

**Graduate Council (GC)**  
**Minutes of Meeting**  
**October 14, 2015**

Pursuant to call, the Graduate Council met at 4:00 pm on October 14, 2015 in Room 362 of the Kolligian Library, Chair Michael N Dawson presiding.

I. Chair's Report

Chair Dawson updated GC members on the following:

--October 12 Division Council meeting. Major items of discussion included the allocation of the 1.5% component of the 3% increase in faculty salary and the revised GASP major proposal.

--October 7 CCGA meeting.

--Project 2020 design meetings with design teams and faculty representatives.

II. Vice Chair's Report

Vice Chair Balasubramaniam updated GC members on the October 8 PROC meeting. PROC members discussed ways to make the program review process more engaging for campus stakeholders and how to ensure that input received from program reviews is tied to outcomes. Lastly, there was consensus on PROC that the draft policy on designated emphases and concentrations is effective.

III. Consultation with Provost/EVC Peterson

Prior to this meeting, GC asked Provost/EVC Peterson to address specific questions related to graduate education.

One question was about Project 2020 and its impact on graduate students. Provost/EVC Peterson emphasized that there should be no inconsistency between objectives one wants to accomplish by hiring through pillar process/clusters and supporting the graduate programs the campus currently has. He reminded GC members that graduate groups helped draft the proposals from the thematic pillars.

In response to a question about opportunities that will exist in the future for communication between the strategic academic focusing (SAF) process and Project 2020 (as there is some concern that the two are too separated), especially in regards to the types of graduate student space, Provost/EVC Peterson replied that he examined wet and dry lab space and computational space, and those projections were factored into the 2020 plans. However, there will be some variation to these plans, and that is why, in the first iteration, there were no specifics on space based on discipline. A GC member emphasized that SAF plans will evolve with time and that a process for clear communication could be highly beneficial.

A GC member inquired about shared graduate programs across the schools, specifically, whether SAF intends to prioritize FTE lines for shared graduate programs and whether bylaw 55 units and graduate groups can make a case for hiring faculty members for this purpose. Provost/EVC Peterson affirmed this and added that he hopes all faculty members have the same mission, which is, to expand the academic reach of UC Merced. He encourages collaborative and interdisciplinary activity and stated that the thematic pillars are the ideal way to build these interdisciplinary cluster areas. However, he recognizes that there are also specific foundational needs that need to be met.

With regards to where the SAF process currently stands, Provost/EVC Peterson confirmed that he previously sent a letter to the three thematic pillars that were identified to receive FTE lines this year under his six-year hiring plan. He hopes the steering committees of each pillar will invite him to meet with them.

A GC member asked how the six-year hiring plan, with its combination of thematic pillars and foundational hires, is being marketed and communicated outside the campus community. Provost/EVC Peterson stated that once the Regents have approved UC Merced's 2020 project, then the campus should focus on showcasing the demand for a UCM education and the growth in faculty numbers. The Chronicle of Higher Education is but one source. The

Chancellor will be consulted about the types of publicity that will be employed.

Provost/EVC Peterson then stated that there are no plans to renege on the original goal of hiring 150 faculty members over the next six years. However, due to the uncertainty of the sequence of buildings and the various space constraints, the hiring rate and portfolio may have to change. The Provost/EVC suggested that perhaps in the first few years, the campus should hire fewer faculty members and focus on those that do not require laboratory space. In the later years of the six-year plan, after the buildings are established, the campus can increase the rate of faculty hiring and welcome those with wet lab needs. The Provost/EVC asked for input on how to communicate this to the campus and mitigate any fear that he is renegeing on the original plan. A GC member recommended that the Provost/EVC meet with individual bylaw 55 units. Another GC member pointed out that some faculty are concerned by the generic nature of the space needs that were conveyed to the design teams, and faculty members concerns may be quelled somewhat if they knew if there would be capital funds set aside for the space to be adapted.

IV. Consent Calendar

**ACTION:** Today's agenda and the September 23 meeting minutes were approved as presented.

V. CRFs

--EECS 284.

Confirmation requested: if this is a new or modified course (the graduate group approval memo reflects the former and the CRF states the latter).

--ME 255. Explanation requested on how the course fits into the existing ME graduate course work.

--QSB 256/ES 256. Further justification is requested on why these courses are conjoined (the explanation provided about enrollment needs is insufficient).

--NSED 304. As NSED is an undergraduate minor that cannot deliver graduate courses, this CRF will be declined.

--CHEM 250. Explanation requested on how the course fits into the existing CHEM graduate course work. Also remind the graduate group that the syllabus is intended to clarify course expectations for students and so the letter grade and breakdown should be clear about expectations for program (is this distribution normal for CHEM?) and requirement for passing grade in graduate school.

--PH 201-208B and PH 241. Will be reviewed by the CRF subcommittee and placed on the October 26 GC agenda.

--ES 227. Will be reviewed by the CRF subcommittee and placed on the October 26 GC agenda.

**ACTION:** GC will send memos to the relevant graduate groups via educational policy committees requesting the aforementioned information. Upon receipt of the information, GC members will re-review the CRFs.

## VI. CRF and Awards Subcommittee Procedures

GC members discussed the following suggested procedures for the CRF and Award Subcommittees:

### *Alternative #1:*

1. Each new CRF be allocated to one of the faculty subcommittee members as lead reviewer and secondary reviewer.
2. The subcommittee discusses, and subcommittee chair compiles the summary and communicates it to the GC chair.
3. GC and CRF subcommittee chair decides on the course of action and implements it with the assistance of the GC analyst.

ALO Martin would provide input at steps 2 and 3.

### *Alternative #2:*

1. Downsize the CRF subcommittee to 1-2 GC members (GC chair, CRF subcommittee chair, and ALO Martin). Review procedures will progress as stated above. The whole of GC is responsible for skimming all CRFs as another layer of review.
2. Put all other GC members onto the Awards subcommittee.

**ACTION:** Chair to finalize and circulate new policy.

VII. Report from Awards Subcommittee

Pending decision above, GC will begin review on first round of award applications (item one on the “white paper” previously drafted by the Awards subcommittee and circulated to GC members). Item two of the white paper was discussed briefly and received generally positive feedback. Item three was not discussed due to time limitations.

**ACTION:** Both items two and three of the white paper are moved to the Policy Subcommittee to be turned into 1) protocol for GC and 2) communication to non-GC UCM partners in this arena.

VIII. Grade Appeals Policy

A GC member requested clarification on which dean is referred to in one of the footnotes.

**ACTION:** The policy will be revised and circulated to GC members via email consent calendar.

IX. Review Items

Before opining on the review items, GC members discussed how to handle the numerous review items in the future. While the GC chair has the authority to decide on which items the council will opine, he would prefer a transparent process. It was decided that the Chair will read and summarize each review item and recommend whether the council should opine. This “should opine/should decline to opine” recommendation will be noted next to each review item on the agenda. Any GC member may request during the meeting that GC discuss in more detail, but otherwise the recommendations will be accepted as the basis of the memo to be drafted by the Chair and circulated to GC for consent calendar by email.

--proposed revisions to the L(P)SOE chapter of the MAPP. GC supports the revisions.

**ACTION:** A memo will be sent to the Senate Chair with GC's position.

--Honors Task Force report. GC supports in principle but encourages the next stage of planning for Honors to explore opportunities for graduate students to be involved in instruction with Honors students—routinely as TAs and less frequently for the most able teachers as lead instructors (with mentoring); GC would be interested to consult on such opportunities as it would dovetail with the council's efforts to enhance teaching as scholarship. On a related note, GC does recognize that in a world of finite resources, investment in one initiative will inevitably impact another initiative. In this context, GC requests that those impacts be carefully estimated, minimized to the extent possible, and that investment in Honors be used to leverage opportunities that may be integrated vertically to improve complementary missions of the campus around research, teaching and scholarship.

**ACTION:** A memo will be sent to the Senate Chair with GC's position.

--proposed revisions to Senate Bylaw 140.

--proposed revisions to Senate Regulations 417 and 621.

The matter does not intersect with graduate education and so GC declines to comment.

**ACTION:** The Senate Chair will be informed that GC has no comments.

--proposed revisions to the Presidential Policy on Sexual Violence and Sexual Harassment. GC supports in principle and, per the council's summary last year, anticipates the policy will be sensitive to the subtleties of the full range of roles that graduate students play on campus.

**ACTION:** A memo will be sent to the Senate Chair with GC's position.

X. VPDGE Updates

VPDGE Zatz provided new projections for graduate groups are available.

It has come to the VPDGE's attention recently that some international students may need a masters degree en route to seek employment in their home countries with a PhD. The magnitude of this issue is unclear. VPDGE Zatz will attempt to gather the following information: 1) graduate groups that cannot offer a masters degree en route 2), a list of countries that have this requirement, and 3) the number of students on our campus that therefore might be affected.

XI. Executive Session

Items to be discussed were tabled until the October 26 GC meeting due to the absences of particular GC members.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 5:30 pm.

Attest:

Michael N. Dawson, GC Chair

Minutes drafted by the GC Chair