

GRADUATE COUNCIL (GC)
Minutes of Meeting
October 2, 2017

Pursuant to call, the Graduate Council met at 3:00 P.M. in Room 362 of the Kolligian Library, Chair Teamrat Ghezzehei.

Present: Teamrat Ghezzehei, Leroy Westerling, Sholeh Quinn, Hrant Hratchian, Fred Wolf, Sabah Ul-Hasan, and Marjorie Zatz. Matt Hibbing, Andy LiWang, and Maria DePrano participated by phone. Laurie Herbrand, the Registrar and consultant to the committee, was also present.

I. Executive Session

An executive session, including voting members only, was held from 3:00 to 3:30 p.m.

II. Chair's Report

Chair Ghezzehei reported on the September 29, 2017 meeting of the Academic Planning Work Group. During this first meeting, work group members reviewed the charge to the group, and discussed strategies for communicating with faculty chairs about the process.

III. Vice Chair's Report

A. Periodic Review Oversight Committee (PROC)

Vice Chair Westerling reported that the October 2, 2017 meeting focused primarily on undergraduate education, including the WSCUC core competencies.

B. Budget Working Group

The first meeting of this work group is scheduled for October 6, 2017.

IV. Academic Reorganization Work Group Report

GC member Hratchian reported on the first meeting of the Academic Reorganization Work Group, which is charged with developing a proposal for departmental structures within the schools. The proposal, which is due by January 2018, will be disseminated for faculty review and comment during the 2018 spring term. Following discussion of the charge, the Work Group identified a set of next steps, which include identifying models and best practices from other campuses. A member noted that it will be critical to ensure the new structure facilitates interdisciplinary. Members suggested looking outside of the UC system for models.

V. Consent Calendar

The agenda and [Graduate Council's comments](#) on the UC Merced Sustainability Strategic Action Plan were approved as presented.

VI. Consultation with the Acting Dean of SSHA, Holley Moyes

Acting Dean Moyes reported on the delays in payment of student paychecks and travel

reimbursements experienced by SSHA graduate students this calendar. As per Dean Moyes, the delays resulted largely from understaffing due to the resignation of key personnel. To address the issue, SSHA has added a third FTE to its graduate support services office, bringing the total FTE to three, and is currently in the process of filling both open positions. To build redundancy and increase efficiency, staff are being prepared to provide backup across the schools. As a necessary first step, workflows are being mapped and will be standardized across the three schools. At members' request, the Dean agreed to provide a written summary of what has transpired including causes, remedies, and preventive measures undertaken.

ACTION: GC Chair Ghezzehei will request a summary report from Acting Dean Moyes.

VII. Consultation with VPDGE Zatz

A. Carry-Over Business from 9/18/17: Fellowship Funding and Access to Services / Benefits

At its September 18, 2017 meeting, GC members requested a written report from the Graduate Dean describing the fellowship access to services and benefits situation. This includes the services affected, the steps undertaken to address student concerns and the associated timeline, and preventative measures undertaken to avoid reoccurrence.

As a precursor to a written report, members were briefed on the issues, and efforts to address the issues, experienced by students who are fully funded by fellowships. During the discussion, members considered the differences between GSR and Fellowship based funding, and the consequences of those differences. Specifically, students funded wholly on fellowships are not considered employees and are thus removed from the payroll system. Consequently, students lose access to services and benefits available to employees and accessed through the payroll system. These include parking, Travel and Entertainment cards, Catbuy, and worker's compensation.

Members discussed long term solutions. The VPDGE is pursuing small, partial appointments for students on fellowships to maintain them in the payroll system. Members also recommended putting in place a process that comprehensively addresses student needs following transition to full fellowship funding. Members also raised concerns about the campus' ability to proactively identify issues, and encouraged the Dean to include in her pending report how the campus's approach to implementing processes will be revised to ensure that issues and problems are proactively identified, addressed, and communicated to appropriate stakeholders. Members also recommended sending the complete summary of fellowship associated issues to fellowship recipients to review for completeness.

ACTION: GC will request that the Graduate Dean's report also address how we will be revising our approach to implementing processes to ensure proactive identification and resolution of issues.