

GRADUATE COUNCIL (GC)**Meeting Minutes****Wednesday, September 7, 2022****12:00-1:20pm****COB 1 - 320**

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

I. Welcome and Introductions – Chair Scheibner – 12:00pm – 12:05pm

Chair Scheibner welcomed new and returning members.

II. Chair’s Report – Michael Scheibner - 12:05pm – 12:15pm**A. August 21 and 22 Governance Retreat**

The Shared Governance Retreat was held in person this year. The Senate was invited to share their committee’s priorities for AY 22-23; however, there was not a specific amount of time dedicated to discussing them.

B. September 6 Divisional Council meeting

The new Vice Chancellor for Research (VCR) was announced, and their appointment begins October 1, 2022. There were also discussions regarding returning to campus, how to increase enrollment numbers, and plans for creating more majors.

EVC/Provost Camfield informed members that Vice Chancellor & Chief Operating Officer of Physical Operations, Planning & Development Dan Okoli is interested in conducting charrettes (working sessions with stakeholders) with campus constituents to hold focused discussions about how the physical space of the campus can meet their needs. These charrettes will help inform the campus about which buildings will be built next. EVC/Provost Camfield asked the Council of Deans to provide names of faculty they would recommend participating in the charrettes, and he also offered to make a formal request to the Senate for additional faculty names.

C. Update on the Gallo School of Management Review

The Gallo School of Management pre-proposal was transmitted to Divisional Council for review, and Divisional Council met several times last academic year to discuss it. Members of Divisional Council came to a consensus to not approve the pre-proposal and shared their concerns with EVC/Provost Camfield. The pre-proposal has been transmitted to the Coordinating Committee on Graduate Affairs (CCGA) for external evaluation.

III. Consent Calendar – Chair Scheibner – 12:15pm – 12:20pm**A. Agenda****B. [GC’s Conflict of Interest Policy](#)**

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Action:

- The agenda was approved as presented.
- GC's Conflict of Interest Policy was approved as presented.
- GC Analyst will update the Senate website accordingly (completed 9/8).

IV. Conducting Committee Business – Chair Scheibner –12:20pm – 12:25pm

Members review and, as relevant, discuss the following aspects of conducting committee business.

- [Senate website](#)
- [GC's website](#) and [GC's Box site \(also provided in the header\)](#)
- [Meeting Schedule](#) – meeting modality
- [Educational Continuity Website](#)
- [Senate Policies and Procedures](#)
- [Divisional Bylaws and Regulations](#)
- [Systemwide Bylaws and Regulations](#)
- [Consultation Guidelines](#)
- [Principles to Guide the Practice of Executive Session](#)
- [Graduate Policies and Procedures Handbook](#) (Revised May 2022)
- Confidentiality
- Distributing work on Graduate Council

All campus and systemwide review items will be posted on GC's Box folder and on the Senate website, here: <https://senate.ucmerced.edu/review-items>. Some review items may be assigned to one or more GC reviewers before each scheduled meeting.

Chair Scheibner reviewed the several resources available to Council members, most of which can be found on the [Academic Senate website](#) or in our shared [GC box folder](#). He also informed members that the Graduate Council will be required to comment on several review items, and voting members will alternate leading each review.

V. Representation on Subcommittees, Work Groups, and Systemwide Committees - 12:25pm – 12:35pm**A. Campus Representation**

- **Policy Subcommittee (4 members; ideally representation from each school)**

This subcommittee reviews and makes recommendations to GC members on policies related to graduate education.

Action:

- GC Chair Michael Scheibner (SNS) and members Karl Ryavec (SSHA) and Changqing Li (SoE) volunteered to serve on the Policy Subcommittee.
- **Course Proposal Subcommittee (3 members; one member to serve as the chair of the subcommittee; ideally representation from each school)**

This subcommittee reviews and makes recommendations to GC members on new/revise graduate courses.

Action:

- GC Vice Chair John Abatzoglou (SoE) and members Sandie Ha (SSHA; Subcommittee Chair) and Clarissa Nobile (SNS) volunteered to serve on the CPS Subcommittee.
- GC Analyst will notify the Registrar, and CPS Subcommittee members will be added as course approvers in Curriculog (completed 9/8).

- **Fellowship Subcommittee (minimum 3 members, ideally one from each school)**

This subcommittee reviews and makes recommendations on recruitment and continuing graduate fellowships.

Action:

- GC Chair Michael Scheibner (SNS) and members Kara McCloskey (SoE) and Sandie Ha (SSHA) volunteered to serve on the Fellowship Subcommittee.
- GC Analyst will notify Graduate Division and Financial Services Director Eric Cannon.

- **Periodic Review Oversight Committee (PROC)**

GC representative: GC Vice Chair John Abatzoglou volunteered to serve as the PROC representative.

The GC representative on PROC attends each PROC meeting and reports back to GC; takes turns acting as a lead reader for agenda items approximately once every two meetings (meeting materials are never more than 25 pages, and more typically less than 10, and the reader must read them in advance of the meeting and be prepared to weigh in on a specific questions); and participates in agenda item discussions, representing GC's perspective and deciding when GC may need to weigh in on PROC business.

The first meeting is tentatively scheduled for September 13, 2022 from 1:00-2:30pm.

No Action Requested.

- **Support Services for Undocumented Students Work Group**

Representative: TBD

This work group is charged to annually review efforts and report outcomes of services offered to support graduate and undergraduate undocumented students at UC Merced.

Action:

- GC member Nigel Hatton agreed to serve as the GC representative on the Support Services for Undocumented Students Work Group.
- GC Analyst will notify Student Affairs (completed 9/8).

B. Systemwide Representation

- **Coordinating Committee on Graduate Affairs (CCGA)**

Representative: GC Chair Michael Scheibner

CCGA advises the Senate and University administration on all matters regarding the promotion of research and learning related to graduate education.

No Action Requested.

VI. Anticipated Business for AY 22-23 – Chair Scheibner – 12:35pm – 12:40pm

Members review anticipated business for the year.

- A. CCGA proposal review
 - a. GC will likely be reviewing a revised proposal for a [Master's in Public Health](#)
- B. Develop, revise and/or finalize a policy for
 - a. 4+1 program review (jointly with UGC and AFAC)
- C. Review Course Proposals, Graduate Group Bylaws, and Policies and Procedures
 - a. Standard GC activity.
- D. System and campus review items

Action Requested: Committee decides whether the Chair filters review items on its behalf.

Chair Scheibner will determine if the Council should review items in which GC is not a lead reviewer. For items in which GC is required to provide comments, Chair Scheibner will ask individual Council members if they are willing to lead the review.

VII. [GC AY 2022-23 Goals and Priorities](#) – Chair Scheibner – 12:40pm - 12:50pm

Members discuss the Council's goals for this academic year and propose additional goals.

Chair Scheibner discussed GC's goals and priorities for this academic year, which are provided in the link above.

VIII. [Postdoctoral Scholar Support and Development](#) – Chair Scheibner – 12:50pm – 1:00pm

- A. Train UC Merced's diverse student population and ready them for competitive careers, while boosting scholarly output
- B. Develop strategic task force workgroups to assist with planning strategic initiatives
- C. Obtain more funding for hiring
- D. Enhance UC Merced's capacity to perform R1-level research
- E. Partner with Office of Research and Economic Development (ORED)

Requested Action: GC to develop a proposal for postdoctoral programs, including final-year graduates.

One of GC's main goals for this academic year is to provide more support for Postdoctoral Scholars. Chair Scheibner drafted an initiative, linked above, and invited members to review and provide feedback.

A member inquired about data on which graduate programs generally produce PhDs in the private sector versus the academic sector. Many students who would like to find a career in academics may not file their dissertation until after they have signed a contract for a tenure track position. Chair Scheibner recommended acquiring this data from programming communities. VPDGE Hratchian confirmed that this information should be acquired campuswide, as Quantitative and Systems Biology (QSB) collects this

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data. Chair Scheibner would also like to invite Chief Financial Officer (CFO) Kurt Schnier to a future meeting to discuss the costs associated with Postdoctoral Scholars.

Action:

- GC Chair Scheibner asked all members to review his initiative linked above and send him any questions or feedback.
- Further discussion will take place at a future GC meeting.

IX. Review of Continuing Graduate Fellowships – Chair Scheibner – 1:00pm – 1:05pm

The goal is to shift review of continuing graduate fellowships to earlier in the AY (e.g. to end of Fall), so submission & review will not coincide with recruitment fellowships. This revision will help balance committee workload.

Requested Action: GC to determine if review of continuing graduate fellowships is to be conducted by the end of the Fall semester.

Any decisions on fellowships made by Graduate Council are advisory to VPDGE Hratchian. Financial Services Director Eric Cannon manages the review of fellowships and claims that it is difficult to acquire reviews each year. VPDGE Hratchian would like to develop a model where input and guidance come from faculty reviews.

Action:

- VPDGE Hratchian has a scheduled meeting later this afternoon to further discuss this topic, and he will provide the Council with an update at a future GC meeting.

X. Consultation with VPDGE Hratchian – 1:05pm – 1:15pm

A. Enrollment update

VPDGE Hratchian reported that enrollment numbers will not be available until census is reached; however, there has been a positive number of cases for student visas and international students arriving to campus on time. VPDGE Hratchian is working with the Office of International Affairs for a hard deadline in which students must show proof of visa. If a student will not arrive to campus in time for Graduate Research Orientation Week (GROW), then they must petition to VPDGE Hratchian for an exception to arrive late. VPDGE Hratchian recognizes the many hardships that some students face, such as waiting to purchase a plane ticket until after they receive their visa, which at that point they are purchasing a ticket for two days later at a very high cost. If the student misses GROW by even one day, they will not get paid on time. This feels like a disservice to students, so VPDGE Hratchian is trying to establish a harder deadline and to circulate better communication in Spring 2023 regarding the importance of faculty working with their students and the Admissions Office to start the visa paperwork early.

B. Graduate Division staffing, space, and hours

VPDGE Hratchian reported that all staff are on campus on Wednesdays, and he would like to hold an All-Hands meeting to help build community. There are currently three open staff positions, including the Director of Admissions. VPDGE Hratchian will keep the Council apprised of the search.

C. In-person policy for advancement and defense examinations

Under university policy, advancements and defenses are expected and required to be held in-person. One way to ensure this is to require a proper wet signature on the dissertation page. During COVID, this requirement was relaxed but is now being reinforced. VPDGE Hratchian would like to circulate language to the Graduate Group Chairs within the next week to remind them that qualifying examinations and defenses must be held in person and a wet signature must be acquired. If this is not doable, they must formally petition. If anyone feels strongly about changing this requirement, there needs to be a formal discussion and policy change at the Graduate Council level.

A member wondered how defenses are advertised because there is currently no mechanism in the School of Social Sciences, Humanities and Arts to notify the graduate group of an upcoming defense and that one of his students was responsible for emailing the graduate group members to invite them to his defense. Another member noted that there are advertisement mechanisms in place in the other Schools, and VPDGE Hratchian agreed to look into this for the School of Social Sciences, Humanities and Arts. VPDGE Hratchian also noted that he appreciates and hopes to continue the hybrid defense model because many students can have their families Zoom in to watch their defense.

XI. New Business? –1:15pm – 1:20pm

No new business was discussed.

XII. Informational Items

- A. [GC AY 21-22 Annual Report](#)
- B. [Newly released Accountability Report](#)
- C. [GSR Unionization and Proposed Workgroup to Explore the Future of Graduate Student Funding](#)
- D. [Mitigating the Effects of Covid on Graduate Students](#)

XIII. Executive Session – 1:20pm – 1:30pm

GC entered executive session at 1:24pm.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 1:36pm.

Attest: Chair Scheibner.