

GRADUATE COUNCIL (GC)

Meeting Minutes
Monday, October 18, 2023
1:15pm – 2:35pm
ZOOM ONLY

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

I. Consent Calendar – Chair Scheibner – 1:15pm – 1:20pm

- A. Agenda
- B. [October 2 Meeting Minutes](#)

Action:

- The agenda and October 2 meeting minutes were approved as presented.
- GC analyst will update Senate website accordingly.

C. Courses

Action:

- The following courses were approved, and Curriculog will be updated accordingly:
 1. [MATH - 293 - SMART Team](#)
 2. [PHYS - 241 - Condensed Matter Physics](#)
- The following courses were rejected with recommended revisions, and Curriculog will be updated accordingly (completed 10/19):
 1. [MATH - 246 - Numerical Linear Algebra](#) - Recommend “NA” or “not required” for the requisites and restrictions fields. Also, recommend adding a description of the content for course work to be completed outside of class meetings (only indicates the number of non-contact hours).
 2. [MATH - 280 - Mathematical and Statistical Foundations of Data Science – Recommend](#) adding a description of the content for course work to be completed outside of class meetings (only indicates the number of non-contact hours).
 3. [MATH - 282 - Statistical and Machine Learning](#) - Recommend adding a description of the content for course work to be completed outside of class meetings (only indicates the number of non-contact hours).
 4. [MATH - 222 - Partial Differential Equations](#) - Recommend “NA” or “not required” for the requisites and restrictions fields. Also, recommend adding a description of the content for course work to be completed outside of class meetings (only indicates the number of non-contact hours).

II. Chair’s Report – Michael Scheibner – 1:20pm – 1:30pm

A. October 4 CCGA Meeting

- Chair Tantillo listed CCGA topics for the year including:
 - Maintaining autonomy of the Academic Senate, particularly protecting standards for graduate students.

- Faculty are still adjusting to the last round of labor relations and discussions were held regarding how the University will prepare for the next round.
- Discussions are to be held regarding future labor negotiations. A clear message should be sent advocating for more faculty representation in future labor negotiations.
- Concerns were raised about the tension at the recent Academic Council meeting regarding the Board of Regents' role in terms of governance and management of the university.
- Chris Procello (Academic Planning and Research Analyst) reported on AB 656, which proposes that CSUs start offering doctoral degrees. CCGA may be called upon to review CSU doctoral proposals to ensure that they are not duplicating UC degrees.
- Academic Senate Chair Steintrager reported from the Regents that there hasn't been much interest in graduate studies lately.
- Academic Senate Chair Steintrager also reported that the Special Committee on Innovation and Entrepreneurship had their last meeting, and the key outcomes are to focus on a better patent tracking system and better proof-of-concept funding streams.
- Vice President of Academic Research Maldonado reported on research security issues, which graduate students need to better understand.
- Discussions were held regarding the continuous review of new program proposals.

B. October 9 Academic Congress on the Future of Graduate Education

The meeting took place at UCLA and was organized by the systemwide Senate Provost. Approximately 120 individuals were in attendance, which included different campus' provosts, graduate deans, Senate representatives, etc.

Princeton University History Professor David A. Bell introduced a new model of graduate education called Meeting the *Challenges of the Changing Academic Employment Market - The Rising Costs in Graduate Education and Time to Degree*.

The following panel sessions took place, approximately an hour each with time for discussion and questions.

1. Preparing and diversifying the future professoriate
2. Improving pathways and pipelines beyond the professoriate
3. Maintaining a rigorous and demanding undergraduate program's innovative instructional approaches.

Next, several discipline-specific break-out rooms took place where groups discussed challenges or opportunities in their area.

Lastly, there was a closing session of Plenary where Co-Chairs of the Joint Senate-Administration Workgroup on the Future of UC Doctoral Programs Gillian Hayes and Susannah Scott presented the preliminary report on the efforts of the working group.

III. Member Arevalo's Report – Rebeca Arevalo – 1:30pm – 1:35pm

A. October 12 DivCo Meeting

- Interim EVC/Provost Zatz announced Professor Heather Bortfeld as the new interim SSHA Dean.
- Discussions were held regarding the Future of Graduate Education Congress, and Interim

EVC/Provost Zatz noted that there may be alternative pathways for students in social sciences disciplines who are not going into academia to complete their PhD degree faster without additional financial burdens.

- AVC for Interdisciplinary Research & Strategic Initiatives Josh Viers attended the meeting to report on UCM's Agricultural Experiment Stations (AES) Designation, which differs from UC Agriculture and Natural Resources (ANR). Discussions were held regarding the change in title from Cooperative Extension Specialist to Professor of Cooperative Extension.
- Senate Chair LiWang met with SNS Dean Dumont to discuss medical education. The plan is for Teaching Professors to deliver the curriculum; however, instructors will have to undergo a year of training at UCSF.
- Chancellor Muñoz attended the meeting to discuss the ongoing campus financial system issues, which are impacting the graduate students. The main concern that faculty shared in regard to the Oracle Ordering System is that they are unable to view their account balances. Chancellor Muñoz confirmed that these issues are currently being addressed.

IV. Vice Chair's Report – John Abatzoglou – 1:35pm – 1:40pm

A. October 4 Grad Chairs Meeting

Vice Chair Abatzoglou reported on his discussion regarding the MacKenzie Scott Graduate Student Supplemental Travel Awards. The last two rounds of awards have equal representation across all three schools; however, three departments have received majority of the supplemental funds. The faculty feel that there is a bit of unfairness in how the supplemental funds are awarded, which GC may want to reconsider. Recommendations included allocating funds to each graduate group, having the Awards Subcommittee focus on balancing the distribution of funds across the different departments and not follow a first-come-first serve awarding process, allowing only one award per PI, etc. Chair Scheibner noted that the timeline has been posted to the Academic Senate website and that the Graduate Division has been asked to include it to their website, as well. This will inform the faculty of the upcoming calls, so they can be better prepared to submit their application quickly.

Vice Chair Abatzoglou also reported on the Instant Card Program, which would allow graduate students to charge travel expenses to a card rather than undergo a reimbursement process.

Further discussions were held regarding the Master's Incentive Program and whether graduate groups are interested. Vice Chair Abatzoglou believes this conversation relates to the Future of Graduate Education, which will be discussed later in today's meeting.

V. Systemwide Review Items – All – 1:40pm – 1:50pm

A. [Proposed New APM 672-Negotiated Salary Program](#)

The purpose of the Negotiated Salary Program (NSP) is to provide a mechanism for participating campuses to augment faculty compensation on a temporary basis according to the competitive requirements of academic disciplines.

Requested Action: Members continue to discuss and offer comments on the proposed new APM 672-Negotiated Salary Program. Comments due to GC Analyst Snyder by **Thursday, October 26, 2023**. Comments due to the Senate Chair by Friday, November 3, 2023.

Chair Scheibner summarized the proposal and offered the following comments:

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Sentiments among graduate students and postdoctoral scholars indicate that the professoriate is not perceived as a desirable career goal. They cite what they notice in terms of the struggles faculty face in performing their jobs and the imbalance in earning power between inside and outside academia, as well as the ability to make a living. Such reasons are deterring them from pursuing professorships as a career goal. In light of these observations, the NSP does provide a tool to counteract at least some of the concerns, and hence, should remain implemented beyond the test phase.

Action:

- Members are to send Chair Scheibner and GC Analyst Snyder any comments on the proposed new APM 672 via email **by Friday, October 27, 2023**.
- GC Analyst will draft a memo which will be reviewed and approved by GC voting members at the October 30 GC meeting.
- Comments are due to the Senate Chair by Friday, November 3, 2023.

VI. Graduate Student and Postdoctoral Scholar Survey Results – Rebeca Arevalo and Min Hwan Lee – 1:50pm – 2:00pm

At the October 2, 2023 GC meeting, members Lee and Arevalo discussed the following three impacts that they identified to be the most important to elevate to the administration to address:

1. *Advisor Mentoring* - include “Postdoctoral Mentoring Guidelines” in Graduate Groups’ Policies and Procedures, which should outline the frequency of meetings and clarify advisors’ roles and responsibilities in updating students of their degree milestones.
2. *Resource Portal* - include a one-pager to the existing portal that contains all necessary links and contact information, an FAQ section, etc.
3. *Graduate Group Chair/Student Relationship* – improve communication to notify students of career workshops, job-matching events, and professional development support.

Members Lee and Arevalo sorted the three impacts they have identified as most important to recommend to Graduate Group Chairs and the Administration, and for GC to address.

Requested Action: Members Arevalo and Lee will provide the committee with an update. Members discuss the draft memo to transmit to the Senate Chair.

Member Lee provided an update on the recommendations that GC should transmit to DivCo and the Administration. Regarding number 2 above, VPDGE Hratchian and Registrar Webb recommended including such information on the Connect website (connect.ucmerced.edu). Member Lee noted he will become more familiar with the website and determine whether any important information is missing or does not belong. He will provide the committee with another update at a future GC meeting.

Chair Scheibner recommended that members Arevalo and Lee draft a memo to DivCo and the Administration, which can be shared with GC voting members at a future GC meeting.

Action:

- GC Analyst will share examples of memos with Member Arevalo who will draft a memo to Divisional Council with recommendations for the three areas (Advisor Mentoring, Resource

Portal, Dissemination of Information).

- Member Arevalo will share the draft memo with the GC Analyst, Chair Scheibner, and member Lee.
- Voting members will be invited to review the draft memo prior to transmittal to Divisional Council.

VII. Future of Graduate Education – Chair Scheibner – 2:00pm – 2:20pm

At the September 20, 2023 GC meeting, Chair Scheibner shared his PowerPoint presentation, available [here](#), and asked members the following three questions:

1. **Opportunities for funding graduate education and research training:**
Can we envision a more consistent, sustainable, and plannable funding support of graduate education that enables an economy of scale for Faculty, GGs/Depts., Schools, etc.?
2. **Opportunities for a more holistic vision of graduate career paths:**
What mechanisms and support would be needed to provide graduate students opportunities to prepare for the full spectrum of careers; in- and outside academia?
3. **Opportunities to elevate graduate training & research culture:**
What measures can we take to advance fundamental discovery, stimulate innovation and creative expression, across disciplines fields and industries?

Today, GC will continue to discuss the three questions above and identify particular situations, needs, and opportunities at UC Merced that pertain to the impacts from the new contracts.

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

Chair Scheibner shared his PowerPoint slides, available [here](#), containing thoughts and ideas on how graduate education could look like in the future. He discussed the several different pathways for students to enter a master’s or doctoral program, including the 4+1 pathway; certificate programs; the “Back-at-it-you-can” mentality, which allows students to gain job experience in the real world and return to continue in their master’s or doctoral program; etc.

Action:

- Voting members are to send Chair Scheibner and GC Analyst Snyder any comments they may have on the slides, as well as share any creative and critical thoughts and ideas on how graduate education could look like at UC Merced and in the UC System in the future **by Friday, October 27, 2023.**

VIII. VPDGE Hratchian’s Report – 2:20pm – 2:30pm

A. Continuing fellowships timeline

VPDGE Hratchian shared a revised timeline with members regarding the review of the Continuous fellowships. He would like for the Call to open on Wednesday, November 1, 2023 and hopes to send award letters by Monday, March 4, 2024. The timelines for the Recruitment fellowships and the End of Year fellowships remain the same.

B. Block grant funding model for graduate groups

Instead of using USAP funds, other institutions use block grants. For block grants, an agency passes money down to lower levels based on a metric formula. A block grant is awarded by reviewing how many students in the graduate group are making good progress to degree and how many degrees the graduate group conferred last academic year, which then yields a dollar amount. The Graduate Division is encouraging degree referrals, including master's along the way, terminal masters, and PhD.

VPDGE Hratchian shared a table, which highlighted 46 students out of 740 total doctoral students are beyond the normative time to degree by one year or more. He will provide a more detailed report at a future GC meeting.

IX. Any Other Business – 2:30pm – 2:35pm

No other business was discussed.

X. Executive Session – Voting Members Only – 2:35pm – 2:45pm

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