

**GRADUATE COUNCIL (GC)**

Meeting Minutes

Monday, August 31, 2020

1:30-3:00PM

Zoom URL: <https://ucmerced.zoom.us/j/2092009728>

Zoom Phone: 1 669 900 6833, Meeting ID: 209 200 9728

Documents available in [Box](#)[Graduate Council Duties](#)

---

Pursuant to call, the Graduate Council met at 1:32pm on Monday, August 31, 2020, via zoom, with Chair Hratchian presiding.

**I. Welcome and Introductions – *Chair Hratchian***

All introduced themselves.

**II. Chair’s Report—*Chair Hratchian***

Chair Hratchian reported on committee businesses that took place prior to this inaugural meeting.

Chair Hratchian described his collaboration with Interim Graduate Dean Kello, the international office, and the provost’s office, about preparing for the Fall semester with a high level of uncertainties. It appears to be in a stable place now compared to during summer. Enrollment numbers overall are up, better than anticipated, and thus not likely for graduate students to have negative financial impact from reduced enrollment of undergraduate students (and subsequent reduction in TA-ship availability).

Chair Hratchian then explained the [4+1 program proposal and related documents from MBSE](#). Professor Sarah Kurtz has identified potential campus stakeholders, and has found strong support for the program. The next step is for her to have a discussion with the admissions and financial aid committee, to determine what kind of admissions change needs to be made. GC will coordinate efforts with UGC and the provost’s office to determine if a pilot cohort could be started.

The chair also mentioned, as upcoming GC tasks, formulating a strong recommendation on the structure and organizational future of the Teacher Preparation Program (TPP), and helping shepherd along the Gallo School of Management proposal.

**III. Vice Chair’s Report –*Erin Hestir***

Vice Chair Hestir reported on Graduate Group (GG) Chairs’ Meeting on 8/29/20. Her participation aims to make GG Chairs feel more connected with GC and empowered. Topics included the student health coverage (Chris: students never lost coverage, 3<sup>rd</sup> party vendor confirmed), Bookstore’s new vendor, which has made poor communications, including to students that announced \$500 “credit.” Vice Chair asked members to communicate to their students to clarify that it is not pure credit, it is a *line of credit*. (Chris: has been trying to communicate this to students too, they can return things and remove the “credit”).

The Vice Chair also informed the GC members of a new seminar series organized by the Graduate Division. GEARS mentoring program will be offered now as a seminar series for one academic credit. Also Graduate Division is pioneering website development, to improve the web presence of graduate groups.

Vice Chair also communicated to GGs at the meeting that several GGs need to update their P&Ps, and that GC would be reaching out to them.

**IV. Consent Calendar**

- A. The agenda (8/31/20)
- B. Minutes from AY 2019-20 meetings
- C. Graduate Council [Calendar](#) for Academic Programs and Courses

**ACTION:** The consent calendar was approved as presented. Analyst will upload all documents to the Senate Website.

**V. Conducting Committee Business – Chair Hratchian**

Members discussed the following aspects of conducting committee business.

- [Guide to Committee Membership and Principles to Guide the Conduct of Executive Session](#)
- Confidentiality
- Meeting Schedule
- Executive Session
- Managing Work
- [Committee Duties](#)
- [GC Conflict of Interest Policy](#)

Chair expressed his intention to finalize the addition of Library representative as a permanent consultant. Chair explained the concept of the executive session, wherein there will be a report out but only the decision, none of the discussion can be disclosed outside the room. Executive session is declared by vote of the participants. Examples include graduate program reviews, and fellowship applications. Members are welcome to recommend holding an executive session to the analyst or the chair.

Chair recommended all meeting participants to read the campus principles to guide shared governance, which highlights the importance of trust that everyone who attend a shared governance meeting comes with good intentions and treats each other with respect. Chair also asked members not to hesitate to say they do not have time to perform a committee task, it is better than to take on a task that cannot be completed. In the event that this happens, the chair asked members to please let him and analyst know and task will be reassigned.

**ACTION:** Analyst will provide the link to the appropriate version of the Principles to Guide Shared Governance.

In regards to GC duties, Chair considers the welfare of post-docs, and the welfare of faculty in their interaction with graduate students and post-docs, an important issue for GC to address. As the campus population of post-docs has reached a particular growth point, it is a critical issue, and falls within the purview of the Council. Strong mentoring programs and metrics for faculty assessment, and faculty professional development that definitely relates to graduate studies, are items Graduate Council needs to consider.

Chair asked members to self-identify and feel free to report perceived Conflict of Interest (COI) to him, and, if it involves perceived COI of Chair or Vice Chair, to report to Senate Executive Director, or Senate Chair or Vice Chair. GC members reviewed the COI policy, and it was pointed out that the policy does not mention Graduate Groups.

**ACTION:** The motion to approve a revised policy, with change from “departments or programs” to “department, program, or graduate group” in all instances, was made and seconded. All in favor. The analyst will update the COI and transmit to Senate Chair.

**VI. Discussion Item: Anticipated Business for AY 2020-21 – Chair Hratchian**

Members reviewed anticipated business for the year.

- CCGA proposal and other Program reviews
  - GC will likely be reviewing the SSGPDP Master’s in Data Science and Analytics, and the 4+1 program from MBSE. Also anticipated is the School of Management proposal.

- Develop, revise and/or finalize the following policies
  - [Policy](#) on Graduate Group Policies & Procedures (P&P)  
During AY 19-20, GC reviewed the P&P revision process and made modifications to the template to streamline the process. For this meeting, it is recommended that GC revise the review process so that graduate groups only need to vote once per submission, and also include a formal review by Graduate Division prior to submission to GC to ensure alignment with Graduate P&P Handbook (GPPH).

A member questioned how GPPH is revised. Chair responded that Graduate Division brings proposed changes to GC for approval. Clarification was requested on whether GG P&Ps must be in compliance with GPPH. The Chair answered in affirmative, adding that the problem is that some GG P&P are out of date, as they have not had recent revisions. This inconsistency confuses and potentially creates problems for graduate students. Thus, GC decided to set up a review cycle and sunset out of date P&Ps.

Vice Chair asked if there was support for GGs as they revise their P&P. Dean Kello consulted with the GG support staff and confirmed their support, as they use the documents often. The Chair clarified that the P&P policy and template is a “living document” that can be used by groups right now, and be adjusted as needed. The current proposed adjustment is that GG vote is only required once, after review by GC Policy Subcommittee, and that a review by the graduate division be conducted prior to submission to GC Policy Subcommittee.

**ACTION:** The motion to approve, with the addition of the review by the Graduate Division, carried unanimously. Analyst will upload the updated version on Senate website.

- [Policy](#) for Non-Academic Senate Faculty Eligibility to Teach Graduate Courses  
The recommended action was to consider revision to specifically address instructors without doctoral degrees. Chair would like the Policy Subcommittee to review prior to full GC discussion.

**ACTION:** Table until the next meeting, awaiting Policy Subcommittee review.

- Graduate Student Rights and Responsibilities/Conflict Resolution  
The faculty-graduate student dispute workgroup will be convened in Fall 2020. GC will draft a policy document based on their recommendations, the National Academies’ [report on sexual harassment \(2018\)](#), and Graduate Division’s draft document presented to GC in AY 2019-20.

**ACTION:** Table until a future meeting, awaiting Policy Subcommittee review.

- TPP Academic Oversight  
Chair Hratchian briefly explained that GC led the formation of the TPP Workgroup, in response to concerns raised by the members of the TPP’s Curriculum Advisory Board (CAB). Chair is currently engaged in an effort to set up an informal consultation meeting with the administrative partners.

**ACTION:** Table. Chair will make a full report on this item at the next meeting.

- Review CRFs, Graduate Group Bylaws, and Policies and Procedures  
Standard GC activity. P&Ps to be revised on schedule, as discussed above.
- Recommend revisions to the fellowship award processes  
Address concerns about the number of reviews GC and Grad Group reviewers must conduct at a short notice.
- System and campus review items:

Members reviewed the campus's 5-year Planning Perspectives, 2020-25. Chair recommend endorsement.

**ACTION:** The motion to endorse the Perspectives was made, seconded, and carried unanimously. Analyst will send the endorsement memo to Senate Chair.

#### VII. Graduate Council Goals for AY 2020-21 – *Chair Hratchian*

Chair Hratchian reviewed the committee goals, and suggested members to bring up any other items that they would like to add. Engaging in the development and planning of the funding model, enhancing mentoring support for postdocs, and addressing anti-Black racism are particularly important goals. Chair would like to take the anti-Black racism discussion beyond the campus, and think of the campus's role in addressing systemic racism in national and global terms. Chair also addressed the importance of building a stronger structure of collaboration with Graduate Dean, School Deans, and Graduate Group Chairs. Helping GG chairs develop strong leadership skills also contributes to building up better infrastructure and culture to help faculty-graduate student conflict resolutions.

- **Enhance Postdoc mentoring and support** during COVID-19 (ensuring postdocs are informed of current guidance), and beyond (professional development opportunities are made available and communicated)
- **Engage in graduate group funding model development and planning**, particularly with respect to balancing the needs of vertically aligned programs with intrinsically interdisciplinary graduate programs.
- **Address anti-Black racism**, working with DivCo and relevant administration and joint task forces.
- **Strengthen communication lines between graduate group chairs, School Deans, and Graduate Council**  
Continued communication about policy [accommodation for COVID](#), enhance relationships with school-level graduate group support teams, and facilitate graduate group chair leadership development

**Recommended Action:** GC Vice Chair will communicate the [P&P review timeline](#) and process at the next Graduate Chairs' meeting.

- **Advance Faculty-Graduate Student Conflict Resolution**, building on AY19-20 FWAF-GC joint initiative. Actively participate in the Senate-Administration joint working group, and revise policies accordingly
- **GC's Role in Reaching R1**  
Previous suggestions in this regard include inviting the VCORED (last consultation was October 30, 2018), and inviting the Chief Human Resources Officer (to discuss grant support personnel). Chair thanked the member who suggested this goal, and asked members to recommend possible guests. One of the school Deans has expressed interest in attending.

**ACTION:** GC members will email GC Chair and Vice Chair, and the analyst, the names of their suggested guests to attend a GC meeting, for any of the above goals, or other businesses.

#### VIII. **Establish Subcommittees and Other Appointments** – *Chair Hratchian*

Chair Hratchian asked which subcommittee each member would like to serve. The Chair and Vice Chair will meet separately to coordinate their assignments.

1. Policy Subcommittee (3 members last year) – ideally one from each school  
Linda-Anne Rebhun (CHAIR), Jennifer Lu; Hrant Hratchian (decided after the meeting)

**ACTION:** Analyst will forward the MBSE P&Ps to the Subcommittee for review.

2. CRF/CPS Subcommittee (chair and 2 members; ideally one individual from each school)

Sandie Ha, Sarah Depaoli, Stephanie Woo (CHAIR)

**ACTION:** Analyst will set up a meeting for the members of this committee to review the process.

3. Periodic Review Oversight Committee ([PROC](#))—one representative  
A member pointed out that PROC might not be reviewing programs, as there were requests for delay. Chair feels that business should move forward, because delay will cause crunch later. PROC plans to consult on delays at its first meeting. (It was decided at a subsequent GC leadership meeting that the Vice Chair would attend.)
4. Fellowship Subcommittee (2 members; commence in October, work with Eric Cannon from Graduate Division on fellowship review timeline and process to manage workload for GC members.)  
  
Boaz Ilan (CHAIR), YangQuan Chen
5. Others? No further appointments were made at this time.

#### IX. Consultation with Interim Vice Provost/Dean of Graduate Education, Chris Kello

##### A. Overview of Graduate Division Initiatives

Enrollment is up, at 740 students, with more than expected international students (with 47 deferrals). IVPDGE's focus this year is managing funding for students, as there may be immediate challenges especially if deferred students arrive. The other focus is recruiting into next year, with search engine optimization of graduate program websites (with a vendor). IVPDGE would like to work closely with GC. IVPDGE is working with the budget office (especially with AVPAPB Schnier) to manage Ph.D. admissions next year due to the budget crunch. On recruitment, Chancellor Muñoz aims at creating stronger connections with HBCUs and CSUs to recruit more diverse students. IVPDGE agrees, and plans to examine the structural issues in recruitment and placement of HBCU graduates. In addressing the advisor-advisee issues, Graduate Division is developing close working relationship with VPF's office for when issues arise; collaboration with GC will aim at reducing the incidents from arising.

Chair requested updates on statistics on reopening, and on the student fees. The latter is a systemwide issue. While campus opposes keeping the fees for unavailable services---especially the ones that students pay out of their pockets---campus must wait for systemwide response. These are fees that students voted to put in place, which may also be complicating the discussion. Vice Chair pointed out that for her students she charged these fees on grants, and many grant templates include student fees. There needs to be more campus awareness about fees being covered by external funds.

**ACTION:** For the next GC meeting, GC Chair and Grad Dean will provide updates on reopening, and on student fees.

- X. **New Business?** There was no new business.

#### XI. Informational Items

[Report of the Academic Council Teaching Evaluation Task Force](#)

[CSHE Report on Students' Mental Health \(Aug 2020\)](#) from UC Berkeley

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 3:03PM. Att. by Chair Hratchian.