

**GRADUATE AND RESEARCH COUNCIL
ANNUAL REPORT
2008-2009**

TO THE MERCED DIVISION OF THE ACADEMIC SENATE:

During the academic year 2008-2009, the Graduate and Research Council (GRC) met 18 times in person and conducted some business via email with respect to its duties as outlined in UCM Senate Bylaw II.4.C. The issues that GRC considered this year are described as follows:

ACADEMIC ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

GRC shared the Academic Organizational Structure (AOS) committee's concerns about how to best organize Schools and establish resource streams so that graduate groups receive adequate support. GRC endorsed the committee's recommendation for further discussion of School structure and resource allocation methods.

ACCREDITATION (WASC)

In November 2008, GRC heard a presentation by Dr. Laura Martin (UC Merced's WASC Coordinator) and Karen Dunn-Haley (Faculty Development Coordinator) on WASC issues. GRC was informed that every new graduate program must receive WASC approval in addition to CCGA approval. WASC wants to ensure that UC Merced has the infrastructure that is required in the Capacity & Preparatory review, which will be followed by the Educational Effectiveness review. There was discussion on program learning outcomes (developed by the graduate programs) and course learning outcomes (which faculty need to include in course syllabi).

GRC revised its CRF policy to include course learning outcomes and substantive change language. The revised CRF policy takes into account the new WASC requirements that need to be included with all CRF submissions: WASC compliant syllabus providing the course goals/objectives, student learning outcomes, contact information, class policies, academic integrity policy, disability services information, course schedule/assignments/resources, and assessment/grading policy; and, beginning in Fall 2009, the syllabus should also explain what the course contributes to the student's overall education (its relationship to the Program Learning Outcomes) and how it enriches (rather than duplicates, for example) the existing curriculum (i.e. the course's relationship to extant courses). GRC approved the revised CRF policy in March 2009.

GRC also revised its procedures for the approval of new graduate emphasis areas/groups to include substantive change language. This revised policy was approved by GRC in March 2009.

In anticipation of UC Merced's emphasis areas becoming full-fledged graduate programs, GRC - in collaboration with the VCR - formulated the campus's first ever graduate program review policy. During the formulating process, GRC took into account suggestions from DivCo. GRC was also asked to consider a proposal by DivCo for joint program review between GRC and

UGC. GRC voted to approve its graduate program review policy in May 2009 but did not approve DivCo's joint program review.

CATALOG CHANGES

Eight of the nine graduate emphasis areas/graduate groups (ES had no changes) submitted changes to the Catalog. GRC reviewed and approved the revisions and forwarded them to the Graduate Division and the Registrar's Office.

CENTRALIZED RESEARCH UNITS (CRU) POLICY

GRC formulated a policy for the approval of CRUs at UC Merced, developed in collaboration with the VCR. GRC recommended that in the future, the policy be modified or a new policy established for shared research units operated under departments, Schools, or ORUs. While the formulated CRU policy only concerns research units requesting resources from the VCR, GRC noted that all research units compete for the same campus resources for research. GRC approved the CRU policy in May 2009 and the policy was then forwarded to DivCo and EVC Alley.

CHANCELLOR'S DISCRETIONARY FUNDS

The Chancellor announced that he is placing money into a discretionary fund that he anticipates will lead to the submittal of future competitive grant proposals. GRC was asked to opine on the best way to invest these research dollars. GRC recommended (1) increasing the current grant writer's time to 100% which would benefit the faculty and university, and, (2) the additional increment of funding be used to hire technical staff to support shared research infrastructure. GRC also recommended that for any new funding obtained as a result of these actions that return on overhead be used to augment the Chancellor's discretionary funds.

CRFS

GRC reviewed and approved 20 CRFs.

The committee also formulated a flowchart that shows the approval process for graduate courses.

FEDERAL STIMULUS BILL

GRC had some discussions on the federal stimulus bill and its ramifications for research. NSF funding went up by \$3 billion, NIH \$10 billion, and DOE Office of Science \$2.8 billion. For NSF, \$2.6 billion will be used to fund proposals that have already been reviewed but fall below the funding line. The remaining \$400 million will be divided - half for MRI and half for facilities grants. NIH put out a call in March 2009 for major instrumentation grants ranging from \$600,000 to several million dollars. In regards to graduate student funding, \$10 million dollars was placed into the education directorate.

FUTURE WEB-BASED CRF SYSTEM

UGC currently has a web-based system for the inputting and tracking of undergraduate CRFs. GRC expressed interest in doing the same with graduate courses. GRC invited School of Engineering Associate Dean German Gavilan (who created the undergraduate web-based system) to a GRC meeting to collect ideas from committee members on how to proceed with implementing a web-based system for graduate courses. Based on GRC's course approval workflow and CRF form, Gavilan is formulating a cost proposal that will be forwarded to GRC

members. Ultimately, the goal is to link the undergraduate and graduate CRF systems, but for the near future, Gavilan will implement a parallel system for graduate courses that is not linked to the undergraduate system. Gavilan will have a prototype in place by Fall 2009.

GRADUATE STUDENT AWARDS

- Faculty Mentor Program. The Graduate Division received eleven nominations. A GRC subcommittee evaluated and ranked them and forwarded the top four nominees to the Graduate Division.
- Outstanding Teaching Assistant Award. The Graduate Division received eight nominations. A GRC subcommittee evaluated them and recommended two nominees to the Graduate Division.

ITAC/SENATE IT COMMITTEE

The Academic Senate was asked by the Chancellor to nominate a faculty member to serve on an IT advisory committee. GRC provided input to DivCo on which issues the advisory committee should look at. DivCo declined to appoint a faculty member to the advisory committee. DivCo proposed that the Senate form its own IT committee. GRC was asked to opine on this proposal and concluded that it was in favor of forming a Senate IT committee that would deal with both research and teaching needs. GRC felt that it would not be practical, given its current size and workload, for GRC to take on responsibility for representing Senate IT needs, and that a separate Senate committee should be formed for this task.

MEMOS TO DIVCO

- Indirect Cost Return. GRC had several discussions about indirect cost return. The QSB emphasis area submitted a memo to GRC requesting that each fiscal year a certain percentage of indirect cost return be returned to facilitate ongoing research activities and programs in QSB. GRC acknowledged that this is a general issue that more broadly affects all research at UC Merced. GRC convened a subcommittee to deliberate on this issue and submitted a memo to DivCo that recommended the establishment of a joint committee comprised of Senate committees, the business office, the EVC, and School Deans to create a long-term distribution model of indirect cost returns.
- S&E 2 Building. Some members of GRC felt that there was confusion among the faculty regarding the configuration of the S&E 2 building. GRC submitted a memo to DivCo requesting that DivCo ask the Deans to communicate to the faculty an update on the progress in planning S&E 2. Furthermore, GRC requested that the Deans be asked to receive input from the faculty and articulate to DivCo how the planning process will proceed going forward, including transparency in decision making, dissemination of information to the faculty, and faculty input.
- Teaching Relief for Assistant Professors. GRC was concerned with the heavy workload placed on Assistant professors. The committee submitted a memo to DivCo requesting that ways be explored in which the Senate, Schools, and central administration may work independently or together to provide relief from service and teaching for one (or two) full semesters. This would give mid-career Assistant professors time for intense activity focused on preparing data for publication and grant proposals at a critical juncture before application for tenure.

NON-RESIDENT TUITION (NRT)

GRC and VCR Traina had several discussions about non-resident tuition and how much money UC Merced would have available.

There will be nine slots for new NRT for the 2009-2010 academic year. The graduate emphasis areas/groups were asked by GRC to submit their NRT allocation policies. After deliberating on the various areas/groups's policies, GRC decided to allow the areas/groups to continue with their own allocation policies and not create a university-wide one.

Another issue that GRC deliberated on was the idea of faculty swapping their start-up funds for NRT in order to get more international students.

After discussing various models of allocation GRC decided to allocate one slot to each area/group for the coming year. In the future, when UC Merced receives more than nine slots, GRC will further explore the idea of creating a swap model for faculty start-funds.

PSYCHOLOGY PROGRAM PROPOSAL

GRC received the Psychology program proposal in December 2008. GRC chose a review subcommittee to make initial comments and then the committee as a whole opined. In general, GRC found the proposal to be thoughtfully constructed and included the detailed information requested in graduate program proposals by CCGA. GRC evaluated the proposal according to the four major CCGA review criteria: (1) quality and academic rigor of the program; (2) adequacy of the size and expertise of faculty to administer the program; (3) adequacy of the facilities and budgets; and (4) applicant pool and placement prospects for the graduates. CAPRA also reviewed the proposal. GRC submitted its comments along with CAPRA's to the Psychology graduate group requesting that the proposal be amended to address the concerns raised by GRC and CAPRA. GRC also requested that EVC Alley provide a letter of support to the proposed program detailing resource commitments in order to assist the proposers in this effort. GRC looks forward to receiving a revised version of the proposal in the next academic year.

REQUEST FROM CRE

The Committee on Rules & Elections (CRE) reviewed the Bylaws of each Academic Senate committee. GRC was asked to review its Bylaws and list any substantive changes it felt was necessary. The committee will continue this task in the next academic year.

REQUESTS FROM DIVCO (REVIEW ITEMS)

- Strategic Academic Plan (later changed to Strategic Academic Vision)

In response to DivCo's request, GRC reviewed the Strategic Academic Plan (SAP). GRC suggested more extensive deliberation by the relevant standing committees of the Academic Senate. GRC was also concerned with the SAP's focus on localism. As such, GRC recommended that the document be contextualized to national and international levels. Another observation the committee made was that the areas of science and engineering were downplayed in the SAP and need to be more developed. In addition, the research components of the currently proposed themes needed to be emphasized. And for research areas that are already established and not described in the SAP, GRC concluded that discussion of whether and how they receive

future resources is needed. Lastly, GRC was concerned that the SAP called for the realization of a total of 10 Schools and 5 Institutes at UC Merced within 20 years. GRC recommended that the breadth of future research themes be re-examined and that discussion of how these research themes will grow in the context of current programs be included in the SAP.

- School of Management Proposal

GRC reviewed the School of Management Proposal and while it felt that the interdisciplinary nature of the proposed School presented opportunities for UC Merced to develop a unique management program, the committee also identified academic and resource issues that are of concern. Specifically, GRC examined the following issues: (1) there is concern about the academic feasibility of the degree programs involving more than one School; (2) if it is found that existing courses in the current Schools will not meet the needs of management majors, additional courses that will need to be introduced by the Schools should be listed in order to determine if the additional hires proposed for the will be sufficient to deliver the necessary courses; and (3) office and lab space for Management faculty and staff. GRC concluded that the budget model should include a number of different scenarios for revenue and expenses in order to demonstrate how the School will respond in the event that actual revenue and expenses vary from estimates.

- Washington Advisory Group's (WAG) Report on the Medical School

GRC reviewed the WAG report and submitted its comments to DivCo. GRC agreed with the report's recommendations that the planning process must deal fully with fiscal realities and that the planning process be more structured, inclusive, and transparent. GRC raised the concern about the proposed biomedical track, specifically, the section in the report that suggested that the track can be introduced without substantial additional resources. GRC was also concerned by the report's statement that an early medical school need not be research intensive. The initial focus on instruction seems to imply that medical education faculty would be hired mainly for instruction and not research. This diverts resources from the research enterprise and is inconsistent with the faculty's intention to develop UC Merced into a premier research institution.

- Furlough/Salary Reduction Plan

GRC reviewed the Furlough/Salary Reduction Plan and forward its comments to DivCo. GRC did not support any of the proposed furlough/salary reduction plans. The committee remained unconvinced that UC explored all available alternative strategies for making up the budget shortfall. Any reduction in compensation will have a disproportionate affect on UC Merced, which is highly dependent on state support and at a critical stage of its development. Should furlough/salary reduction be implemented, GRC favored the furlough option over the pay reduction or hybrid models as it is more likely to be perceived as a temporary measure, while salary reduction might easily become permanent. GRC asked for reassurance that planning is underway for scenarios in which the state decides to keep the funding at the same level for next year, or drops funding, as it seems to do every year. Reduction in compensation, if implemented, should be accompanied by reduced expectations for the workload of faculty. The academic year should be shortened. Lastly, GRC concluded that any compensation reduction should have a more progressive scale (not just two steps). There should be a threshold below which no cuts are

taken (some workers at the lower end of the pay scale live below the poverty line and cannot afford any reduction in compensation).

REQUESTS FROM GRADUATE DIVISION

- Dates & Deadlines

In December 2008, the Graduate Division submitted to GRC a revised list of 2008-2009 Dates and Deadlines pertaining to graduate students – including deadlines for the advancement to candidacy – and a proposed list of deadlines for the 2009-2010 academic year. After some discussion and clarification by VCR Traina, GRC approved the revised 2008-2009 deadlines and proposed 2009-2010 deadlines in January 2009.

- Fellowships

- Eugene Cota-Robles Fellowship. The Graduate Division received five nominations. A GRC subcommittee evaluated and ranked them and forwarded the ranking to the Graduate Division.

REQUESTS FROM GRADUATE EMPHASIS AREAS/GROUPS

- GRC collected each graduate emphasis area/group's current Policies & Procedures and Bylaws.
- The Physics and Chemistry emphasis area submitted a revised version of their Policies & Procedures. They added rules pertaining to students seeking a waiver on graduate courses. In addition, the area changed its course requirements to: three core courses, three electives, and no compulsory requirement to present a seminar. GRC approved these revisions in January 2009.
- GRC also deliberated on the Electrical Engineering and Computer Science (EECS) emphasis area's revised Policies & Procedures. GRC felt that certain EECS policies were not in accordance with the Graduate Advisor's Handbook and asked EECS to revise its policies. EECS also submitted a request to GRC to change all CSE 2XX courses to EECS 2XX. GRC approved the request and the change was effective Summer 2009.
- Conjoining Courses. It came to GRC's attention that the Registrar recently stated that graduate and undergraduate courses can no longer be conjoined if they were not listed as conjoined on their CRFs. (Earlier conjoined courses that have already been approved and delivered as such did not specifically state on their CRFs that they were conjoined.) GRC deliberated on the topic and decided to ask each School to send the committee a list of all the courses the School wants to "grandfather in" as conjoined courses for Fall 2009 and beyond. Upon receiving the lists, GRC approved them at one time and the Registrar was notified.
- TA Policy. The Graduate Advisor's Handbook stated that the total length of service rendered by a graduate student in any combination of Teaching Assistant or Teaching Associate titles may not exceed 4 semesters following advancement to candidacy for the Ph.D. Three graduate areas/groups from the School of Natural Sciences submitted a request to GRC asking for this four semester limit to be deleted. After deliberating, GRC agreed to delete the four semester limit in February 2009.

RESEARCH/TRAVEL/SHARED EQUIPMENT GRANTS

The Academic Senate received funds in the amount of \$107,000 to be disbursed to the faculty to support research activities and the purchase of shared equipment. A revised call for proposals was approved by GRC in November 2008 and distributed to faculty with a February 1, 2009 deadline for submission. Twenty-six proposals (totaling \$132,232.31) were evaluated by GRC. Each proposal was assigned two reviewers – a lead reviewer affiliated with the PI's School and a second reviewer unaffiliated with the PI's School. GRC funded all twenty-six proposals totaling \$107,000.

SENATE RESEARCH AWARDS

For the first time in UC Merced's Academic Senate history, Senate awards were made to faculty. GRC awarded the following:

- Distinction in Research

The Senate Award for Distinction in Research (for tenured faculty) is intended to encourage and recognize individuals for research and/or other creative activities that have had a major impact on the field, either through a sustained record of contributions or through a specific, highly influential contribution.

- Distinguished Early Career Research

The Senate Award for Distinguished Early Career Research (for non-tenured faculty) is intended to encourage and recognize individuals for research and/or other creative activities that have had a major impact on the field, either through a sustained record of contributions or through a specific, highly influential contribution.

- Graduate Teaching/Mentorship Award

This Senate Distinguished Graduate Teaching/Mentorship Award is intended to encourage and recognize individual excellence in teaching at the graduate level and mentorship of graduate students. Both of these are important functions of faculty at a research university.

GRC did not receive any nominations for the Teaching/Mentorship award.

Following its decision on the awards, GRC sent a memo to DivCo detailing its recommendations regarding solicitation of nominations for these awards in the future in order to increase the number of candidates for the awards. GRC suggested (1) that the request for nominations go out earlier in the academic year; (2) that the advertising and/or nominating process be modified in 2010 to encourage a larger number of nominations from across a broader cross-section of academic disciplines; and (3) that review instructions for the subcommittee include some wording on whom the committee may consult in case an issue (such as a possible conflict of interest) arises.

SYSTEMWIDE ITEMS REVIEWED BY GRC

- Report on the Professional Doctorate

GRC reviewed the report of the Subcommittee on the Professional Doctorate of the UC Task Force on Planning for Professional and Doctoral Education. Overall, GRC found that the report presented a thorough analysis and list of recommendations regarding the principles that should be used to determine when such doctorates are distinct from doctorates based on research and scholarship, and therefore appropriate for the CSU to offer them (either independently or jointly with UC). In summary, GRC was in agreement with the key recommendations of the report that

UC should strive to retain sole authority to grant research/scholarship-based doctoral degrees in order to ensure effective use of public resources, and that for professional doctoral titles, UC and CSU should develop principles and a process for evaluating the appropriateness of sharing granting authority.

- UC Accountability Framework Draft

GRC reviewed the Accountability Framework draft and suggested using indicators that are more relevant to UC Merced such as retention of under-represented students or under-represented student enrollment in the Freshman through Senior years, early career awards per faculty member (as UC M has a high percentage of untenured faculty), research expenditures reported on a per capita basis, and number of courses taught per faculty member. GRC also recommended broadening comparison institutions.

GRC CHAIR (PROFESSOR VALERIE LEPPERT) REPORTS ON CCGA ACTIVITIES INCLUDED THE FOLLOWING:

- Budget
- Graduate student support/funding
- Furloughs and pay cuts
- UC Pension
- Indirect cost return
- Review process for part time or self supported graduate programs

GRC VICE CHAIR (PATTI LIWANG) REPORTS ON UCORP ACTIVITIES INCLUDED THE FOLLOWING:

- MRUs
- Opening of a new office at OP: the Proposition Application Review Center that will handle all aspects of peer review that deal with OP and the Office of Research.
- Research grants (including those being awarded from Lawrence Livermore and Los Alamos labs) and administration of grants.
- Research infrastructure
- Technology/teleconferencing/web seminars
- Furloughs and pay cuts
- Federal stimulus bill
- PRO/UAW (post doc union)

GRC also benefited from consultation and reports throughout the year from VCR Traina.

Respectfully submitted,

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