

GRADUATE COUNCIL (GC)

AGENDA

Tuesday, September 7, 2021

1:30-3:00PM

SSM 230

Zoom URL: <https://ucmerced.zoom.us/j/84757526508>

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

Documents available in [box](#)

[Graduate Council Duties](#)

Pursuant to the call, the meeting was called to order at 1:42 PM, with Chair Hestir presiding.

I. Welcome and Introductions – Chair Hestir

2021-2022 Membership:

Erin Hestir, Chair, SoE

Sandie Ha, Vice Chair, SSHA

Nigel Hatton, SSHA

Hrant Hratchian, SNS

Boaz Ilan, SNS

Changqing Li, SoE

Kara McCloskey, SoE

Karl Ryavec, SSHA

David Strubbe, SNS

Ex-Officio (non-voting):

Jodran Collignon, Graduate Student Representative

TBD, Postdoctoral Scholar Representative

Chris Kello, Interim Vice Provost and Dean of Graduate Education

Consultant:

Jerrold Shiroma, Library Representative

Erin Webb, Registrar

All present introduced themselves and, at the chair’s request, spoke about one accomplishment during the last AY (including summer 2021).

II. Consent Calendar

A. Today’s agenda (9/7/21)

B. Graduate Student Instructor [Petitions](#)

ACTION: The consent calendar was approved as presented.

III. Conducting Committee Business – Chair Hestir

Members discussed the following aspects of conducting committee business.

- [Guide to Committee Membership and Principles to Guide the Conduct of Executive Session](#)
- Postdoctoral member (new)—two nominations have been made. CoC will notify GC of the new member.
- Confidentiality
- Executive Session—chair explained the purpose and function of executive sessions and importance of confidentiality to ensure candid discussions.

- [Meeting Schedule](#)—Members discussed the meeting modality. The GSA representative expressed preference for in-person, especially if meeting contains sensitive information. Others expressed preference for remote, due to concerns about the pandemic and difficulty communicating with masks on. The current room is not suitable for multiple in-person participants to use the zoom option, which resulted in delay of the start of the meeting.

ACTION: GC will continue the hybrid mode for the time being. Analyst will find a room more suitable for hybrid meetings.

- Managing Work: review items—members discussed whether chair would decide what to review, or all members decide together what to review. It was mentioned that the Senate Weekly Digest contains information on reviews, as well as informational items of potential interest to GC members.
- [Committee Duties](#)—chair requested members to review GC’s duties and charges, especially since GC anticipates businesses wherein a clear understanding of GC’s purview (vs. administration’s, especially APO’s) is of critical importance.
- [GC Conflict of Interest Policy](#)

ACTION: Members present suggestions for revision of the Conflict of Interest Policy. Hearing none by 9/10/21 at 4PM, the policy will be considered endorsed by the Council.

IV. Anticipated Business for AY 2021-22 – Chair Hestir

Members reviewed anticipated business for the year.

- A. CCGA proposal review
 - a. GC will likely be [re-reviewing](#) the School of Management, Master of Public Health, and Master of Data Science and Analytics proposals this AY.
- B. Collaborate with GSA on Graduate Student Rights & Responsibilities(GSRR)—Chair hopes to place the GSRR document on the agenda in the near future.
- C. Develop, revise and/or finalize the following policies
 - a. Conflict Resolution ---pending an official communication from the Provost’s Office inviting GC to collaborate with the Graduate Division. Informal endorsement has been received.
 - i. GC to develop policies and implementation recommendations to Graduate Division reflecting the work of the faculty-administration joint workgroup on conflict resolution between advisors and advisees; also incorporating findings from the National Academies’ recommendations and call to action to prevent sexual harassment (2018, 2019)
 - b. Self-supporting program review process—Concerns have been raised at the system level about these program’s impact on state-funded programs. Master of Data Science and Analytics program proposal is the first proposal for such programs at UC Merced.
 - c. 5-year program review policy—5 year programs are joint undergraduate and master’s programs, on which GC has collaborated with UGC and AFAC since Fall 2020. GC transmitted the proposed policy to UGC in March 2021, and hopes the policy will be finalized this AY.
 - d. Further review and revision of Course Proposal Review Process and Policy—GC made suggestions to the Registrar’s office in Spring 2021, and will continue to collaborate on unresolved items.
- D. Review Course Proposals, Graduate Group Bylaws, and Policies and Procedures
 - a. Standard GC activity. GC has been advocating for regular updates to P&Ps and anticipates 5 this AY.
- E. Engagement in the fellowship award processes
 - a. Recommend changes for a uniform review process and a regular review cycle, and review the end of year fellowships—with a firmer timeline to ensure fellowships are awarded on time.
- F. System and campus review items—discussed under Item III.

ACTION: Members will vote on whether the Chair filter review items on its behalf via email.

V. Graduate Council Goals for AY 2021-22 – Chair Hestir

- A. Ensure that Conflict Resolution Procedures outlined by the conflict resolution working group are reviewed by GC prior to implementation, and following report recommendations, coordinate further refinement and development in consultation with Graduate Division. There were many good recommendations from the workgroup, chair would like to ensure that they are implemented.
- B. Self-supporting programs – discussed under item IV
- C. Support for postdocs—postdoctoral scholars are under GC’s purview. GC would advocate for support ranging from continued development of professional development and interview/job prep training to getting more timely and reasonable (re-)appointment processes agreed upon with APO. This is critical for our postdocs, our abilities to get grants, and our goals for R1.
- D. Finance, budget, and planning—GC will continue to push for better financial planning and enrollment management for graduate groups, and instructional budgets for graduate groups, including a mechanism for efficiently coordinating the professional development and training for grad students via the curriculum (e.g., cross-listed courses). Chair shared new information about a recently signed MOU between UC Merced and UC President’s Office that encourages the growth of graduate student population. Provost announced a substantial cut to TAs that had been overallocated; the money will be reassigned to the administration of more fellowships. Graduate Division and GC will be engaged in the decision-making.
- E. Leadership training -- advocating for improved leadership training and process management for faculty in leadership roles and serving as mentors to each other, postdocs, and students
- F. Simplifying, streamlining and version control for GC-related curricular business (e.g., catalog working group) –due to unforeseen staff shortage at the Registrar’s Office, this item is on hold for AY 21-22.
- G. Address [NASEM recommendations and call to action](#) to prevent sexual harassment in academia (2018, 2019), including follow up on campus initiatives (e.g., action collaborative) and pursue recommendations to *prevent* sexual harassment in academia, in particular climate and culture for women graduate students and those with intersectional identities.

VI. Establish Subcommittees and Other Appointments – Chair Hestir

Chair solicited members or representatives to the following committee, subcommittees and workgroup. In addition to those who volunteered at the meeting, members accepted positions via email after the meeting, as follows.

- A. CCGA representative (Fall only)—First Wednesdays, 10AM-4PM. Due to teaching schedule, chair and vice chair are unable to attend the full meetings. None volunteered.
- B. Policy Subcommittee (4 members)— Changqing Li, Hrant Hratchian, Boas Ilan (Fall only), Karl Ryavec
- C. Course Proposal Subcommittee (chair and 2 members; ideally one individual from each school)—Sandie Ha (chair), Kara McCloskey, David Strubbe (Fall only)
- D. Fellowship Subcommittee (minimum 3, ideally one from each school) –David Strubbe (chair in Spring), Boaz Ilan (chair, Fall only), Nigel Hatton, Changqing Li
- E. [Undocumented Students Work Group](#) (1 representative)—Nigel Hatton
- F. Conflict Resolution [Recommendations] Implementation Work Group (1 representative)—pending workgroup formation. Member McCloskey expressed interest as an alternative to serving in the Course Proposal Subcommittee.

ACTION: Analyst will reach out to members for additional assignments on the Chair’s behalf, and provide the name of the Undocumented Students Work Group to CoC.

VII. Graduate Policies and Procedures Handbook —Chair Hestir

Graduate Division has requested to add revisions aimed at further clarification of policies meant to support graduate students, as summarized [here](#). The draft revised GPPH is [here](#). Recommended additional revision is [here](#). The GSA representative recommended re-wording of the eligibility and duration of Non-Resident Supplementary Tuition waiver described in page 17. Other members agreed that the eligibility criteria and the availability of the waiver at pre-and post-advancement to candidacy stages are not clear.

ACTION: GSA representative will provide recommended revision for consideration by the Council at its next meeting.

VIII. Consultation with APO—Chair Hestir, Guest Assistant VPAP Kelly Anders

As a follow-up to [the review of MAPP 500](#), GC leadership consulted with APO during the summer to discuss temporary academic hires—postdocs and project scientists, as well as GSRs and Student Academic Employees (SAEs) such as TAs and Teaching Fellows (TFs). GC is particularly concerned about its implications for the faculty as well as the candidates (increased workload, appropriateness of review committees, and associated delay in personnel actions). Related questions about responsibilities and supervision of TFs and TAs have been brought to GC by Graduate Group Chairs. GC shared its [draft memo](#) on TFs and TAs with AVPAP Anders for comments prior to the meeting.

AVPAP Anders presented [slides](#) that described the hiring process for the academic employees, which includes Academic Student Employees (including TAs and TFs but not GSRs). There are search waivers available, but it is important that they keep the campus in compliance with the office of federal contract compliance programs. Other campuses have passed the OFCCP audits, and UC Merced is expected to be audited (as the last campus among the UC systems). She also described the different titles under which students engage in teaching duties (TAs, TFs and Associates). Due to limited time for discussion today, Chair invited AVPAP Anders to a future meeting. AVPAP Anders accepted and offered to prepare answers to GC's questions if they can be relayed to her in advance.

Chair reminded members that, per Bylaw 330, GC is responsible for graduate student appointments. GC needs additional clarification on the supervision of TFs and TAs, especially given the fact that the senior leadership is encouraging more students to instruct (rather than assist) courses.

ACTION: Invite the Assistant VPAP to a future meeting, with more time.

IX. Consultation with VPDGE –Interim VPDGE Kello

- A. Graduate Housing—This is a priority for the campus, and an update should be coming this semester. Graduate Division is working with all students in need of housing due to Merced Station's delay in opening.
- B. Alternative to GRE scores? <https://www.projectamiga.org/toolkit> Dean Kello would like GC to consider this, and affirmed that he shares GC members' concerns about having less data for admission decisions due to the apparent Universitywide trend to not request GRE scores.
- C. Summary of information from Fall Welcome [message](#)

ACTION: Members will review the Interim VPDGE's welcome message and bring questions, if any, to the next GC meeting.

X. New Business?

XI. Informational Items

- A. Updated CCGA [Handbook](#) (new: guidance on dual-degree programs)
- B. Academic Council Chair's [endorsement of CCGA/UCPB letter](#) concerning Master's Program Reviews

XII. Executive Session

Information is available [here](#) (voting members and VPDGE)

GC entered Executive Session at 2:58PM. Due to its informational nature, no actions were taken. Exited Executive Session at 3:08PM.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 3:09PM. Att. by Chair Hestir.