

**GRADUATE COUNCIL (GC)****Meeting Minutes****Friday, February 3, 2023****2:15pm – 3:30pm****ADMIN 245**

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

**I. Executive Session – Voting Members Only – 2:00pm – 2:15pm**

No minutes were recorded during the executive session. The action items were shared with GC voting members.

**II. Consent Calendar – Chair Scheibner – 2:15pm –2:20pm**

A. Agenda

B. [January 20 meeting minutes](#)

C. Courses

[REVISED]

[EECS - 257 - Signal Processing for Internet of Things](#)[QSB - 214 - Tissue Engineering Design](#)**Action:**

- The agenda and January 20 meeting minutes were approved as presented. GC Analyst will update the Senate website accordingly.
- The courses were approved. GC Analyst will update Curriculog accordingly.

**III. Chair's Report – Michael Scheibner - 2:20pm – 2:30pm**

A. January 23 DivCo Meeting

- Reporting from the Divisions' Chairs meeting Chair LiWang reported of discussions that were held regarding timesheets for GSRs and TAs.
- CAPRA reported that the EVC/Provost announced UCOP will provide support to help recover from the impacts of the strike, providing funding to pre-tenured faculty to help with the increased costs of GSRs.

B. February 1 CCGA Meeting

- Further discussions were held regarding the costs associated with the strike. The Vice President for Research and Innovation (VPRI) and the Vice Chancellors for Research (VCRs) have limited discretionary funds that may be available to help.
- The compact agreement with the governor was affirmed. In the compact UC agreed to raise the number of graduate and undergraduate enrollment. It is important for UC Merced to determine an alternate way of doing business moving forward to maintain enrollment

numbers or keep the class sizes small in order to attract students.

- There were overall discussions regarding how graduate education should be and how it may have to change following the strike.
- There is a call for more resources, especially regarding research. The VPRI reported that research has been put on hold during the strike and is working diligently to find solutions.
- One student representative addressed the current housing situation, and another student reported that some students are willing to take pay cuts in order to join certain research groups.
- Discussions were held regarding the development of a working group to discuss graduate education in the future in the UC System. CCGA may be involved in the process for formulating the charge.
- UCSF Medical School allocates additional \$12,000 per postdoc and \$2,400 per graduate student during the summer months to mitigate the impacts from the increased pay scales.

#### IV. Vice Chair’s Report – John Abatzoglou – 2:30pm – 2:35pm

##### A. February 1 Grad Chairs Meeting

Vice Chair Abatzoglou reported on discussions regarding research course syllabi, which will be thoroughly discussed during the February 17 GC meeting. He also announced the rescheduling of Grad Visitation Weekend to March 17, 2023.

#### V. Awards Subcommittee - Distinguished Graduate Teaching/Mentorship Award – Chair Scheibner – 2:35pm – 2:40pm

**Selection Process:** The Graduate Council (GC) will form an ad-hoc committee from its membership to serve as the GC Awards Committee.

Membership will include:

- A minimum of three Senate faculty (balanced representation from a range of academic areas and broad school representation).
- If additional expertise is needed, non-GC committee members will be appointed by Chair Scheibner.

**Requested Action:** Establish a subcommittee for the Graduate Teaching/Mentorship Award. The deadline for nominations is Friday, March 24, 2023 and the winners of all Senate awards will be announced at the Spring Meeting of the Division (date TBD). The deadline for the subcommittee to provide their recommendation will be determined once the Spring Meeting of the Division date is finalized.

**Action:**

- Members Lee (SoE), Ryavec (SSHA), and Arevalo (SNS) volunteered to serve on the Awards Subcommittee to review nominations for the Distinguished Graduate Teaching/Mentorship Award.
- GC Analyst will share additional information and the nominations with the subcommittee members, once received.

VI. **[Policy for the Establishment of UC Merced Extension Non-Degree Programs](#) – Chair Scheibner – 2:40pm – 2:45pm**

The policy was approved by GC on November 17, 2020 and is to be revisited every three years.

**Requested Action:** Members to engage in discussion and recommend revisions to the policy. If no recommended revisions, voting members vote to endorse the policy.

The link to the policy was broken. GC Analyst agreed to share the correct link with members, and members will send any recommended revisions to the GC Analyst by 5:00pm, Wednesday, February 8, 2023.

**Action:**

- Voting members are to review the policy and recommend any revisions. If no recommended revisions are received by 5:00pm, Wednesday, February 8, 2023, the policy will be considered approved, and GC Analyst will update the Senate website accordingly and notify University Extension.

VII. **Discussion: [It's Time for a Professionalized Research University](#) – Chair Scheibner and VPDGE Hratchian – 2:45pm – 2:55pm**

On January 24, 2023, UC Irvine Graduate Dean Gillian Hayes published a letter in Inside Higher Ed framing the landscape that will largely dictate the challenges and opportunities all of higher education will be working through with respect to graduate education in the months and years ahead.

For additional information, please see the [LA Times Article - How Will Uc Pay for Historic Raises?](#) shared by CCGA Chair Erith Jaffe-Berg during the February 1 CCGA meeting regarding the future of graduate education and research course syllabi.

**Requested Action:** Members to engage in discussion on the future of graduate education in general and on research course syllabi.

In her article published in Inside Higher Education, *It's Time for a Professionalized Research University*, UC Irvine Graduate Dean Gillian Hayes discusses the impacts of the strike on graduate education and provides solutions, which include hiring additional lecturers to cover all the courses and keeping the classes small. Other solutions include adding more emphasis on the master's degree programs, developing additional funding models, alternate methods for conducting research, etc. Longer term solutions include State and Federal funding agencies to provide more funding for higher education.

A member noted that cutting doctoral students to make more space available for undergraduate students is a disservice to the university's Teaching and Research Mission. They believe that the university is already on the path leading to a professional research institution, as there will always be people who want to apply to higher education; the demand will always be there.

VPDGE Hratchian reported on the many discussions in Higher Education that the Higher Education System is producing too many PhDs, and he believes that if one's field unemployment rate is less than

half of the national unemployment rate, then there is nothing to worry about. He also discussed NIH fellowships and the congressionally mandated limits on the maximum pay, which graduate students will reach in 2 years under the new contract. If Congress does not shift the cap on the stipends for every student that receives an NIH fellowship, they will either be turned down or the university will have to find an alternate mechanism to fund them, or the students will not be paid on GSR.

Chair Scheibner noted the need for a larger discussion regarding shaping graduate education at UC Merced and to inform a broader systemwide discussion.

**Action:**

- At a future GC meeting, members will discuss the development of a Work Group comprised of GC, CoR, and CAPRA members to collaborate and develop models for UC Merced’s plan of action during future strikes.

**VIII. Anonymous Graduate Student Survey – Member Arevalo and Graduate Division Research Analyst Michael Gonzalez – 2:55pm – 3:10pm**

During the November 9 GC meeting, two graduate students discussed the impacts that the COVID-19 pandemic, BSP building shutdown, and the Oracle Ordering System have had on their research and progress to degree. Members agreed to develop an anonymous survey for other graduate students to indicate the impacts that these three things have had on their research and progress to degree.

During the November 30, December 14, and January 20 GC meetings, members discussed member Arevalo’s proposed questions, and recommended revisions. The most recently updated version of the list of questions is available [here](#). Graduate Division Research Analyst (GDRA) Michael Gonzalez shared the [2021 systemwide graduate student survey](#), which includes questions directly related to graduate students’ experience during the pandemic.

Today, GDRA Gonzalez is joining the meeting to further discuss the upcoming systemwide [UC Graduate Student Survey](#) (UCGSES) and GC’s proposed survey.

**Requested Action:** Members to discuss the updated list of questions and make additional revisions. If there are no further recommended revisions, voting members vote to endorse the list of questions.

Chair Scheibner welcomed GDRA Gonzalez and explained that GC is not only interested in how the COVID-19 pandemic has impacted graduate students and their time to degree, but also the impacts of the building shutdowns and the Oracle Financial System. GDRA Gonzalez recommended removing several of the COVID-related questions from GC’s survey that also appear in the UC systemwide survey to reduce the length of the survey and to avoid burnout. GDRA Gonzalez also agreed to share data from past surveys with GC members. Member Arevalo and GDRA Gonzalez agreed to meet offline to further discuss and finalize GC’s list of survey questions.

**Action:**

- Member Arevalo will collaborate with GDRA Gonzalez to revise GC’s survey to remove several of the COVID-related questions that appear in the systemwide survey.
- The final version of GC’s survey will be discussed and voted on at the February 17 GC meeting.

**IX. VPDGE Hratchian's Report – 3:10pm – 3:25pm**

VPDGE Hratchian provided the following updates:

- The Summer Bridge program for incoming students is scheduled to take place for 6-7 weeks starting in July. Incoming students will be funded \$5,000, and for every 7 students, one graduate peer mentor within the department will be funded to engage in professional development.
- There are plans for a campuswide graduate symposium for 1-3 days.
- Next year will be the 20<sup>th</sup> year of graduate education and postdoc training UC Merced. Graduate Division is scheduling a year's worth of events to celebrate the 20 years, and VPDGE Hratchian is trying to locate funds for alumni to travel back to campus to engage in the events.
- Graduate Division has moved forward with graduate admissions, and letters will hopefully be distributed starting next week.
- The faculty and the Administration must work closely together to figure out how to rearrange the entire budgetary and educational landscape to address the impending 30 to 40% increase in cost for the TA budgets. Several lecturers are used in place of TAs, and the campus must decide if the instructional budget will be used in this way moving forward.
- Two primary concerns regarding the post-strike and new contract landscape: 1) making sure the admissions process does not inadvertently decrease access to advanced degrees for students from underserved and unserved backgrounds, and 2) adding more undergraduate degree programs. Graduate and undergraduate education depend on each other; they are not two separate entities. Much of the Graduate Division's funding comes from undergraduate education.

**X. Any Other Business? – 3:25pm – 3:30pm**

VPDGE Hratchian alerted the Policy Subcommittee of several forthcoming revisions to the Graduate Policies and Procedures Handbook (GPPH). He also asked that GC and Graduate Division think about coming together and developing a plan to help recover relationships between graduate students and faculty that have declined after the strike.