

GRADUATE COUNCIL (GC)**Meeting Minutes****Thursday, May 13, 2021****2:00 – 3:30 PM**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 the call, the meeting was convened at 2:04PM, with Chair Hratchian presiding.

I. Chair's Report (2:00-2:30) -Chair Hratchian

A. Welcome New GSA President, Jordan Collignon; Congratulations to the outgoing GSA president Shayna Bennett for winning the systemwide Grad Slam.

B. CCGA (5/5)—the discussion on self-supporting graduate programs (SSGPs) is ongoing, a report is to be issued by the workgroup of CCGA and UCPB (CAPRA-equivalent of system level) about the cost of the SSGPs and how they impact state-supported programs. Chair also learned that at some campuses graduate student housing do not have stoves or ovens. UC Merced should make sure graduate students can cook in their campus-provided housing when it is provided in the future. GSA president shared that there were plans in the works to partner with an external company to build graduate student housing in the next few years. The rent may be around half the salary of a TA or GSR. Chair also consulted GC chairs from other campuses about the proposed MAPP 500, and all said that their campuses did not follow the procedures in hiring graduate students and postdoctoral researchers as laid out in MAPP 500. Informal consultation with APO is planned next week, and Chair will report to GC.

C. 4/30 DivCo—business as usual (except MAPP 500—DivCo's opinion is same as GC); Meeting of the Division—amendments to Campus Bylaws and Regulations passed, including those suggested by GC.

D. Fall Instruction—looks to be a “normal” fall across the system. WSCUC confirmed that remote classes in fall 2021 would not be counted as remote, but this would be the last semester of exception. Remote instruction by medically-exempt instructors, and for self-supporting international students who are unable to enter the US, require GC guidance, especially to ensure that programs do not cross the 50% threshold that would designate them as online degree programs and thus require university and WSCUC reviews.

ACTION: Chair will draft a policy to allow department chairs to change course modality for medical accommodation, without changing CRFs, after consultation with APO. Members will review by email.

E. [ES Proposal](#) to create five Concentrations—Concerns about the course availability for the concentrations were raised. Vice Chair Hestir, who is a member of the ES Graduate Group, stated that the concentrations were designed based on what courses could be offered. It was proposed that GC request ES to provide the course rotation for 3-5 years, as done in a CCGA proposal.

ACTION: Analyst will email ES Graduate Group Chair requesting the course rotation information.

F. Summer business—Chair expects to have no “in-person” meeting unless an important issue that needs faculty vote is brought to GC. Chair plans to send out a monthly email in the first week of every summer month.

G. New Committee Chair—Vice Chair Hestir has been formally appointed by CoC.

H. Chair invited Vice Chair to update on PROC. Vice Chair stated that PROC co-chairs would like to start considering how to be more explicitly anti-racist and equitable in the assessment starting AY 21-22. PROC will send GC a memo requesting GC input.

II. Consent Calendar (2:30-2:30)

A. The agenda (5/13/21)

B. [Minutes](#) from the 4/29 meeting

C. CatCourses [Auto-populated contents](#)

- D. [AY 21-22 Academic Calendar](#)
- E. Public Health Graduate Group Revised Bylaws
- F. Course Proposals

NEW:

[ECON 245](#)—Immigration Economics and Policy

[ECON 247](#)—Advanced Topics in Macroeconomics

[ECON 255](#)—Political Economy

[ECON 269](#)—Topics in International Trade

[ECON 270](#)—Econometrics III: Applied Methods

[PHYS 227](#)—Machine Learning and Statistics for Physics and Astronomy (conjoined with PHYS 127)

ACTION: The Consent Calendar was approved as presented

III. **Course Proposal Review Report (2:30-2:40) -CRF Subcommittee Chair Woo**

GC led the effort to streamline the Curriculog process in AY 19-20, and the changes were implemented in Summer 2020. CRF Subcommittee Chair Woo summarized the new process's pros and cons, both as a reviewer and course proposer, and GC members suggested ways for improvement on the following:

1)Contact/noncontact hours *Pro*: streamlined *Con*: not specifying the non-contact hours made it hard to determine if the requested credit hours were justifiable. In a few cases, the contact hours seemed low for the credit hour requested. *Recommendation*: change the instruction for the hours, asking to state the number of expected/average non-contact hours per week

2)Syllabus requirement removal *Pro*: lessened the workload on both initiating and reviewing end. *Con*: The instructions for the "Course Design" box, which replaced syllabus requirement, are ambiguous, and the type of information was not standardized---some wrote a detailed plan, others only a sentence or two.

Recommendation: Identify which of the information in the parenthesis (in the instructions) should be required, and make multiple text boxes that are mandatory.

3)The PLO-CLO linkage (the 2019-20 workgroup discussed this extensively, but no change was made) *Con*: Many course proposals need modifications at the GC stage because CLOs must be linked to the exact PLOs, and it is cumbersome for both proposers and reviewers (especially involving concentrations or multiple degrees' PLOs). *Recommendation*: explore alternative ways to provide this information, in Curriculog (for example, radio buttons instead of pulldown menu that proposers must scroll; Registrar will consult her colleagues who are rolling out the new version in June), or possibly outside Curriculog, as this information is not a requirement from the Registrar's office, and different accreditation agencies require different mapping.

Members also made suggestions to improve the user experience in Curriculog, such as FAQ, visual (video) instructions, and guidelines for first time users (it was pointed out that there are guidelines inside Curriculog).

ACTION: Members will send their suggestions to the CRF Subcommittee Chair Woo. The subcommittee will summarize the feedback and its recommendations for GC review.

IV. **Faculty-Graduate Student Conflict Resolution Infrastructure Workgroup (2:40-3:00) -Member Chen**

Member Chen updated GC that the workgroup will be dissolved at the end of the AY. The products (flowchart and text, and the final report) will be presented to GC after the workgroup concludes its review.

V. **Campus Review Item: (3:00-3:10)-Chair Hratchian and Vice Chair Hestir**

- A. [Proposed revision](#) to the Grade Appeal Policy (current policy is [here](#))

The Ombuds office has requested that the Grade Appeal Policy, posted in the Catalog, add a paragraph that states students "may consult with the Ombuds to discuss possible options towards resolving the concern." The request was forwarded from CRE to UGC. Due to concerns about faculty welfare (that this may turn into a bullying mechanism), GC Chair and Vice Chair invited FWAf to comment on the proposal. The summary of FWAf's comments was provided to GC Chair and Vice Chair prior to the meeting. GC agreed with FWAf that the

Ombuds office is for mediation and conflict resolution that require confidentiality; when would a conversation about grades require the level of confidentiality that is required of ombuds, which excludes even the regulatory officials? If, as it happens on occasion, the concerns are about bias and inappropriate behavior of the instructor, it is no longer a grade appeals process. Also, the Berkeley process, which the ombuds refers to, uses the Student Ombuds office, different from UCM's university ombuds. The grade appeals process pertains to the academic affairs, and involves the student affairs already. A member stated that nowhere in the proposal is it demonstrated that the addition of ombuds will improve the process. A member added that it may seem like an additional requirement for students, i.e., if ombuds is put in the policy explicitly, students will think consultation with the ombuds is required, and might discourage them from addressing their concern. Chair asked if any member was supportive of the proposal, and none voiced their support.

ACTION: Transmit a memo indicating GC does not endorse or support the proposed change.

VI. Systemwide Review Items: (3:10-3:15)

A. [Proposed Presidential Policy for Covid-19 Vaccination Program](#) (due 5/17/21)

This policy would require students, faculty, academic appointees, and staff who are accessing campus facilities at a UC location beginning this Fall to be immunized against SARS-CoV-2 (except when exempt). Chair solicited comments, adding that CCGA would transmit its own review. GC endorsed the proposed policy unanimously.

ACTION: Transmit an endorsement memo to the Senate Chair.

B. [Fee Policy for Graduate Student in Absentia Registration](#) (due 5/24/21)—*review by email*

The revisions of the policy would permit Deans to establish "a local campus region within which in absentia registration will not be considered" instead of limiting eligibility to students studying outside of California. Interim Graduate Dean explained that he had been granting individual exceptions, usually for students who planned to be in the Bay Area, and welcomed consultation with GC in defining the local campus region. Chair added that CCGA had discussed the proposed revision, and he would like to wait for the systemwide memo/recommendations, which he would circulate, before conducting the review.

ACTION: Chair Hratchian will lead the review.

VII. Consultation with VPDGE (3:15-3:30)-*Interim Graduate Dean Kello*

A. Graduate Division Academic Planning--- The planning is divided into short term (resource neutral, or revenue generating) and long term (requires resource, such as growing the PhD population). Chair invited members to review the document the Interim VPDGE shared today.

ACTION: GC members will share their concerns, if any, by 5/20/21 by email.

B. USAP Funding Formula—The former VPDGE Zatz created the formula with input from graduate group chairs. The formula gives proportions-the budget is constant but enrollment grows, the per student amount decreases, which has been the case. There needs to be a formula that grows in total amounts as enrollment grows, so the amount per student is maintained, if not increased. The current formula does not incentivize recruiting self-supporting students. What is considered as "return to aid" in budgeting is also unclear. Chair Hratchian added that the return to aid generated through grants should go back to the research enterprise and not TA tuition reduction, which should be paid for by undergraduate tuition remission.

C. Virtual Hooding—Graduate Division is holding a virtual ceremony for graduating students.

VIII. New Business? There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 3:35PM. Att. by Chair Hratchian

IX. Informational Items

Systemwide Senate [Guidelines and Recommendations](#) for Fall Campus Re-opening
UC Grad Slam Winner [Announcement](#)