

GRADUATE COUNCIL (GC)**Meeting Minutes****Tuesday, November 30, 2021****1:30 – 2:25 PM****COB 1 Room 320**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](#)

Pursuant to the call, the meeting was convened at 1:32pm, with Chair Hestir presiding.

I. Chair's Report (1:30-1:35)—*Chair Hestir*

- A. Divisional Council (11/18)—see [here](#) for the full report. GC proposal for the use of the McKenzie Scott gift was received positively. Representatives from CAPRA, CoR and GC will finalize the prioritization.

ACTION: Members interested in serving in this workgroup will contact Chair Hestir.

LASC reported on its concerns that the library lacks sufficient financial support. The library is not open on Saturday and partially closed on Sunday, which is a student welfare issue.

II. Vice Chair's Report (1:35-1:50)—*Vice Chair Ha*

- A. Graduate Chairs' Meeting:

-Chairs discussed PhD admissions. Instructional budget is not yet available. For Fall 22, the number of applications (about 63) is lower than last year, but follows the trend pre-Covid. SPARK seminars are no longer being taught for additional compensation for faculty. As a result, many SPARK courses are not taught but they are still GE requirement. In this meeting, the possibility was raised that grad students teach these courses. Vice Chair Ha reminded the chairs that the teaching experience should be for the benefit of the students, not to cover the need for instructors, and she shared GC's discussions about how to ensure that teaching experience is benefiting students, and the possible requirement for CETL training. A chair asked if alternative teacher training (such as discipline-specific one) would satisfy the requirement if it does become a requirement.

-Announcement was made about an upcoming faculty mentoring training opportunity in April 2022.

-Also discussed the memo from administration about faculty not wanting to return to campus after thanksgiving. Because the definition of "in person" instruction allows for up to 1/3 being not in person, Vice Chair Ha was asked if GC was okay with people not coming back after Thanksgiving. She did not answer this question, which was raised at the end of the meeting.

Chair Hestir added that post-Thanksgiving instruction was discussed at the "regular check-in" meeting with UGC Chair Moyes, VPDUE Frey and Interim VPDGE Kello, where policy change was requested. Chair Hestir declined and reminded the administrators that, before the pandemic, instructors were encouraged to provide a "reading week" to students, and that it is important to leave flexibility for contingencies such as sickness and jury duties. However, questions such as the one Vice Chair Ha described reinforce the need for GC to reconsider the definition of in-person instruction. The UCLA definition (if not 100% in person, it is called online) removes the uncertainties/gray areas.

- B. PROC: Members discussed the state of the graduate assessment. From AY 19-20 and 20-21, PROC received 13 assessment reports. PLOs were generally met, but due to the small number (one PLO per year per program), findings are not generalizable. The PLO on writing seems to be consistently under-met, which is consistent with undergraduate assessment. On independent research PLOs, students identified mentorship and opportunity for collaboration outside program as important yet unmet needs. Some programs had lost their assessment rubric forms, and others found the rubric forms too general and not actionable. Chair Hestir suggested that, as the Graduate Division is being added in Curriculog as

an entity that can offer credit-bearing professional development courses, supplementary writing courses may be made available. Regarding assessment, her program is accredited by an external board, and her program faculty have created rubrics. Because these rubrics are faculty-driven, once the faculty approves of them, they can be incorporated into Canvas, which has analytical utilities. This may prove to be a better assessment tool than the current assessment form provided by the Graduate Division.

III. Consent Calendar (1:50-1:55)—*Chair Hestir*

- A. The agenda (11/30)
- B. [Minutes](#) from the 11/16 meeting
- C. Petition for a Graduate Student to Teach an Upper Division Course
[Cruz, Nicholas 202210 POLI 140](#) (Transitions to Democracy)
- D. [Draft approval memo](#) on Economics P&Ps and Bylaws

ACTION: The Consent Calendar was approved as presented.

IV. Systemwide Review Items (1:55-2:00)

- A. [Proposed Revised APM 025 \(and 671\)](#) (by 11/30)—Member Hratchian

The proposed revisions to APM 025 (Conflict of Commitment and Outside Activities of Faculty Members and Designated Other Academic Appointees) extends its applicability to postdoctoral scholars and other academic appointees who are not faculty and creates subcategories (A and B) for Outside Activities categories I and II, with some differences in reporting requirements across subcategories and appointment types. 671 applies to Health Sciences Compensation Plan Participants (not applicable to UC Merced).

Member Hratchian pointed out that nowhere in the document the supervisor who is not the department chair is mentioned. That is, the PI who supervises the postdocs and any other soft-money researchers (project scientists, for example) are not a part of the reporting process. Section 6 describes the involvement of department chair, but APM 245 does not contain specific language about this. Member Hratchian also found some language to be in need of further clarification in both APM 025 and 671 (Page 10 and 14). A member expressed concern that these academic employees could potentially engage in outside activities without supervisor's approval if the policy is implemented as written.

ACTION: Endorse with comments. Members to respond to Lead Reviewer's comments by 8AM on 12/3.

- B. [Proposed Presidential Policy on Abusive Conduct/Bullying in the Workplace](#) (by 12/6)—Chair Hestir

This is a newly proposed policy "responsive to a request from the Regents and the Academic Senate for a systemwide policy that addresses the University's responsibilities and procedures related to abusive conduct/bullying" (per cover letter). Chair Hestir's comments are [here](#). Chair Hestir found the policy to be reactive and punitive, rather than proactive and preventative. Postdoc contract is currently under negotiation, and bullying is one of the most significant issues postdoctoral scholars have raised. Chair encouraged all to review the proposed policy.

ACTION: Members to provide feedback by email by 8AM on 12/3.

V. Discussion Item: Online Courses (2:00-2:10) —*Member Ilan*

Member Ilan updated GC on the UGC/GC discussions with VPDUE Frey, CETL and CIO Kovalchick (who has a background in online teaching) on online instructional training, resources and evaluation tools. These meetings were prompted by concerns that online instruction is being offered for convenience, not pedagogical reasons, and concerns about the quality of instruction. As GC and UGC primarily interact with courses through the course proposal process, the discussion focused on how to address these concerns in this process. UGC has received many supplementary questionnaires with identical answers, and it found GC's questionnaire to be more detailed than their own. Some concrete suggestions for revision were made.

A GC member who is also a member of the Course Proposal Subcommittee (CPS) asked how this might connect with CPS's efforts. Chair Hestir responded that it is likely that UGC's questionnaire will be revised after the consultations, and GC's CPS can put its work on hold. The member responded that CPS already produced its suggestions, and GC could share CPS's suggestions with UGC.

Regarding requiring CETL training for online teaching, CETL is not against it, they reminded GC/UGC members of the workgroup that they make the rules, not CETL. Chair Hestir commented that the Councils need to make sure the policy was actionable—for example, CETL funding could be cut. Member Ilan added that CETL is strongly against hyflex. CETL also asked about having similar questionnaire for in-person courses. Member Ilan thinks there is a capacity issue. Another member added that this is an important question to answer—what is the value of the residential learning experience? For Summer Session, many students have difficulty with housing to attend in person. Per Registrar Webb, Summer 2020 enrollment increased, likely due to the online offerings. It is important to consider the benefit of offering online courses.

ACTION: GC will revisit this topic and the definition of in-person/online in January.

VI. Discussion Item: Graduate Student Teachers (2:10-2:20)—Chair Hestir---TABLED UNTIL A FUTURE MEETING. Registrar Webb provided data on graduate students identified in the schedule of courses as “instructor.” Members discuss the need for professional training of graduate students, as well as the need for campus-wide policy/guideline, based on [the data](#) presented as figures by Chair Hestir.

VII. Consultation with Vice Provost/Dean of Graduate Education (2:20-2:25) —Interim VPDGE Chris Kello R1 fellowship deadline is today, many proposals have been received. The plan is to have the awards out on 12/10/21. There is no instructional budget yet, which is holding up the progress on admissions planning. Regarding SPARK seminars being taught by graduate students, the cost is being covered this year by bridge funds. Dean Kello is looking at 10-20 additional SPARK courses taught by graduate students. Graduate Group Chairs welcome the idea, and it creates room for growing PhD admissions. In the long term, if instructional budget is solely based on credit hours, it may not be supportable to hire graduate students to teach SPARK seminars, as they are not a part of the instructional budget stream. It might have to be from the fellowship funding. (During Vice Chair's report, a GC member commented that it costs more to fund graduate students to teach SPARK seminars compared to giving stipends to faculty who teach SPARK seminars.)

GC Chair emphasized that we need to make sure that we are not brining graduate students solely to teach because we created an unsustainable GE program. A member commented that graduate student teaching SPARK does not fit either the SPARK model or graduate student educational model. (During Vice Chair's report, another member pointed out that students who teach SPARK are spending less time in their own labs.)

VIII. New Business? GSA representative Edgar Lopez Perez updated GC that the revision of the Graduate Student Rights and Responsibilities document should be completed by the end of the semester. Chair Hestir invited him to schedule an informal consultation with her and Dean Kello.

IX. Informational Items

X. Executive Session (2:25-3:00) GC entered Executive Session at 2:31PM.