

GRADUATE COUNCIL (GC)

Tuesday, October 19, 2021

1:50 – 3:00 PM

COB 1, Room 320 (Willow Conference Room)Zoom URL: <https://ucmerced.zoom.us/j/84757526508> Passcode: 050205

Zoom Phone: 1 669 900 6833, Meeting ID: 84757526508

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

The meeting was convened for regular session at 1:57PM, with Chair Hestir presiding.

I. Chair's Report—Chair Hestir

Chair Hestir welcomed the new postdoctoral representative to GC, Mikahl Banwarth-Kuhn. The new GSA president, Violet Burton, was also welcomed as a guest.

A. Divisional Council (10/14)— Dr. Hurd and Dean Dumont updated DivCo on medical education. BPS is opening and people are slowly moving back in. Chair Hestir asked CoR to get an accurate account of how many graduate students and postdocs are impacted. Senate has not quantified the impact of closure on student/postdoc training. The Chancellor is giving Senate Faculty additional funds for antiracism activities. Chair Hestir would like GC to make a proposal to DivCo to provide training grants for student and postdoc representatives to senate committees. Interim VPDGE is supportive of the idea.

B. CCGA (10/6)—continues to discuss SSGPDPs. CCGA is strongly opposed to the systemwide Provost's proposal to conduct review at campus level only. There is conflict of interest-financial incentive at local level—and campuses benefit from the systemwide reviews by experienced reviewers. A working group may be established to discuss this further. At some other campuses, SSGPDPs were set up with little to no Senate faculty or their input. There are issues about how "self-supported" these programs are, and potential differences in the learning outcome. As we craft policies, these are things to consider. The UCLA policy on restricting online instruction to Senate faculty reflects these challenges.

II. Consent Calendar (2:00-2:00)—Chair Hestir

A. The agenda (10/19)

B. [Minutes](#) from the 10/5 meeting

Action: The Consent Calendar was approved as presented.

III. Systemwide Review Items (2:00-2:00)—Chair Hestir

[Proposed revised Presidential Policy on Sustainable Practices](#) is being reviewed by email.

Action: Transmit GC comments to Senate Chair by 10/22/21. (Completed on 10/22/21)

IV. Discussion Item: Distance Education-definition and exceptions (2:00-2:15)—Vice Chair Ha

Vice Chair Ha reported on the 10/18 meeting of the Course Proposal Subcommittee (CPS, which Vice Chair Ha chairs) with UGC's subcommittee to discuss the definition of distance education courses. Currently, UGC has two definitions, both of which differ from GC's. The discussion shifted away from the definition to the management of online/distance courses to ensure that no "accidental online degrees" are conferred. Questions were raised as to the role of CPS, which reviews courses and not programs. There was general consensus that introductory courses should not be online courses, and that offering of online courses need to be pedagogically based. UGC plans to meet with the Undergraduate Dean to discuss the Supplemental Questionnaire, and it agreed to having a GC representative attend. Chair encouraged members to share their thoughts with CPS.

ACTION: CPS will discuss criteria for reviewing online course proposals, and consider departmental level control over online courses given the dependence of some programs on extra-departmental courses. The

objective is to have a streamlined review process for both undergraduate and graduate courses, with the necessary flexibility to address graduate-specific needs.

GC [communicated](#) to Graduate Group and Department Chairs in August 2021 that seminar courses in Fall 2021 may be conducted remotely when guest speakers from outside UC Merced were in attendance. Given the vague language defining online courses, Chair recommended extending the exception for Spring 2022. It was agreed that GC would develop a clearer policy for next year, possibly with a cap on how many sessions can be remote. Also, there are benefits from face to face interaction that the junior faculty and students do not receive in online setting, such as informal mentoring and employment opportunities (postdoc, for example). Bringing people to UCM campus physically has been an effective means of recruitment, especially of diverse population.

ACTION: A motion was made, seconded, and unanimously approved to extend the blanket waiver for seminars with speakers who do not reside locally and colloquiums for Spring 2022, with reminder of the importance of in-person speakers and seminars for students and efforts to be made to make them happen.

V. Discussion Item: Conflict Resolution Infrastructure (CRI) Workgroup Recommendations and Implementation/Change of Advisor Form—*Chair Hestir (2:15-2:30)*

The CRI Workgroup's [final report](#) contains links to conflict resolution [flowchart](#) and [accompanying text](#) for graduate students and faculty. These materials have been reviewed by last AY's GC, FWAF, and EDI, but no formal endorsement was solicited. Change of Advisor is sometimes the outcome of the conflict, and the Graduate Division has proposed revisions to the [form](#). The differences in the language between the current and proposed forms are noted [here](#).

A member pointed out that there are no mentions of the chairs and members of student committees (such as the dissertation committee). Informal counseling should include committee members and chairs, especially in discussions of authorship norms and credit norms, which are discipline specific. Interim VPDGE agreed and stated that student committees were previously in the chart. He will reinsert it in the first step. Members discussed who GC should solicit comments from. In addition to the previously identified stakeholders (CoR, EDI, FWAF, department and graduate group chairs), school executive committees, deans, and graduate support staff were suggested. After their comments are made available, GC will invite the Graduate Academic Counselor for a discussion.

ACTION: The CRI Workgroup Final Report was unanimously endorsed. Interim VPDGE is to provide revised flowchart and text (guidelines), and GC to review by email by 10/22/21 on Consent Calendar. Hearing no objection, the revised guidelines were endorsed on 10/22/21.

The Interim VPDGE explained that, in a recent case, a party refused to sign off on some of the acknowledgements. Legal counsel informally agreed that the language is strongly worded. In discussion with the legal counsel, the Interim VPDGE has revised the language, which will be reviewed by the legal counsel upon GC endorsement. A member recommended clarifying the language on Principal Investigator (PI), as PIs are not necessarily a student's advisor. The Interim VPDGE agreed and will further edit the proposed language.

ACTION: Analyst will circulate the form on consent calendar with the minor changes proposed by GC that the Interim VPDGE incorporates. The [revised form](#) was endorsed on 10/22/21.

VI. Consultation with Vice Provost/Dean of Graduate Education —*Interim VPDGE Chris Kello (2:30-2:40)*

- A. Enrollment Management/Funding Model: It is a simple formula based on the number of new and continuing students who the program plans to support, external (i.e., non-TA) funding, and TA funding. Dean Kello has been consulting with school deans, who would communicate with their departments and graduate groups. The estimates need to be completed before admissions start, by January.

- B. New funding from the Chancellor: \$1 million has been awarded for graduate student fellowships, in addition to the funds diverted from TA-ships, for the purpose of reaching R1 status by 2030. The total fellowship funding will be about \$2 million for this and next recruitment seasons. Chancellor's Inclusive Excellence fellowships will also be doubled. A workgroup is being set up to think of how to spend these funds and capitalize on other sources. A member suggested reduction in student fees that PIs pay. Dean Kello requested one member from GC to serve on the workgroup with himself, VCORED, and a CoR representative. The workgroup's proposal will need approval from the CFO.

ACTION: Members who would like to volunteer to contact Dean Kello by end of today, 10/19/21.

- C. TOEFL iBT Home Edition, TOEFL Essentials, and IELTS Indicator: GC unanimously approved the addition of iBT Home Edition and IELTS as acceptable tests for English proficiency.

Due to lack of time, the following items were tabled:

- D. Master's Degree Plan II Committee
E. In absentia eligibility and geographical boundary for UC Merced
F. Graduate Professional Development one-credit course (for each program, or one offered by Grad Div)
G. Normative times for all programs
H. Policies and procedures for graduate group members to maintain membership

VII. Consultation with the Gallo School Planning Team (2:40-3:00)

The Gallo School Planning Team visited to follow up on AY 20-21 GC's comments on the [pre-proposal](#), accessible [here](#). The guests were Professor Jessica Trounstein; Paul Maglio, Director, and Alvin Cha, Assistant Director, Division of Management and Information; and Ehsan Choudhry, Faculty Liaison. Members learned that the current School preproposal includes the Department of Political Science (Poli Sci), and their questions centered on this addition. GC's main concern about the school was its underdeveloped identity. The addition of Poli Sci would seem to further weaken the School's cohesion. The guests described Poli Sci as consisting of two parts—one whose research focuses on political institutions and political economy, like Economics, and the other that focuses on political cognition and behavior, like CIS. In response to a member's concern about the School's impact on SSHA, the guests clarified that the Planning Team was ensuring that the Gallo School was a net positive for the campus, and that there was no financial incentive (change of pay scale) for Poli Sci to join the Gallo School. Chair suggested that the Planning Team consider GC recommendation from last year to create a prioritized list of programs to pursue, as well as research projects to pursue, as an integral part of the development of scholarly identity of the school.

VIII. New Business?

- A. Request from Senate Chair to formulate guidance on mentoring graduate students once they are unionized: Chair Hestir would like to postpone this item until there is a contract. Once Senate Chair sends a formal request for GC to opine, GC will respond formally.
- B. A new systemwide review item on leaves of absence/other leaves without pay (for entrepreneurship): there is potential impact on students whose mentor may go on leave. While the revision does not significantly alter the current leaves policy, Chair Hestir considers this an opportunity to start a conversation. Item will be sent out shortly.

IX. Informational Items

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