

GRADUATE COUNCIL (GC)**MEETING MINUTES****Wednesday, September 6, 2023****1:15pm – 2:45pm****ADMIN 345**

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

I. Welcome and Introductions – Chair Scheibner – 1:15pm – 1:20pm

Chair Scheibner welcomed new and returning members, and members introduced themselves.

II. Chair’s Report – Michael Scheibner – 1:20pm – 1:30pm**A. July 5 CCGA Meeting**

- Members engaged in a general discussion regarding new program proposals.
- Members discussed 299 courses (295 at UC Merced). The Academic Council distributed guidance to all 10 campuses in August.
- The new systemwide Provost Katherine Newman attended the meeting to discuss the future of graduate education and her plans for addressing concerns. She intends to hold a system-level congress about the future of graduate education in early October, and a second congress may be held in the spring. CCGA members asked the Provost questions related to graduate student health issues, faculty/graduate student relations post-strike, funding graduate students with the increased salaries, other funding commitments, etc.

B. Summer meetings with subgroups of the Joint Senate-Administration Working Group for the Future of Graduate Education

- i. July 20 Academic Planning Council on Guidance for 299 Meeting
- ii. August 10 Graduate Support/Funds Meeting
- iii. August 11 Enrollment Management Meeting

Systemwide guidance was transmitted to the campuses over the summer. These three meetings were held to gauge what plans campuses have for recruiting, funding, and increasing the number of graduate student enrollments; however, many campuses still have not established their local working groups.

III. Vice Chair’s Report – John Abatzoglou – 1:30pm – 1:35pm**A. September 1 Grad Chairs Retreat**

A retreat took place at Vista Ranch for graduate group chairs and department chairs. One of the main items discussed was how to manage conflict.

B. September 6 Grad Chairs Meeting

Admissions has begun. Graduate group chairs discussed how to maintain the number of quality graduate programs in light of the current financial situation. Data suggests that three times the number of graduate students should be applying to graduate school at UC Merced relative to other UC campuses. UC Merced also reviewed the use of funding at other campuses. Many campuses have a typical 2:1 GSR:TA ratio, whereas UC Merced has a 2:1 TA:GSR ratio; however, if UC Merced were to acquire a 2:1 GSR:TA ratio, there are not enough applicants to fill effectively twice as many GSR spots. VPDGE Hratchian also noted that application numbers are relative to reputation; not many out-of-state universities recommend UC Merced graduate school to their students.

IV. Consent Calendar – Chair Scheibner – 1:35pm – 1:40pm

A. Agenda

B. [May 12 Meeting Minutes](#)**Action:**

- The agenda and May 12 meeting minutes were approved as presented.

C. [GC's Conflict of Interest Policy](#)**Action:**

- GC's Conflict of Interest Policy was approved as presented.

D. Courses

[Revised]

[COGS - 256 - Language in Minds, Brains and Machines](#) – In Spring 2023, GC reviewed the proposal and asked for revision or clarification regarding a 4-unit class having a 2-hour lecture and 2-hour lab (A 4-unit course expects 12 hours of work per week). The proposal has been updated to reflect a 3-hour lecture with 9 non-contact hours.

Action:

- COGS 256 was approved and Curriculog will be updated accordingly.

V. Conducting Committee Business – Chair Scheibner – 1:40pm – 1:50pm

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](#)
- [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 2023)
- 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.

VI. Representation on Subcommittees, Work Groups, and Systemwide Committees – All - 1:50pm – 2:00pm

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; Subcommittee Chair), Vice Chair John Abatzoglou (SoE), and members Karl Ryavec (SSHA) and Min Hwan Lee (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/revised graduate courses. This subcommittee also reviews and makes recommendations to GC members on new/revised Extension courses, postbaccalaureate courses, and Teacher Preparation Program (TPP) requests.

Action:

- Members Rebeca Arevalo (SNS; Subcommittee Chair), Roberto Andresen Eguiluz (SoE), and Christina Baker (SSHA) 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.
- GC Analyst will share additional information/relevant policies with the subcommittee.

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

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

Action:

- Members Roberto Andresen Eguiluz (SoE; Subcommittee Chair), Marilia Palumbo Gaiarsa (SNS), and Jennifer Howell (SSHA) volunteered to serve on the Fellowship Subcommittee.
- GC Analyst will notify Graduate Division and Financial Services Director Eric Cannon.

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

This subcommittee is responsible for:

- Reviewing nominations for the Graduate Teaching/Mentorship Award in the Spring term.
- Reviewing the applications for the Graduate Student Supplemental Travel Award throughout the academic year to ensure each nomination includes a research/academic related abstract and will be supported by the appropriate amount and source of matching funds.

Action:

- Members Min Hwan Lee (SoE; Subcommittee Chair), Marilia Palumbo Gaiarsa (SNS), and Jennifer Howell (SSHA) volunteered to serve on the Awards Subcommittee.
- GC Analyst will share the Graduate Student Supplemental Travel Award applications with the subcommittee members for review.

- **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 Thursday, September 14, 2023.

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:

- Member Christina Baker agreed to serve as the GC representative on the Support Services for Undocumented Students Work Group.
- GC Analyst will notify Student Affairs.

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.

VII. GC AY 2023-24 Goals, Priorities, and Anticipated Business – Chair Scheibner – 2:00pm – 2:20pm

Requested Action: Members discuss the Council’s goals for this academic year and propose additional goals. The Committee also decides whether the Chair and Vice Chair filter review items on its behalf.

Chair Scheibner reviewed the list of goals, priorities, and anticipated business with members.

Item 1. Syllabi – Chair Scheibner recommended transmitting a formal memo to graduate group chairs inviting them to consider collecting syllabi from their graduate group faculty that can be added as templates to GC’s research course syllabi repository.

Item 5. Grad & PD surveys – Chair Scheibner explained to new members that two surveys were circulated last academic year to identify the impacts that the COVID-19 pandemic, BSP building shutdown, and the Oracle Ordering System have had on their research and progress to degree. One survey was a systemwide survey to graduate students and the other a local survey to postdocs. Members Arevalo and Lee volunteered to review the results of both surveys and provide the committee with an overview at the September 20 GC meeting.

Additional item: VPDGE Hratchian noted that San Jose state has plans for developing a joint PhD degree with UC Merced, which will require GC’s review.

Action:

- 1. Syllabi (medium priority, ongoing effort)**
 - GC Analyst will distribute a formal memo to Graduate Group Chairs to invite them to share examples of 299 research course syllabi.
- 2. Grad & PD surveys (time sensitive, priority as it informs other topics)**
 - Members Min Hwan Lee and Rebeca Arevalo volunteered to review the survey responses and present their findings at a future GC meeting.
- 3. Additional item (upcoming business)**
 - GC Analyst will add the following item to the list suggested by VPDGE Hratchian:
 - i. Joint PhD degree with San Jose State University

VIII. Cognitive & Information Sciences (CIS) Graduate Advising Exception Request – Chair Scheibner - 2:20pm – 2:30pm

The CIS Graduate Group is seeking an exception for a faculty member to remain the primary advisor for a 6th-year CIS PhD student, even after they are no longer a core member of the CIS Graduate Group.

Chair Scheibner summarized the request, and voting members voted to approve the exception.

Action:

- GC voting members unanimously approved CIS’s request for an exception for a faculty member to remain the primary advisor for a 6th-year CIS PhD student, even after they are no longer a core member of the CIS Graduate Group.
- GC Analyst will prepare and transmit a memo to CIS Department Chair Kristina Backer.

This agenda may contain confidential and privileged material for the sole use of GC Members.

IX. Consultation with VPDGE Hratchian – 2:30pm – 2:40pm

VPDGE Hratchian invited members to reach out to him with any topics they wish to discuss under his report at future GC meetings, or to Vice Chair Abatzoglou to present at the grad chairs meetings.

VPDGE Hratchian explained that the review processes for undergraduate degree programs are much less onerous than graduate programs. Undergraduate programs can be reviewed and approved at the campus level, whereas graduate programs require systemwide review and approval.

VPDGE Hratchian also mentioned that postdoc policy is managed by the Graduate Division and the Graduate Council. Over the upcoming years, discussions will be held regarding the difficulties surrounding domestic, non-California resident graduate students who move to Merced for graduate school to become residents. A systemwide working group has been established to review the residency policy, which VPDGE Hratchian has been appointed to, and he will provide updates to GC.

A. Enrollment update

There are approximately 770 graduate students enrolled at UC Merced for AY 23-24. Census closes on September 15, 2023. Due to visa delays, many international students typically defer a semester to a year. Several others whose visas were approved on time faced housing issues once they arrived in Merced. This also caused problems for department chairs who believed that a TA would arrive on time. This year, international students were offered admissions with a hard deadline of July to demonstrate that they have their visa. If by the end of July, if the student did not have their visa, they were forced to defer, which gave Graduate Division and department chairs additional time to plan accordingly.

VPDGE Hratchian also explained that Graduate Division will focus on increasing master's students in the next year.

B. Shifting the review of fellowships (deadline: October – November)

The goal is to shift the review of continuing graduate fellowships to earlier in the year in order to assist the faculty in properly engaging in the funding calls. This would also allow Graduate Division to gauge how many students need TA-ships when managing enrollment for the next year. Historically, continuing fellowships have been offered in the Spring, which does not provide the Graduate Division much planning time. Shifting the review to the Fall gives first-year students a significant disadvantage because they do not have much to show for their accomplishments; however, VPDGE Hratchian clarified that there are more pros than cons to moving the review to earlier in the year.

C. October 9 UC-wide Academic Congress

There has been a lot of focus on students who only go into professorial. VPDGE Hratchian stated that most students do not pursue professorial; UC Berkeley has a lot of students who do, and it tends to interfere with UCOP's judgement for the other campuses. UCOP believes that that there are too many graduate students and that professorial jobs will be decreasing in the future. VPDGE Hratchian does not believe that the majority of students intend to graduate in the professorial; however, here at UC Merced,

humanities and certain social sciences must be carefully evaluated. Continued discussions will take place at the October 9 Academic Congress.

VPDGE Hratchian closed his report noting that he and Chief Financial Officer (CFO) Schnier and EVC/Provost Zatz met with Chancellor Muñoz for a preliminary discussion regarding a draft master's incentive program that will provide increasing support to graduate programs and recruit self-paying master's students.

X. Any Other Business – 2:40pm – 2:45pm

No other business was discussed.