

**GRADUATE COUNCIL (GC)****Tuesday, March 31, 2020****1:30 – 3:00 PM****Meeting Minutes****Graduate Council Duties**

The meeting was called to order at 1:31PM, via Zoom, with Chair Westerling presiding.

**I. Chair's Report--- *Chair Westerling***

Chair Westerling updated GC members on CRF Policy Workgroup, and consulted members on three questions that had not been addressed at the last GC meeting. Clarifications were made by the Registrar, after GC members' questions, about special topics courses (STCs): the Registrar's office monitors the titles of STCs but not contents, and the titles (beyond "Special Topics") appear on student transcripts; students may take more than one STCs per semester with prior notification. Chair advised members to review their groups' STCs, as in some groups it seems that the STC titles are being used for highly specialized topics (which should become regular courses), rather than as a "safety net" to explore new course ideas.

Members agreed that a Special Topics course should be allowed to be offered three times with the same description before it has to be a regular course, with exceptions for specialized special topics courses that rotate regularly among faculty, such as what is offered in EECS; that any pedagogically necessary additions to STCs (discussion section, lab section, etc.) may be approved at the school level (the same as special topics courses); and that there be the option (i.e., not mandatory) for department and program support staff (not curriculum managers) to submit and edit CRFs on instructors' behalf.

Motion was made to approve the above three points. Motion carried unanimously.

ACTION: Communicate GC responses to CRF Workgroup.

**II. Vice Chair's Report—*Vice Chair Hratchian***

Vice Chair Hratchian will draft the charge for the Teacher Preparation Program working group as soon as possible. As the co-Chair of the Working Group on Cyberinfrastructure, he will keep GC abreast, as it impacts graduate students and post-docs, of the progress on creating a source of funding to support research activity especially in remote setting.

ACTION: Vice Chair will draft the charge and new membership structure for TPP Working Group.

**III. Consent Calendar**

A. The agenda (3/31)

B. Minutes from the 3/17 meeting

C. CRFs

New: PSY 215 Essential Mathematics for Quantitative Social Research

Modify existing: PH 211 Introduction to Statistical Methods in Public Health

Hearing no objection, consent calendar was approved as presented.

**IV. Discussion Item: Grading Policy during Emergency Course Continuity—*Chair Westerling***

University campuses across the nation, as well as other UC campuses, have instituted changes in grading policies which seek to mitigate the negative impact of the disruptions caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. UGC has drafted, and DivCo endorsed, P/NP grading policy for undergraduate education during Emergency Course Continuity (ECC). GC discussed its counterpart for graduate education, drawing on examples from other campuses. It was noted that UCB is the only campus that has defaulted on P/NP for undergraduates, other campuses have made it student-driven process, where students can request to go this route until the last week of instruction.

Question was raised about how to treat summer session, and GC decided that for both summer and fall students can have 2 S/U courses if ECC ended in Spring. A member proposed that GC extend the deadline for changing grades to 2 weeks after the instruction is over, rather than last week of instruction, out of concern about students having to make the decision about S/U before knowing their grades. Another member concurred. Chair consulted the Registrar about changing grades after the finals, to which the Registrar responded the Registrar's office would be able to handle it. The policy draft was modified to allowing students to ask for grade option change up to 2 weeks after the finals (3 weeks after the last week of instruction).

Motion to approve the edited text carried unanimously.

ACTION: Transmit the approved policy to DivCo

**V. Campus Review: Revised Organized Research Unit (ORU) Policy—*Member Arif***

Committee on Research developed new policies and procedures for the establishment, review and closure of ORUs in AY 18-19, and submitted for campus review towards the end of AY 18-19. The policy has been revised, with additional clarification of certain aspects provided in a list of FAQs.

The lead reviewer summarized the changes to the policy. The lead reviewer and the Chair agreed that it is important to standardize ORUs, as there are many "centers" and it is not clear which ones are ORUs and which ones are not. Chair added that a robust ORU policy is important for graduate education, so it would be good to comment/endorse. Motion to endorse the policy was made and carried unanimously.

ACTION: Transmit memo to DivCo communicating GC endorsement.

**VI. Systemwide Review: Revised Presidential Policy on Travel Regulations—*Member Theodoridis***

The lead reviewer summarized the revisions, which include policy update based on new IRS business mileage reimbursement rate, use of gender-neutral language, a new section on sustainable travel which are suggestions to be mindful and nonbinding, and clarification of foreign per diem. The lead reviewer did not find any objectionable clause, or need for comments.

ACTION: Communicate to DivCo that GC declines to opine.

**VII. Discussion Item: CoR "LEAP" Proposals—*Chair Westerling***

Chair Westerling explained that, in an effort to enhance UC Merced's research profile, CoR is proposing the restructuring of the Faculty Grants Program (proposal I), and the development of research workforce (proposal II) to maintain a healthy staffing level. Proposal I recommends increasing the funds available, and create two separate categories of grants—one to be decided at school levels (with a report back to CoR on research impact), and the other one for campus-wide research activities, rotating on a 3-year cycle between different research foci, intended for inter-school collaborative research. Proposal II recommends funding graduate student assistant researchers (GSARs) to provide research support (as opposed to GSRs who are funded to conduct research in their own research area) in temporary positions.

A member expressed concerns about the proposal's STEM focus, with insufficient reference to supporting arts and humanities. Another member pointed out that the CoR research awards are being offered using indirect cost reimbursement from external grants, which at other campuses go back to the grantees at a much higher percentage, and the new proposal may be trying to address this issue. It was decided that, while GC will endorse the proposal, members will submit written comments for incorporation into the memo to be submitted to CoR.

ACTION: Analyst will draft memo incorporating member comments, and transmit to CoR by April 6.

#### **VIII. Consultation with VPDGE**

In interest of time, VPDGE asked to postpone COVID-19 related updates (program changes/cancellations, enrollment projections, annual review of graduate student form) until the next meeting. She notified GC of 2 new NSF GRFPs (Graduate Research Fellowship Program, which covers tuition and pays stipend)—one for applied math, which is the third GRFP in a row, and a mechanical engineering student. Admissions are looking good although many admitted international students will likely not be able to attend in Fall.

There being no further business, meeting was adjourned at 2:55PM.

Attested by LeRoy Westerling, GC Chair