

**GRADUATE COUNCIL (GC)**

**Meeting Minutes**  
**Thursday, January 18, 2024**  
**11:30am – 1:00pm**  
**COB 1 - 320**

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

**I. Consent Calendar – Chair Scheibner – 11:30am – 11:35am**

- A. Agenda
- B. [December 13 Meeting Minutes](#)

**Action:**

- The agenda and December 13 meeting minutes were approved as presented, and GC Analyst will update the Senate website accordingly.

**C. [GC AY 24-25 and AY 25-26 draft Academic Calendars](#)****Action:**

- Members are to review the GC AY 24-25 and AY 25-26 draft calendars and send any questions/concerns to GC Analyst **by 10:00am, Wednesday, January 24, 2024**. Hearing no objections, the calendars will be considered approved and posted on the Senate website

**D. Courses****Action:**

- The following courses were rejected with the following comments, and Curriculog will be updated accordingly:
  1. [ME - X408 - Introduction to Industrial Additive Manufacturing](#) (Extension course; Summer 2024) – recommend specifying the number of contact hours per week; clarify how the training for the 3D printers will be conducted; and providing additional information on the format of the topics courses listed.
  2. [QSB - 209 - Molecular Cell Biology Seminar](#) (Fall 2024) – recommend providing more information on the seminar format.
  3. [QSB - 286 - Cooperative-based Graduate Research Experience \(COOGRE\)](#) (Fall 2024) – recommend clarifying what research will be conducted in the 6-contact hour research lab.

**II. Chair’s Report – Michael Scheibner – 11:35am – 11:45am****A. December 14 DivCo Meeting**

- Former Senate Chair LiWang provided the following updates from the December 7 Meeting of the Assembly:
  - There are ongoing discussions regarding GSRs and how to manage syllabi for 299 or 295 courses over the summer.

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- GSRs and TAs are now part of the same union.
- Statements from departments specifically in the context of the current Middle East conflict. Conversations are ongoing.
- Former Senate Chair LiWang also reported on considerations for future negotiations and the plans to advocate for more faculty consultation.
- The UCs are purchasing several hospitals across California.

#### B. January 10 CCGA Meeting

- Dean Tantillo reported on the Academic Council meeting noting that Systemwide Provost Katherine Newman discussed online education and there seems to be a foregone conclusion that online education and online degrees will happen in the UC system. It is also recognized that it may have some impact on several campuses including UC Merced.
- There are ongoing discussions regarding how to manage syllabi for 299 or 295 courses over the summer.
- Advertisement has been circulated via email for a one-day Congress that will focus on undergraduate education. This is a follow-up systemwide meeting to the Congress on the Future of Graduate Education.
- The CCGA chair shared concerns that replacing graduate TAs may be a focus of this congress on undergraduate education.
- Provost Newman believes that existing models for graduate education will not last under the existing pressures and is asking for creative thinking. She noted that there are not enough hours in the day and bodies in the lab to manage teaching responsibilities in the research groups. Chair Scheibner shared a [webform link](#) for members to share suggestions on the interim report.
- The governor released the new budget on January 10, 2024, which includes funding for the UC. The 5% increase in the budget is being deferred by one year but will then be increased by 10% the following year.

### III. [Interim Report of the Academic Planning Council \(APC\) Working Group on the Future of Doctoral Education](#) – 11:45am – 12:05pm

The APC Working Group is a joint administration/Senate working group that was appointed in the summer of 2023 to advise the University community on the future of graduate education. It is co-chaired by UCSB Senate Division Chair Susannah Scott and UCI Dean of Graduate Studies Gillian Hayes.

During the December 13, 2023 GC meeting, Chair Scheibner briefly summarized the report. Members were invited to provide their feedback on the report, as well as the shared [materials from the system-wide Academic Congress on Graduate Education](#), and Chair Scheibner's [updated PowerPoint slides](#), including the questions below from slide 20 and slide 22 – *Funding of Graduate Education*.

1. How does the redesigned graduate pathway address the actionable items?
  - Provide stable and competitive financial support.
  - Actively manage PhD and MFA enrollment.
2. What may need to be tweaked, changed, added, etc. to the pathway to address the actionable items?

Vice Chair Abatzoglou and member Andresen Eguiluz had also provided comments on the Future of Graduate education, available [here](#). No additional comments from members were received. Chair Scheibner drafted a memo with his comments, available [here](#).

**Requested Action:** Members review and discuss the Interim Report of the Academic Planning Council (APC) Working Group on the Future of Doctoral Education and Chair Scheibner’s draft memo. If there are no further comments, members approve the draft memo. Deadline for comments to the Senate Chair is January 22, 2024.

Chair Scheibner summarized his draft memo and invited members to provide any additional comments by Wednesday, January 24, 2024. The interim report explains what should be done but fails to provide guidance or include sound suggestions for implementing ideas. Chair Scheibner’s draft memo provides recommended solutions.

Chair Scheibner inquired about whether John and Roberto’s comments should be anonymized in the slides that will be appended to the memo, to which GC members agreed.

VPDGE Hratchian pointed out that he does not believe UC Merced has a budget issue. He discussed the following main issues related to the first two pathways:

- **Pathway 1: Standard Path—with admission into 5-year program (includes advancement to candidacy).**
  - o UC Merced does not have equitable teaching loans.
  - o The Graduate Dean’s ability to provide fellowship funding is approximately a third compared to what other campuses offer.
- **Pathway 2: “4+1” Path—with a master’s thesis (or proposal) to demonstrate research readiness.**
  - o VPDGE Hratchian wonders whether the Graduate Division will be expected to support students who enter the master's portion. Financial aid generally covers the undergraduate portion.

VPDGE Hratchian strongly supports **Pathway 3: Flex Career Path—Enter the Candidacy Phase (year 3+) with a qualifying master’s degree** and wonders whether UC Merced could partner with other institutions to offer a 4 + master’s degree whereby the student completes the first three years at UC Merced and the remaining fourth year + master’s at another institution.

**Action:**

- Members are to review the report and Chair Scheibner’s [draft memo](#) and send any additional comments to the GC Analyst and Chair Scheibner **by 10:00am, Monday, January 2024**. If no additional comments are received, the memo will be considered approved and transmitted to the Senate Chair along with the (anonymized) PowerPoint slides.

**IV. Graduate Students Teaching Graduate Students – Chair Scheibner and VPDGE Hratchian – 12:05pm – 12:15pm**

Policy for Graduate Students Teaching Graduate Students is available [here](#).

During the [April 28, 2023](#) and [May 12, 2023](#) GC meetings, members discussed whether to grant

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exceptions for qualified PhD students to teach Master’s courses. Members agreed that the current policy could be amended to include that PhD students are allowed to teach master’s courses with approval by exception only.

**Requested Action:** Members discuss the current policy and provide comments on potential revisions.

Chair Scheibner summarized the policy noting that under no circumstances will graduate students teach graduate students as IORs and that the right is reserved for ladder-rank faculty. Exceptions have been approved by the graduate dean, but Chair Scheibner asked members if students who hold a master’s degree should be considered. Members discussed whether the policy should be amended to allow students who have advanced to candidacy or students who have obtained a master’s degree to teach graduate students, or both. The main focus is ensuring that peers are not grading peers.

**Action:**

- Members are to review the policy and provide comments **by 10:00am, Wednesday, January 24, 2024** regarding the requirement of “advancement to candidacy” and/or “having a master’s degree”.

V. **[Draft Academic Senate Handbook on University Extension](#) – Dean of University Extension Annette Roberts Webb, Director of University Extension Michael Pierick, and Associate Dean of University Extension Fanis Tsoulouhas - 12:15pm – 12:30pm**

At the start of the Fall 2023 semester, Chair Scheibner and VPDGE Hratchian met with University Extension to discuss and provide guidance on strengthening communication with the Senate around Extension initiatives.

Following the meeting, Dean of University Extension Annette Roberts Webb drafted the Academic Senate Handbook on University Extension, modeled after UC Riverside’s handbook. ALO Laura Martin and EVC/Provost Zatz have reviewed the draft. Their comments are embedded in the draft handbook, linked above.

Today, Dean of University Extension Roberts Webb, Director of University Extension Pierick, and Associate Dean of University Extension Tsoulouhas will join the meeting to present the draft Academic Senate Handbook of University Extension and answer any questions.

**Requested Action:** Members discuss the draft Academic Senate Handbook on University Extension and provide comments.

Dean of University Extension Roberts Webb shared her PowerPoint slides, available [here](#). Every UC campus except for UCSF and UCOP has University Extension. UC Merced Extension caters to the Central Valley from Bakersfield to Stockton, and their mission is to provide continuing education through a self-supported operating model. University Extension does not receive state funding to operate their programs and are generally market driven. Their real purview is in the non-degree space for professional certificates and alternative credentials.

Dean Roberts Webb’s charge is to scale up Extension and to offer a full portfolio of workforce development programs and alternative credentials for a variety of stakeholders in the community. She would like GC’s support in providing comments on the draft handbook and developing a working relationship with University Extension.

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Chair Scheibner offered several recommendations in the draft handbook, summarized below:

- Include links to the referenced program webpages.
- International students could benefit from taking language courses to improve their language skills to the level needed for graduate school or employment.
- Add XCal.
- Include a footnote regarding the different modalities and how many online courses can count toward a certificate program.
- Provide clarification on how non-contact hours are enforced. If this cannot be monitored, recommend revising “must” to “strongly recommend”.
- Include a flowchart that outlines the review process.
- Information-sharing website or portal.

VPDGE Hratchian recommended connecting with Belinda Braunstein, English Language Institute Coordinator in the Division of Undergraduate Education, regarding the assessment process for those who do not meet certain program thresholds.

Dean Roberts Webb plans on updating the handbook annually and providing GC with regular updates. GC Analyst will clarify the Senate review process.

**Action:**

- Members are to review the draft handbook and provide additional comments **by 10:00am, Wednesday, January 24, 2024.**
- The draft handbook and GC’s comments will be shared with UGC and DivCo.

**VI. VPDGE Hratchian’s Report – 12:30pm - 12:45pm**

- A. ReGROW
- B. Admissions
- C. Advisor Assignments

Due to time constraints, VPDGE Hratchian will provide his report at the February 1 GC meeting. He quickly noted that admission numbers are up by 10% to 20%. He will share data via email.

**VII. Any Other Business – 12:45pm – 12:50pm**

**A. Graduate Program Partnerships with Industry**

For graduate programs that either require industry partnerships for a capstone project or allow students to conduct their degree research in industry labs, what policies are in place in to ensure (1) academic freedom and integrity, particularly to allow free communication of research at the student’s home institution and (2) compliance with anti-discrimination and anti-harassment policies to create a safe educational environment in the industrial setting?

**Requested Action:** Members are asked to share any experience they have with such graduate program partnerships.

Due to time constraints, this item will be discussed at the February 1 GC meeting.

**VIII. Executive Session – Voting Members Only – 12:50pm – 1:00pm**

Due to time constraints, the executive session did not take place and the items will be discussed at the February 1 GC meeting.

**IX. Informational Items**

- A. [Invitation to UC-wide Virtual Workshop – Monday, January 29, 2024](#)