

GRADUATE COUNCIL (GC)

Meeting Minutes

Friday, February 17, 2023

2:00pm – 3:30pm

ADMIN 245

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

I. Consent Calendar – Chair Scheibner – 2:00pm – 2:10pm

A. Agenda

B. [February 3 Meeting Minutes](#)

Action:

- The agenda and February 3 meeting minutes were approved as presented.
- GC Analyst will update the Senate website accordingly.

C. Courses

Action:

- The following courses were approved and Curriculog will be updated accordingly (completed 2/18):

Extension courses:

[EDUC - X301 - Foundations of Education](#)

[EDUC - X302 - Teaching Practicum](#)

[EDUC - X303 - Clinical Practice I - Initial Student Teaching](#)

[EDUC - X304 - Clinical Practice II: Field Experience Support](#)

[EDUC - X306 - Intern Field Experience Seminar](#)

Cross-listed courses:

[MBSE - 260 - Sustainable Energy](#)

[EECS - 230 - Sustainable Energy](#)

[ES - 260 - Sustainable Energy](#)

[EECS - 235 - Solar Cells, Modules and Systems](#)

[ES - 265 - Solar Cells, Modules and Systems](#)

[MBSE - 265 - Solar Cells, Modules and Systems](#)

[ES - 231 - Fuel Cell Fundamentals, Modeling, and Diagnostic](#)

[ME - 262 - Fuel Cell Fundamentals, Modeling, and Diagnostic](#)

[MBSE - 262 - Fuel Cell Fundamentals, Modeling, and Diagnostic](#)

[EECS - 232 - Fuel Cell Fundamentals, Modeling, and Diagnostic](#)

Other courses:

[MBSE - 219 - Computational Materials Science](#) (modify existing)

[PHYS - 246 - Computational Materials Science](#) (modify existing)

Action:

- GC members requested clarification for the following courses and Curriculog will be updated accordingly.
- GC Analyst will work with the SSHA and SOE Curriculum Managers to ensure GC's concerns are addressed:

Cross-listed courses:

[EECS - 231 - Energy Storage](#) – request justification for why the course can be repeated once for credit or recommend the proposer revise to 0.

[MBSE - 261 - Energy Storage](#) - request justification for why the course can be repeated once for credit or recommend the proposer revise to 0.

[ME - 261 - Energy Storage](#) - request justification for why the course can be repeated once for credit or recommend the proposer revise to 0. Also, ME PLO's 1 to 0 appear twice.

New course:

[PH - 221 - Psychiatric Epidemiology](#) – clarification on delivery method. Seminar Topical is listed but the description of courses format mentions weekly lecturers.

D. SSHA Petitions for Graduate Students to Teach Upper Division Courses

[Hinojosa, Bianca PSY 156 202320](#)

[Lee, Sejin PSY 130 202320](#)

[McAnally, Kaylyn PSY 126 202320](#)

[Sullivan, James PSY 130 202320](#)

Action:

- The four SSHA petitions were approved.
- Chair Scheibner will sign the petitions, and GC Analyst will transmit them to VPDGE Hratchian.

II. Chair's Report – Michael Scheibner - 2:10pm – 2:20pm

A. February 6 DivCo Meeting

- EVC/Provost Camfield discussed the aftermath of the strike in terms of meeting financial needs and announced that President Drake will provide funding to UC Merced to assist untenured faculty this, and perhaps next, fiscal year.
- Senate Chair LiWang reported that there appears to be a sentiment among the Regents to now consider graduate students unionized workers or laborers instead students.
- CAPRA Chair Mitchell reported on the Chancellor's announcements of new money coming to campus:
 - \$20 million was approved by the UC Regents for site improvement for the new medical education building. The medical education building itself is funded with \$14.5 million approved by the Governor.
 - \$31.5 million times three for campus expansion was approved by UCOP. The first tranche of money will be used to build the new COB 3 building.
 - The ACE initiative (acronym unknown at this time) will provide \$24 million over five

years for campus expansion. This money will be used to hire new faculty and staff. This is one-time funding and not a loan. This funding is intended to increase enrollment over the next five years.

- A \$10 million loan over four years was approved to hire research support staff. ORED will receive \$1.5 million.
- An unspecified amount of funding was approved for UC Merced as a result of its Agriculture and Natural Resources (ANR) designation.

III. Vice Chair’s Report – John Abatzoglou – 2:20pm – 2:25pm

A. February 9 PROC Meeting

- The review of Applied Math program is complete:

Applied Math is a high-functioning program producing at the level of an R1 institution while being dedicated to mentoring their students and being integral to interdisciplinary research and education. The program highlighted areas for action in the coming years including development of a Data Science 4+1 program, asking for a variety of things that are systemic at UC Merced such as the need for staff support, mental health services for students, and improved communication effort. The program has outlined a few strategies for implementing these over the next review period in their strategic plan.

- Physics site review is scheduled for early April.

IV. [Research Course Syllabi](#) – Chair Scheibner and VPDGE Hratchian – 2:25pm – 2:40pm

At the December 14 and February 3 GC meetings, members briefly discussed the development of repositories with research course syllabi templates, GSR workplan templates, as well as other expectations templates for faculty to use to provide guidance for students engaged in graduate research.

Requested Action: Today, members to engage in a more thorough discussion regarding an expectations document and research course syllabi.

Chair Scheibner uploaded his research course syllabi into the [GC AY 22-23 shared box folder](#).

At the March 1, 2023 CCGA meeting, members plan to discuss the 299 (295) research course syllabi, and Chair Scheibner would like for GC members to share their thoughts that he can then share with the systemwide membership.

Chair Scheibner asked GC members if they use research course syllabi or if the graduate students have had experience with research course syllabi in any of their courses. A member noted that they have the Chemistry Graduate Group’s syllabus and will ask permission to share it with the membership. The graduate student noted that they have never seen a research course syllabus for their Physics 295 course and explained that expectations are usually discussed with the advisor at the beginning of each semester.

Chemistry and Public Health are using Satisfactory/Unsatisfactory this semester for their classes. A member noted that they include a Gantt chart in their syllabus to help define expectations and determine whether the student reaches Satisfactory. Chair Scheibner noted that he asks his students to complete his template for them to self-assess their current standing, and then they discuss the various

projects/deliverables/milestones week by week for the coming semester. The survey that the Graduate Division disperses has also been helpful in revealing student’s self-evaluations, which has been very informative when setting the schedule for the following semester.

A member wondered how specific the syllabus should be regarding the group culture or whether it should be included in a separate document. Chair Scheibner explained that he has a separate document that is not associated with the course only because many students continue their research during the summer months. Another member wondered if it is appropriate to indicate the minimum amount of research required in the syllabi. Chair Scheibner explained how the number of credit hours listed connects to research hours, and that sometimes the research demands more, sometimes less hours in a given week.

What is the distinction between research for pay versus research for credit? Chair Scheibner noted that students during the strike seemed to take the viewpoint that research appears to be work because the university is using the results to bring in more funding from grants, resulting in the need to be make explicit what is work and what is research. Can the work used for the dissertation also be used for grant proposals? Or is this also considered work? A member noted that any work that leads to a publication with the student’s name as an author, plus the work that contributes to the thesis formation, should be considered research for credit, not research for pay. Chair Scheibner then raised the question, to what degree must faculty specify?

Chair Scheibner invited members to share their additional thoughts via email, and he will keep the membership apprised of the March 1 CCGA discussion.

Action:

- Members are encouraged to upload their research course syllabi, or those from others within their department, into the GC AY 22-23 shared box folder [here](#).
- Chair Scheibner will upload his expectations document into the shared box folder.
- Future discussion will take place via email and at a future GC meeting.

V. Graduate Admissions GSR Funding Guarantee – Chair Scheibner – 2:40pm – 2:55pm

Some faculty have shared their concerns regarding the limitation of admissions by the Grad Division, especially in cases where faculty are committing multiple semesters/years of GSR support for their admits. They feel it is an overstep of faculty roles and academic freedom, in addition to limiting their ability to deliver research on sponsored projects they are responsible for, impeding their ability to contribute UCM’s goal to reach R1.

Requested Action: Members to engage in discussion and determine next steps.

Chair Scheibner explained that after much discussion between several faculty members, the Graduate Division, and School Dean(s), an agreement was made whereby the graduate group could admit graduate students as master’s students if they provide a Chart of Accounts string (COA). Chair Scheibner wondered whether this should be allowed for PhD admits, as well. Also, if there is a faculty-backed funding guarantee, what happens if there is an issue and the student must change research groups? Who would bear the cost - the student or the faculty member? If the faculty member must continue paying for the student after their departure, this could cause issues if the student was funded on

a Federal Grant because students cannot be paid on a Federal Grant if the work is not being completed. This also causes concern for international graduate students because several graduate group chairs were unaware that there is no Non-Resident Supplemental Tuition (NRST) waiver for master's students.

A member recommended an initial one-semester commitment, and if everything works well between the faculty member and the student, they can renew the commitment for an additional semester. Chair Scheibner agreed noting that the admissions letter to the student should clearly articulate the specifics of the agreement. This leads to the question of what should graduate education look like moving forward, which will be further discussed during today's meeting.

Action:

- If members have any additional comments, they are encouraged to share them with the membership via email **by Monday, February 27, 2023.**
- Future discussions will take place at a future GC meeting.

VI. Anonymous Graduate Student Survey – Member Arevalo – 2:55pm – 3:05pm

Graduate Division Research Analyst (GDRA) Michael Gonzalez joined the February 3 GC meeting and shared the [2021 systemwide graduate student survey](#), which includes questions directly related to graduate students' experience during the pandemic.

Member Arevalo consulted with GDRA Gonzalez on February 9 to finalize GC's list of questions, available [here](#).

Requested Action: Members to discuss the final list of questions. If there are no further recommended revisions, voting members vote to endorse the list of questions.

Member Arevalo reported that questions 11 and 12 have been rephrased and that several redundant questions have been removed. She also reported that GDRA Gonzalez would like to include several of GC's questions in the systemwide graduate student survey, so it may be a good idea to merge the two surveys to prevent student burnout. Members agreed with including in the systemwide survey the questions that would address UC Merced's local issues.

Chair Scheibner also noted the following actionable items resulting from the survey:

- Inform the Senate and the Administration (on campus and possibly systemwide) about the level of impacts our students experienced, and to gauge how that compares systemwide (or even beyond).
- Determine potential inequities that have arisen across the graduate (and postdoc) population across campus, in order to determine mitigation measures. One example aspect that might be impacted is competitiveness for fellowships. Another aspect that is impacted by graduation delays (time to degree) is the resource allocation for graduate groups and determination of graduate admission limits.
- The survey itself is a tool to help the campus climate by demonstrating to our students that we are taking note of their issues and aim to address them.

Member Arevalo noted that the systemwide survey will not be delivered to postdocs. GC should consider sending a separate survey to only postdocs since they will not be overwhelmed with surveys.

Action:

- GC Analyst will schedule a meeting with Chair Scheibner, Member Arevalo, VPDGE Hratchian, and GDRA Gonzalez to take place sometime next week or the week of February 27 to further discuss the draft list of questions and about possibly merging GC’s survey with the systemwide graduate student survey.

VII. Discussion: Development of a Graduate Education Work Group – Chair Scheibner – 3:05pm – 3:15pm

At the February 3 GC meeting, members agreed to a further a discussion on 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.

Requested Action: Members to engage in discussion regarding the membership and charge of the Work Group.

Chair Scheibner invited members to review EVC/Provost Camfield’s and Chancellor Muñoz’s draft memo, available [here](#).

In addition to members of GC, CoR, and CAPRA, members of UGC should also serve on the working group because undergraduate education is impacted by graduate education. Additionally, UC Merced has the largest fraction of undergraduate students included in research. Chair Scheibner wondered how UC Merced can ensure undergraduate students are provided the opportunity to enter research groups early on in their education.

Chair Scheibner noted that one aspect the working group may want to consider is expanding the undergraduate/graduate hybrid degree programs to admit undergraduate students into a program that would allow them the opportunity to obtain their master’s degree as well. This could help to grow UC Merced’s diverse student body into the graduate programs and beyond and place them in advanced jobs in the real world. Another idea is lobbying for more funding from the State, both from the governor and from federal funding agencies.

Chair Scheibner invited members to share their thoughts on how graduate education should be moving forward, which will inform further discussion at Divisional Council and CCGA. Further discussion will also take place at a future GC meeting with VPDGE Hratchian’s presence.

Action:

- If members have any additional comments, they are encouraged to share them with the membership via email **by Monday, February 27, 2023**.

VIII. VPDGE Hratchian’s Report – 3:15pm – 3:25pm

- A. Admissions update
- B. Fellowship update
- C. Summer Bridge

This item was tabled for the March 3 GC meeting.

XI. Any Other Business? – 3:25pm – 3:30pm

No other business was discussed.