

GRADUATE COUNCIL (GC)

Monday, September 14, 2020

Meeting Minutes

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

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

The Graduate Council meeting was called to order at 1:32PM via Zoom, with Chair Hratchian presiding.

I. Executive Session (none)**II. Chair's Report—Chair Hratchian**

A. Divisional Council (9/4/20) was essentially an informational meeting. The Chancellor was in attendance. EVC/Provost's updates included Spring 2021 instruction, where in-person instruction seems unlikely in January, although there is still discussion on transitioning to in-person later, after spring break. Members discussed the impact of reopening on graduate students, such as visa status for international students, unavailability of childcare, and the double ambiguity it would present to graduate students who are Teaching Assistants. Questions were raised about students' residency, and eligibility to be tested for Covid-19. The Registrar is in the process of address verifications, and offered to provide the residency data (Merced/CA/US/Overseas).

ACTION: The Registrar will provide GC with graduate student residency data.

B. Updates on reopening, enrollment, and student fees: the Chair shared his screen with data, including number of postdocs (about 60, 28 with current approved research reopening plan), graduate students (737 total- 688 PhD-students, 300 with approved plan). Other statistics to be included are COVID tests, and Merced and California residency. Chair emphasized the need to keep these numbers in mind as campus needs to manage funding for the existing graduate students, and these statistics will affect next year's admissions. A member asked how the University was managing residency requirements. Interim Graduate Dean Kello responded that UCOP made it easier to establish residency, by allowing to count the time, while enrolled remotely, towards residency, and not rejecting the appeals, which, in his words, "normally never work."

ACTION: GC members to send recommendations for data to the Chair.

C. Workgroup on Faculty Graduate Student Disputes (the charge and helpful information are [here](#))

ACTION: YanQuan Chen was appointed to the workgroup.

D. Chair added that he planned to ask DivCo to consider committee appointments in such a way that there is not the slightest appearance of conflict of interest— that chairs and vice chairs of committees do not serve on any other committees. Chair is concerned that two members of the Committee on Committees (CoC) are serving on another committee; that CoC chair is serving on CAP (as a member) seems particularly problematic.

III. Consent Calendar

A. The agenda (9/14)

B. [Minutes from the 8/31 meeting](#)

C. Course Proposals

NEW: [COGS 210: Statistics for Cognitive Scientists](#)

[IH 242: Research Seminar: Space, Identity & Power](#) (repeatable, may take up to 4 times)

[ME 292: Directed Study of Technical Writing](#)

MODIFY: [MBSE 295: Graduate Research](#) (changing from letter to S/U grade)

D. Appointment of [a new Curriculum Advisory Board member](#) for the Teacher Preparation Program

Consent calendar was approved as presented.

ACTION: Analyst to move course proposals to the next stage and draft an approval memo for the CAB appointment, and upload items A and B on Senate website.

IV. Systemwide Review Items—Chair Hratchian

The Chair invited members to voice their opinions on whether or not they would like to see all review items, or would like to continue the practice, from last year, of the chair determining which items GC would review. All agreed it was good to follow last year's practice.

ACTION: Analyst to put on chair's report the review items GC chair declines to opine on GC's behalf.

- A. [Proposed revisions](#) to Senate Regulation 544: Registration (by 10/6/20)—Chair will assign someone to conduct a full review (Erin Webb will help with the review), to review by next meeting in time to send comment to Senate Office. The aim is further streamlining the process. Registrar has provided this link as reference: <https://www.ucop.edu/educational-innovations-services/programs-and-initiatives/ilti/>
- B. [Proposed revisions](#) to Senate Regulation 630: Undergraduate Degree Requirements (by 10/6/20) -the Chair decided GC would decline to opine.
- C. [Report](#) of the Academic Council Online Undergraduate Degree Task Force (by 11/2/20) Chair will request someone to review this item for next meeting, after screening it himself.

V. Discussion Item: Teacher Preparation Program (TPP) Workgroup—Chair Hratchian

The TPP Workgroup was formed last AY in response to a [memo](#) from its Curriculum Advisory Board (CAB), with the aim of improving academic oversight of the Program. Chair Hratchian explained that Extension was under Student Affairs, not Academic Affairs (until Fall 2020), and TPP, having no corresponding department, is a very different program than other extension programs. Chair will draft the charge, including the membership, that the workgroup is to examine the structure of the TPP and identify the weak points, and make recommendations to the Provost.

ACTION: Chair will draft the charge for GC's review by consent calendar at the next meeting.

VI. Presentation on Graduate Student Fellowships—Eric Cannon [postponed to next meeting]

At a GC-GD leadership meeting in August 2020, it was agreed that the Graduate Division would provide GC with a list of graduate student fellowships and their recipients. Eric Cannon was invited to present the list to GC, but was absent. It was decided to postpone the presentation to the next GC meeting.

Dean Kello used this time to ask GC about what he termed the "top off fellowships" which are small amount of money (\$1000 or so) given yearly. These awards do not seem to impact student recruitment. Donors are moving away from these fellowships, and administering them is time-consuming, but there is value in having fellowships on resume. Members discussed alternative ways to manage the donations, including combining small fellowships to make full fellowships, or awarding them every other year. Both of these suggestions have the drawback of fewer fellowships being awarded (i.e., negative impact on students' resumes). Chair suggested delegating the decision to schools or departments, instead of graduate division managing the awards centrally. Dean Kello said there are not enough awards to give to every department. Chair suggested graduate group chairs form a committee to select recipients for 2-3, full fellowships per year.

VII. Consultation with Vice Provost/Dean of Graduate Education —Interim VPDGE Chris Kello**A. New Diversity Fellowships**

With possible passage of PROP 16 (repeal of Prop 209, which disallows affirmative action), there have been renewed calls to leadership to do more to diversify the university. The Chancellor is very supportive of these calls, and is setting up the diversity fellowship to recruit Black students. Chancellor's directive is to award 3 fellowships this year. GC chair will attend the first meeting on this fellowship on 9/28/20, and will update GC. The nature of the fellowship has not been defined yet.

B. Postdoctoral Professional Development

About 5 years ago, postdoctoral scholars came to be under the purview of the Graduate Division (until then the office of Organized Research and Economic Development, or ORED, oversaw them). There has

been interest in increasing postdoc professional development. Graduate Division (GD) is planning to provide stipend to postdocs for professional development, but there are technicalities that need resolution. For example, all stipends are frozen for staff (postdocs are staff), and most of the funds GD uses for professional development come from student aid and fees, so they cannot be used for postdocs. Previous GD efforts to get more funding for postdocs have been unsuccessful. Dean Kello has made a decision to add some grant money to postdoc professional development, but these are the reasons for the shortage of postdoctoral professional development.

Members discussed how to develop a strong postdoctoral professional development program. In absence of resources other campuses have, such as indirect cost return, for GD to fund such a program, it was recommended that GC approach ORED. Members agreed that having a robust postdoctoral program would enhance UCM's ability to achieve R1, and it would make it easier to compete for grants. Dean Kello expressed that ORED does not have control over indirect cost return but might be able to increase postdoctoral professional development funding, and suggested that GC present a concrete proposal with specific monetary amount, of up to \$6,000.

C. Graduate Student Survey

Dean Kello referenced an undergraduate student survey on instructional resilience and courses created by the instructional resilience workgroup, and solicited GC input on how much surveying GD should do. He is hesitant to push frequent surveys, but it would be useful to have information on student success, to better plan for spring and AY 21-22. He would like to send out a survey in October. The workgroup will be surveying department chairs in the next month or so, on prioritizing in-person activities in Spring 2021.

Chair expressed, and a member agreed with, his concerns about UCM's pace of reopening, which has been slower than other institutions and has impacted research in long term, as no-cost extensions of grants does not equate with supplemental grants. Chair also pointed out that graduate students' needs are very different from undergraduate students. Dean Kello commented that the administration is consulting with faculty before announcing that instruction will be remote in Spring 2021.

VIII. New Business? (no new business)

IX. Informational Items

Provost Michael T. Brown's [letter](#) regarding the President's Postdoctoral Fellowship Program (8/18/20)
[Charge](#) for Enrollment Strategy Committee, issued by EVC/Provost (9/9/20)

Chair recommended that everyone look at the PPFP database, to invite the fellows to give seminars (good for the fellows' CVs also) and to recruit them—it is a fantastic way to recruit colleagues.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 3:01PM.