISION OF THE ACADEMIC SENATE:

During the academic year 2015-2016, the Graduate Council (GC) met 16 times in person and conducted some business via email with respect to its duties as outlined in UCM Senate Bylaw [II.IV.3.B](#). The issues that GC considered and acted on this year are described as follows:

Administrative Structure

- The Graduate Council operated with three standing subcommittees that met via email throughout the year:
 - Awards Subcommittee reviewed guidelines, applications and provided recommendations on awardees to the Graduate Division.
 - Membership: Nancy Burke (SSHA [Chair]), Ramesh Balasubramaniam (SSHA), Victor Muñoz (SOE), Changqing Li (SOE), Ricardo Cisneros (SSHA), Kurt Schnier (SSHA), Sachin Goyal (SOE), Ming-Hsuan Yang (SOE). As an experimental procedure to spread the burden of the review process, one round of reviews was facilitated by an expanded review panel including additionally one member of each graduate. A similar expansion for the OTA recruited LPSOEs and LSOEs.
 - CRF Subcommittee reviewed all graduate course request forms and provided a recommendation to the council as a whole.
 - Membership: Kurt Schnier (SSHA [Chair]), Mike Dawson (SNS), Laura Martin (OPRAAS)
 - Policy Subcommittee provided the initial review and recommendations on all graduate policies and systemwide policies.
 - Membership: Mike Dawson (SNS [Chair]), Ramesh Balasubramaniam (SSHA), Victor Muñoz (SOE)
- GC invited informal consultants to the membership that included Eric Cannon from the Office of Graduate Studies and Laura Martin, the Director of the Office of Periodic Review, Assessment, and Accreditation Support (OPRAAS), and Angela Krueger, Substantive Change and Graduate Assessment Coordinator, in order to provide an opportunity for administrative consultation.
- OPRAAS requested GC consider its role in graduate program review, with GC responding that GC can provide:
 - higher-level guiding statements on the characteristics of a successful graduate program;
 - input during the review process on experiences dealing with a particular program.

CCGA Proposals

- **GC Lead Reviewers and Process**
Proposals were assigned to individual GC members as lead reviewers, who did not have a conflict of interest. GC recognized the value of support letters from the school deans, Graduate Dean, and Provost, and encouraged Lead Authors to include such letters with their proposals.
- **IIGP extension**

GC unanimously voted in favor of recommending renewal of the Interim Individual Graduate Program (IIGP) for AY 2016-17, with a formal request for renewal sent to the Chair and Vice Chair of the Coordinating Committee on Graduate Affairs. Response is pending.

- **Program Advancement**
 - Mechanical Engineering (ME): approved by CCGA,
 - Public Health (PH): advanced to CCGA,
 - Economics (ECON): approved by CCGA, pending approval by the President,
 - Electrical Engineering and Computer Science (EECS): GC anticipates revisions by early Fall 2016,
 - BEST (BEST): a revised proposal is expected by end of Fall 2016.

Graduate Course Requests

- **Course Request Forms**
GC approved 11 courses.
- **Course Request Form deadlines**
With UGC and the Registrar, GC agreed to establish the existing CRF deadlines as hard deadlines—with the possibility of occasional prior request for extension—for acceptance by the Registrar (rather than as flexible dates for submission of CRFs to the Registrar).
- **“Course (or Curriculum) Proposal and Management Information System” (CPMIS) Committee**
GC, in partnership with UGC and the Registrar’s Office, convened a new committee focused on unifying the procedures for CRF handling between GC and UGC in an electronic application, with the consideration of including additional documents such as CLOs and PLOs, and the potential for incorporating additional features, such as curriculum approval workflow, integration with the Student Information System (SIS and Banner), and Acalog, etc. Work will continue through the Fall, with a possible pilot in 2017. Committee membership included representation from Graduate Council, Undergraduate Council, Registrar’s Office, OPRAAS, Undergraduate Education, School of Engineering, School of Natural Sciences, and School of Social Sciences, Humanities, and Arts, and Information Technology.

Conflict of Interest Policy

- GC voted to approve the AY 13-14 policy for use in AY 15-16.

Request for University Librarian to teach Interdisciplinary Humanities (IH)

- GC received a request to allow the UCM Librarian to be listed as an instructor of record for IH 205 for Fall 2016. The Chief Librarian is senate faculty, and GC welcomed a formal Lecturer Without Salary (LWOS) application for the proposed instructor(s), with a provision that any future requests would be reviewed annually. The formal application is outstanding as of the writing of this report.

Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) Scores

- UC Merced has one of the highest requirements for TOEFL Speaking score, and the Mechanical Engineering graduate program proposed a clarification to the Graduate Division admissions website. This revised text was presented for Graduate Council consideration. The committee agreed with the revision to the admissions website, and also agreed to revisit the idea of

amending the minimum TOEFL Speaking requirement to Fall 2016, when a full assessment of what impact the scores have can be conducted.

Membership in Graduate Programs

- GC discussed the roles of affiliate members within Graduate Programs. Currently, UC Merced has some affiliates in place that did not go through a formal approval process, but there is no current policy on campus for what Graduate Groups may be able to do, particularly in reference to CCGA proposal reviews. Using the [UC Davis Graduate Council policy](#) as a point of reference, this subject will be added for discussion by GC in Fall 2016.

Graduate Professional Development Course

- Throughout the year, GC has discussed the request from Graduate Division to teach a professional development course for credit. GC supports professional development activities by Graduate Division, as well as other entities, however policy prohibits Graduate Division from offering graduate courses for credit. To remain within policy, as well as minimally impact graduate group workloads, GC supports a cross-listed course. GC also noted that this matter is important because it addresses the fundamentals of UC organizational structure, academic policy, and shared governance at UC Merced. Graduate Division is an “academic administration” unit, unsanctioned to offer graduate courses. GC identified alternative approaches to achieve the goal of offering a professional development course, including:
 - Continuation of the series of professional workshops as already offered by Graduate Division
 - Professional development courses offered as a part of individual graduate groups’ curricula, as already offered by some Graduate Groups
 - Professional development courses as cross-listed offerings within existing Graduate Groups

The third approach generated additional discussion, with GC firmly stating they did not wish to prescribe or recommend any details of implementation, leaving that to Graduate Division and the Graduate Groups, so long as graduate policy is consistently followed. GC also emphasized several desirable outcomes, including integration of professional development with scholarly pursuits, facilitation of interdisciplinary/multidisciplinary activities, and investment (if required for such a course) being made in the graduate groups such that capacity for holistic development of professional scholars, and interdisciplinarity, can be an integral component of graduate groups’ activities.

Graduate Group Policies and Procedures

- **Annual Review:** In order to ensure continuing compliance with campus and systemwide policies and streamline the review process, GC members were assigned as primary and secondary reviewers of each Policy & Procedure document for content. OPRAAS reviewed the documents for each Policy & Procedure against what was published online, and the GC analyst reviewed each Policy & Procedure document for the inclusion of a cover letter and table of contents, requesting them from the Program Chair if missing. The Applied Math P&P were approved; CIS is recommended for approval pending minor corrections. All other programs’ P&P require additional revisions and review. This effort will continue into Fall 2016.

Designated Emphases and Concentrations

- GC members reviewed the revised policy on the establishment of designated emphases and concentrations, approving of the revisions.

- Programs not submitting a proposal:
 - Sociology
 - Chemistry & Chemical Biology
 - Psychological Sciences
 - Applied Mathematics
- Programs proposing:
 - IH – Anthropology
 - Quantitative & Systems Biology (after a request for extension)
 - QSB plans to submit 2-4 concentration proposals in AY 16-17.

The deadline for these will be in conjunction with CCGA proposals, and will be handled by the GC Chair in Fall 2016.

Grade Appeals Policy

- GC members agreed that campus should have one policy that includes instructions for both undergraduate and graduate students, revising an existing policy focused on undergraduates. GC approved the revised policy for campus distribution.

Attached (but not conjoined) Courses

- GC unanimously approved the proposed [policy](#) for the Registrar's Office to list all undergraduate and graduate courses that have been co-taught but not formally conjoined.

Revised Policy for Undergraduate Program Review

- A joint Graduate Council-Undergraduate Council-PROC Policy Review Subcommittee (JPRS) considered a revised policy for Undergraduate Program Review. GC was tasked to advise on whether a similar process of revisions and format would work for Graduate Program Review documentation, with GC members generally agreeing with the review procedure. The JPRS was reconstituted in 2016 to undertake revision of graduate policy during AY2016-17.

Course Conventions Review

- GC was presented a document for review from the Registrar's Office. GC provided their suggested revisions, and charged the Registrar with sending the document to UGC & GC biennially as part of a continuing discussion.
- The issue of a B/B- as a split point for a pass or fail grade was discussed and submitted to the Registrar's Office, with GC requesting them to update their website to clearly state a B- is not a passing grade. All graduate groups were also asked to clarify this split point in any new or revised curricula through the CRF process.

Consultations with Administrative Leadership

- To increase familiarity and communication of GC with Administrative Leadership, and vice versa, GC initiated a series of consultations during the year to complement the long-standing invitation to Provost/EVC Tom Peterson. Visitors included
 - Abigail Rider, AVC Real Estate Services
 - Laurie Herbrand, Registrar
 - Joshua Reinhold, Associate Registrar
 - Charles Nies, (interim at time of meeting) AVC Student Affairs
 - Kyle Hoffman, VC Development and Alumni Relations

- Jan Mendenhall, AVC Development and Alumni Relations

Requests regarding Graduate Students

- **Graduate Student Researchers (GSR)**
 - GC reviewed the topic of GSRs working in a professional unit, and cited the excellent opportunities this would provide. GC noted issues with faculty oversight, appropriate working hours, and the logistics of paying the GSR with regard to a PI's grant or from the professional unit. GC members agreed that the definition of GSR should not be weakened and any GSR assignment should be directly related to research.
- **Teaching as Scholarship**
 - With regard to some units offering 399 courses as part of an apprenticeship, but not making these available across all areas of campus, GC agreed that TAships should be emphasized as scholarship and apprenticeship rather than a mere job, in order to provide the adequate training for graduate students' future careers. GC members discussed which individuals on campus should be consulted on advancing teaching as scholarship, with a list of recommended campus units/individuals created. Due to time constraints, no further action was taken.
- **Petition to allow appointment of Graduate Student TA in a Graduate Course**
 - GC considered a petition from Psychology to allow appointment of a graduate student TA in a graduate course. Such an appointment would be in contravention of policy, as stated in the document "[Non-Academic Senate Faculty Eligibility to Teach Graduate Courses](#)", approved March 18 2015. The petition was declined and the policy affirmed as generally applicable and desirable.

Requests from the Division Council

- **Review of GASP Major Proposal:** GC endorsed the revised proposal.
- **Academic Degree Policy:** GC approved of the policy with only minor editing comments.
- **Revised Public Health Bylaw 55 Unit proposal:** GC had no comments.
- **Proposed World Heritage Minor:** GC declined to comment, as the proposal had no implications for graduate education.

Requests from the Graduate Division

- **Continuing Student Fellowship**
 - **Review and Rankings:** A total of 103 applications were received for the continuing student fellowships. GC provided complete rankings for the 2015-2016 Faculty Mentorship Program Fellowship, Graduate Student Opportunity Program Fellowship, Fletcher Jones Fellowship, Miguel Velez Scholarship, President's Dissertation Year Fellowship.
- **Outstanding Teaching Award**
 - **Review and Rankings:** A total of 16 applications were received for the 2015-2016 Outstanding Teaching Award. The Awards Subcommittee provided their rankings, which were approved by GC. A tie was identified, and GC requested that the Graduate Division (1) allow for the school to split the award and name the two tied students as winners, as the honor of winning the award would be more valuable on a C.V. than the monetary award, or (2) as per the PDY fellowship, find additional funds to cover one additional

award. Due to various constraints, Graduate Division made the award to one of the two tied nominees.

- **Proposal for new Award:** GC discussed the creation of a new award for an overall well-rounded graduate student, with the possibility of naming it after Professor William Shadish. The GC membership was in favor of the idea, but the funding of a new award would require further investigation. GC Chair spoke with VC Hoffman, who supported the idea and would try to speak with the Chancellor about the concept. GC can create an award, select an awardee, and make the recommendation to the Graduate Division. GC Awards Subcommittee Chair drafted a proposal to the Senate Chair and VPDGE Zatz.
- **Graduate Advisors Handbook – I**
 - GC considered a request from Environmental Systems (ES) to amend the Graduate Advisor’s Handbook for consistency with ES Policies and Procedures regarding the composition of Master’s Thesis Committees. The final authority on MS thesis committee composition is delegated to the graduate groups under certain circumstances and with some restrictions, with the Graduate Division, on behalf of GC, retaining the right to grant or decline exceptions.
- **Graduate Advisors Handbook – II**
 - Following revisions initiated with Graduate Division during AY2014-15, a fully revised copy of the Graduate Advisors Handbook was provided to GC on December 15, 2015. Due to the volume of other business, chapters were assigned to primary and secondary reviewers in March 2016. Review will be completed during Fall 2016, in readiness for new graduates enrolling Fall 2017.
- **Catalog: Graduate Studies Section**
 - GC voted unanimously in favor of the 2016-2017 UCM Catalog Graduate Studies Section as presented. During the review, some PLOs in the catalog were found to be different than those on the Graduate Division website. OPRAAS identified five Graduate Groups having discrepancies in their PLOs, and GC reviewed and approved the revisions for these as received.
 - A new policy for revising PLOs is being proposed for consideration by the incoming Council members.

Systemwide Business

- **Search Waivers:** GC was asked to review the guiding principles for search waivers in UC academic appointments, with the membership declining to comment as the issue does not hold direct implications for graduate education.
- **APM 360 and 210-4:** GC reviewed and had no objections or comments to the documents related to the proposed revisions of APM 360-Librarian Series, and APM 210-4-Instructions to Review Committees.
- **APM 278, 210-6, 279, 112, and 350:** GC reviewed and had no objections or comments to the documents related to the proposed revisions of APM 278-Health Sciences Clinical Professor Series, APM 210-6-Instructions to Review Committees, APM 279-Volunteer Clinical Professor Series, APM 112-Academic Titles, Clinical Associate, and the new APM 350-Clinical Associate.

Respectfully submitted,

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Ramesh Balasubramaniam, Vice Chair (SSHA)
Nancy Burke (SSHA)
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Ming-Hsuan Yang (SOE)

Ex-Officio

Cristián Ricci, Divisional Council Chair (SSHA)
Joshua Viers, Divisional Council Vice Chair (SOE)
Marjorie Zatz, Vice Provost & Dean of the Graduate Division

Student Representative

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Consultants

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