

GRADUATE COUNCIL (GC)

Meeting Minutes
Thursday, February 1, 2024
11:30am – 12:40pm
COB 2 - 392

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

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

- A. Agenda
- B. [January 18 Meeting Minutes](#)

Action:

- The agenda and January 18 meeting minutes were approved as presented, and GC Analyst will update the Senate website accordingly.

II. Chair’s Report – Michael Scheibner – 11:35am – 11:45am**A. January 22 DivCo Meeting**

- Interim EVC/Provost Zatz announced SNS Dean Dumont as the new incoming EVC/Provost and provided an update on the Dean searches – VPDUE, SSHA Dean, and CREATES Executive Director.
- The Financial Management Task Force is progressing well. There are three sub-groups who are working to identify opportunities for both short- and long-term improvements to their respective areas – Payroll Accuracy and Timeliness, “Inflow” and Front-end Process Improvements, and Financial Reporting Improvements and Delivery.
- The TAS Work Group meetings have been scheduled (in part) during GC meetings. The Work Group will submit an interim report by March 15.
- Interim EVC/Provost Zatz and the administration are working on an issue about graduate students and time sheets. If graduate students change from GSR to TAs or vice versa, the prior fund source will continue being charged until the change is made. Payroll and APO are working to resolve this issue.
- Senate Chair Hibbing reported on the restructuring of SSHA into two or three divisions and the future split into the Gallo School of Management.

III. Vice Chair’s Report – John Abatzoglou – 11:45am – 11:50am**A. January 22 PROC Meeting**

The Environmental Systems (ES) program review has begun. The external review committee will visit UC Merced on April 8 and 9, 2024. Several comments arose during the review that were previously mentioned during the Physics program review, which is that there is a lack of information regarding the distribution of GSRs across PIs. It was recommended that more information be provided through CVs that could be shared with the review committee.

VPDGE Hratchian clarified that he can acquire a Cognos report from Banner that shows how the student was supported on GSR or TA, so it should not be an issue going forward.

IV. Campus Review Items – All – 11:50am – 12:10pm

A. [Proposal for Establishment of a Department of Medical Education](#)

The proposal was distributed to all Senate Committees and School Executive Committees. The policy governing the establishment of new departments is attached and available [here](#).

CAP, CAPRA, CRE, GC, and UGC are lead reviewers.

Member Howell led the review of the proposal and offered comments. Chair Scheibner also offered comments. A draft memo with their comments is available [here](#).

Requested Action: Members discuss the proposal and offer additional comments. If there are no further comments, members vote to approve the draft memo.

Deadline for comments to the Senate Chair: Monday, February 12, 2024.

Member Howell provided a summary of her assessment noting that GC's main feedback is to ensure that the proposed department directly engages graduate education. The plan is to hire 9 full-time teaching faculty and 3 fractional clinical faculty, which suggests that the department aims for a much broader program than simply serving these 75-90 students. Member Howell also noted that the proposal is not clear as to whether there are plans to establish their own graduate group and whether the MD students will receive support from UC Merced or UCSF. The department is proposed as an undergraduate department; however, it appears to be a hybrid program, so graduate education should be involved.

A member wondered whether a student at UC Merced could laterally enter the SJVP+ Pathway after their Sophomore year if they meet all the requirements for the MD portion of the program. VPDGE Hratchian noted that the Pathway was not proposed in that capacity, but students who will drop out were not accounted for. VPDGE Hratchian recommended inquiring about this in GC's memo.

VPDGE Hratchian noted that the medical students will not be considered graduate students; they will not take on GSR appointments or receive pay for performing research in a faculty member's research group; however, they may take advantage of co-curricular opportunities in research by joining research groups across campus. As capacity in research labs may be limited, VPDGE Hratchian wondered if and how this new category of students on campus may impact recruitment and GSR employment of PhD students, especially once the number of medical students grows beyond the current SJV PRIME+ cohort size. Chair Scheibner recommended revising the memo to include all questions raised during the meeting.

Action:

- GC Analyst will revise the draft memo to include questions regarding Graduate Division's role in providing support to students.
- Voting members will be invited to review the updated draft memo prior to transmittal to the Senate Chair.

B. **[Proposed Bylaws for the Division of Undergraduate Education Executive Committee](#)**

In September 2023, former VPDUE Sarah Frey submitted to the Academic Senate a proposal to consolidate the [General Education Executive Committee \(GEEC\)](#) and the [Honors Program Executive Committee](#) into a new Division of Undergraduate Education Executive Committee (DUEEC). Falling under College One, the DUEEC would provide faculty governance for both the General Education and UC Merced Honors programs.

The Committee on Rules and Elections (CRE) opined and endorsed the proposal, and recommended amending the current General Education Bylaws to reflect [the proposed governance structure](#).

Chair Scheibner reviewed the proposed bylaws and offered comments. His draft memo is available [here](#).

Requested Action: Members discuss and offer additional comments on the proposed Bylaws. If there are no further comments, members approve the draft memo.

Chair Scheibner summarized his draft memo noting that the Graduate Division and Graduate Program Chairs should be consulted when matters directly affect graduate students, such as TAs. VPDGE Hratchian reported that he had consulted with Interim VPDUE Utter who clarified that the DUEEC does not provide any decisions on TAs. He explained that course proposals in Curriculog are reviewed by both UGC and GEEC. New Honors courses must be reviewed in the same manner, so the idea is for the DUEEC to review courses in the same manner that the GEEC currently reviews courses, and any matter related to TAs will be reviewed by UGC.

Chair Scheibner recommended GC send a formal memo to give the Undergraduate Division the opportunity to respond in writing. VPDGE Hratchian recommended not asking for consultation because it may be interpreted as requesting a GC member every year to attend the DUEEC meetings. Instead, it was recommended to revise “consultation with the Graduate Division” to “informing the Graduate Division.”

Action:

- Voting members approved the draft memo with the revision to remove “consultation with the Graduate Division” and replace it with “informing the Graduate Division”.
- GC Analyst will transmit the final memo to the Senate Chair.

V. **Graduate Students Teaching Graduate Students – Chair Scheibner and VPDGE Hratchian – 12:10pm – 12:20pm**

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

During the January 18, 2024 GC meeting, members discussed under which conditions to grant exceptions for qualified PhD students to teach graduate courses. Members considered amending the current policy to include that PhD students are allowed to teach master’s courses with approval by exception only. Members also discussed whether to explicitly state possession of a master’s degree as a requirement.

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

Members further discussed whether the current policy should be revised to include that a graduate student who has acquired a master's degree should be allowed to teach graduate students primarily as a TA. The question was raised as to whether Instructor of Records should be allowed to teach graduate students. Vice Chair Abatzoglou noted that there have been instances where a qualified graduate student who has either a master's degree or who has advanced to candidacy could potentially serve as an Instructor of Record. He also noted that graduate students should be allowed an IoR appointment if the course is primarily for graduate students in a non-doctoral granting degree program (e.g., professional Master's, M.S./M.A. program). The graduate student IOR must also obtain approval from the Graduate Group Chair and Graduate Dean.

The policy currently states that a graduate student can serve as a TA for graduate courses if they have advanced to candidacy. Members agreed that graduate students should also be allowed to TA for graduate courses if they have a master's degree in a relevant field or by approval from the Graduate Program Chair. TAs also cannot contribute to final course grades and will continue to be supervised by the IoR assigned to the course to avoid any conflicts or perceived conflicts.

Action:

- Vice Chair Abatzoglou will consult with VPDGE Hratchian to amend the policy accordingly.
- Voting members will be invited to review the proposed amendments.

VI. VPDGE Hratchian's Report – 12:20pm - 12:35pm

A. ReGROW

ReGrow was successful. Eight programs were involved, and one program has asked whether they could still attend virtually. The programs that attended in person will receive Block grant funds; however, those who attend virtually will not.

B. Admissions

UC Merced is 8 short of 1,200 graduate applications and has the highest conversion rate in the UC system. VPDGE Hratchian expects to be up 15% in application numbers this year. There are only three programs down in numbers this year, with Political Science having the lowest number of applicants.

C. Advisor Assignments

There is currently no policy regarding instantiating advisor/advisee, only a policy for what is done for an advisor change. VPDGE Hratchian would like for GC to collaborate on a policy to include two things: 1) Give more agency to the chairs to manage issues in their program, and 2) a more manageable method for navigating conversation regarding the expectation that faculty provide support through GSRs for their students.

VPDGE Hratchian also emphasized the importance of articulating the difference between the

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right to pursue scholarship versus being part and parcel with the right to advise students. Graduate student mentoring and advising is about graduate student mentoring, not about the right to pursue scholarship. Mentoring students is a responsibility of the faculty and falls into the Faculty Code of Conduct. VPDGE Hratchian would like to collaborate with GC to develop a policy.

VII. Any Other Business – 12:35pm - 12:40pm

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?

Action:

- Members are to send Chair Scheibner any feedback **by COB, Tuesday, February 6, 2024.**

VIII. Executive Session – Voting Members Only – 12:40pm – 1:00pm

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

IX. Informational Items

- A. Campus Review Item - [Policy on Transmission of Documents to the University Archive](#)
- B. [CCGA Resources - Example Syllabi for Research Courses](#) (see under section: *Working with Graduate Students*)