

**GRADUATE COUNCIL
MERCED DIVISION OF THE ACADEMIC SENATE
ANNUAL REPORT 2025-2026**

During the academic year 2025-2026, the Graduate Council (GC) held a total of 5 regularly scheduled meetings in person, 11 via Zoom and conducted some business via email with respect to its duties as outlined in UC Merced's [Senate Bylaw II.IV.6](#). The Chair of GC attended Divisional Council meetings and provided regular updates at each GC meeting.

University Deputy Registrar Joshua Reinhold and Director of UC Merced Center for Data Services Derek Devnich participated in meetings as consultants to the committee.

The structure of GC and the issues that the Council considered this year are described below.

GRADUATE COUNCIL ORGANIZATION AND REPRESENTATION ON COMMITTEES

GC operated with three standing subcommittees that conducted business primarily via email throughout the year.

Course Proposal Subcommittee: Wan Du (SOE); Zack Grossman (SSHA); Aaron Hernday (SNS); Min Hwan Lee (SOE)

Policy Subcommittee: Irene Beattie (SSHA); Carolin Frank (SNS), Shawn Newsam (SOE)

Awards Subcommittee: Carolin Frank (SNS); Jennifer Howell (SSHA); Shawn Newsam (SOE)

The Awards subcommittee reviewed the nominations for the Distinguished Graduate Teaching/Mentorship Award. The names of the awards recipients are available [here](#).

GC provided representatives for the following campus committees and task forces:

- *Periodic Review Oversight Committee (PROC):* Min Hwan Lee
- *PROC's Program Review Structuring Committee:* Irene Beattie
- *Joint Senate Work Group on Academic Senate Procedures for PACE Programs:* Carolin Frank
- *Campus Climate of Respect Task Force:* Jennifer Howell
- *WASC Senior College and University Commission (WSCUC) Steering Committee for Reaffirmation and Accreditation:* Harish Bhat
- *Workgroup on AI in Teaching and Learning:* Zack Grossman
- *Workgroup on AI in Research and Innovation:* Wan Du

CAMPUS AND SYSTEMWIDE REVIEW ITEMS

GC offered comments or otherwise took action on the following review items:

- Revised APM 015, 016 and Interim Systemwide Guidelines for Faculty Discipline (9/22) *
- Presidential Policy for the UC's Use of Online Program Management Companies (9/22) *
- Academic Senate Task Force on UC Adaptation to Disruptions Report (9/22) *
- UC Merced Alcohol Service and Sales Policy (9/22)
- UCM Regulations on Employee Organization & Representative Access to University Property (9/22)
- Presidential Policy IMT-1300: Information Technology Accessibility (11/3) *
- Presidential Policy on Education Loan Practices (11/24) *

- UC Merced Interim Policy on Responding to Allegations of Research Misconduct (2/3)
- Presidential Policy Applying to Campus Activities, Organizations and Students (PACAOS) 100.0 and PACAOS-Appendix H (4/17) *
- Five-Year Planning Perspectives 2026-2031 (4/30)

*Systemwide review items

Other

- GC transmitted a memo to the Senate Chair, CRE Chair and UGC Chair regarding a request to form a joint Senate Work Group on Academic Senate Procedures for UC Merced's Professional and Continuing Education (PACE) Programs (9/8).
- GC transmitted a memo to the UGC Chair regarding a draft Undergraduate Certificate Program Policy (9/15).
- GC transmitted a memo to the Graduate Division including GC's endorsement of proposed amendments to Section II.B.2.2.5 English Language Proficiency of the GPPH (9/29).
- GC transmitted a memo to CRE regarding proposed amendments to UCM Senate Regulation III.3.A (Scheduling of Examinations) (9/29).
- GC transmitted a memo to the Senate Chair pertaining to a request from the Registrar regarding Course Proposal Deadline Exceptions (10/7).
- GC transmitted preliminary comments to the Senate Chair pertaining to the Hybrid BA/BS to PharmD Between UC Merced and UCSF School of Pharmacy Program Proposal (11/7).
- GC transmitted comments to the Senate Chair pertaining to the Request Process for Reasonable Instructional Accommodations Due to Disability (11/24).
- GC transmitted a memo to CRE regarding revised proposed amendments to UCM Senate Regulation III.3.A (Scheduling of Examinations) (11/25).
- GC transmitted preliminary comments to the Master of Public Health (MPH) Graduate Program proposers (12/1).
- GC transmitted a memo to the CSE Department Chair and EECS Graduate Group Chair regarding a request for faculty review of course proposals submitted by PACE (12/4).
- GC transmitted a memo to the PACE Work Group Chair pertaining to faculty oversight of PACE course proposals (12/4).
- GC transmitted a memo to the Senate Chair and Senate Executive Director pertaining to the revised UC Merced Guidelines Concerning Scheduling Conflicts with Academic Requirements (Missed Class Policy) (12/9).
- GC and UGC transmitted a joint memo to Department Chairs requesting information pertaining to Artificial Intelligence (AI) Use (12/17).
- GC reviewed the revised proposal for a Program of Professional Graduate Studies with PDST for the Master in Public Health (MPH) degree and recommended it for campus review (2/24).
- GC transmitted a joint memo with UGC to the proposers of the Hybrid BA/BS to PharmD Between UC Merced and UCSF School of Pharmacy Program Proposal (3/30).
- GC transmitted a memo to the VPDGE regarding a request for the Graduate Division to review discrepancies between Graduate Group Bylaws/Policies & Procedures (4/8).
- GC transmitted a joint memo with UGC to the proposers of the Materials and Biomaterials Science and Engineering 4+1 Hybrid Degree Program Proposal (4/15).
- GC transmitted a memo to the Graduate Group Chairs regarding Dissertation Standards and Program-Level Expectations (4/17).
- GC jointly created a draft Generative AI Academic Policy with UGC and transmitted it to Divisional Council for consideration (4/20).
- GC transmitted preliminary comments to the M.S. in Applied Statistics Graduate Program proposers

(4/24).

- GC transmitted comments on the draft recommendations from the Joint Senate Work Group on Academic Senate Procedures for PACE Programs (5/7).
- GC endorsed the proposal for the Mechanical Engineering Graduate Group to change its name to Mechanical and Aerospace Engineering. GC determined that the proposal constitutes a “simple” name change and transmitted their decision to the Chancellor (5/19).
- GC transmitted a memo to the Graduate Group Chairs regarding Guidance on Remote Participation in Qualifying Examinations and Thesis/Dissertation Defenses (5/20).
- GC and UGC reviewed the revised proposal for a Materials and Biomaterials Science and Engineering 4+1 Hybrid Degree Program and recommended it for campus review (6/1).

GRADUATE COURSE REQUESTS

- GC approved 25 courses (new and revised) in Curriculog.
- GC approved 7 requests for an extension to the deadline to submit course proposals.

GRADUATE STUDENT APPOINTMENTS AS INSTRUCTOR FOR UPPER DIVISION COURSES

- GC considered and approved 14 requests to appoint graduate students as instructors for upper division courses.

GRADUATE GROUP POLICIES AND PROCEDURES AND BYLAWS

GC approved, effective Fall 2026, revisions to the Policies and Procedures of the following programs:

- Economics
- Mechanical Engineering
- Interdisciplinary Humanities
- Electrical Engineering & Computer Science
- Applied Math
- Cognitive & Information Sciences

GC offered provisional approval to the following graduate group Policies and Procedures, provided that the graduate group address GC and the Graduate Division comments.

- Political Science

GC approved, effective Fall 2026, revisions to the Bylaws of the following program:

- Economics

GUEST CONSULTATIONS

- Assistant Vice Provost Jesus Cisneros joined the October 20, 2025 meeting to provide a graduate enrollment overview.
- Professors Ryan Baxter and Justin Yeakel joined the November 3, 2025 meeting to discuss the Hybrid BA/BS to PharmD Between UC Merced and UCSF School of Pharmacy Program Proposal.
- Professor Christian Fons Rosen joined the December 1, 2025 meeting to discuss the Gallo School of Management Proposal.
- VPAP Tom Hansford joined the December 1, 2025 meeting to discuss the graduate student employee (TA/GSR) review process.
- VC/CFO Kurt Schnier joined the December 15, 2025 meeting to provide an overview of campus budgeting for Ph.D. student support, including general funding sources and to discuss the potential for counting Student Credit Hours for graduate courses.

- Professor Ryan Baxter joined the March 30, 2026 meeting to discuss the campus comments on the Hybrid BA/BS to PharmD Between UC Merced and UCSF School of Pharmacy Program Proposal.
- Professor Mayya Tokman, Professor Zenaida Aguirre-Munoz, Professor Gordon Bennett and PACE Dean Annette Roberts Webb joined the May 11, 2026 meeting to discuss proposed amendments to Senate Regulation IV.2 (Master's Degree Requirements).

Respectfully submitted,

GC Members

Irene Beattie, Chair, School of Social Sciences, Humanities and Arts, CCGA Representative

Min Hwan Lee, Vice Chair, School of Engineering

Harish Bhat, School of Natural Sciences

Wan Du, School of Engineering

Carolyn Frank, School of Natural Sciences

Zack Grossman, School of Social Sciences, Humanities and Arts

Aaron Hernday, School of Natural Sciences

Jennifer Howell, School of Social Sciences, Humanities and Arts

Shawn Newsam, School of Engineering

Ex-Officio

Hrant Hratchian, Vice Provost and Dean of Graduate Education

Senate Staff

Petra Martins, Senate Analyst