

**GRADUATE COUNCIL (GC)****MINUTES OF MEETING  
Tuesday, September 3, 2024  
12:00pm – 1:30pm  
ADMIN 344**

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

Pursuant to call, the Graduate Council met at 12:00pm on September 3, 2024. Chair John Abatzoglou presiding.

**I. Welcome and Introductions**

Chair Abatzoglou welcomed new and returning members. Members then introduced themselves and discussed their previous experience with graduate education.

Chair Abatzoglou informed members of GC's role and the different topics that the Council will address throughout the year.

**II. Chair's Report – John Abatzoglou****A. August 23 All Chairs' Meeting**

Chair Abatzoglou informed members that this is the second year that graduate and undergraduate Chairs have been brought together for an All Chairs' Meeting. Some topics that were discussed during the meeting included concerns about the financial state of the university and a reminder for effective communication when working with others.

**B. August 29 SNS & SoE Graduate Group Chairs' Meeting**

Chair Abatzoglou noted that the Graduate Group Chairs' Meetings used to be conjoined and included all three schools (SSHA, SNS, SOE). There are now two separate series of meetings, one for SSHA graduate group chairs and one for the SoE/SNS graduate group chairs.

**III. Consent Calendar****A. Agenda****B. [GC's Conflict of Interest Policy](#)<sup>1</sup>****Actions:**

- The Consent Calendar was approved as presented.
- The GC Analyst will update the Senate website accordingly.
- The GC Analyst will notify the Senate Chair that GC had no concerns with the GC COI Policy.

Chair Abatzoglou reviewed GC's Conflict of Interest Policy with members. He then provided some examples of when the Policy would be relevant to the committee.

**IV. Conducting Committee Business**

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<sup>1</sup> All Senate Committees are encouraged to review their respective COI policy at their first meeting in the Fall. All Senate Committees COI policies are available on the Senate website: <https://senate.ucmerced.edu/conflict-interest>

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](#)
- [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)
- [CoC's Guide to Populating Academic Senate Committees: Leadership and Membership Commitments](#)
- 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 Abatzoglou asked members to review the documents linked above if they had not done so already. He also encouraged members to actively engage in committee business throughout the year in order to make the committee work efficiently. Additionally, Chair Abatzoglou stressed the importance of confidentiality within the committee. He noted that the meeting minutes will be posted on the Senate website, which will be the public dissemination of what occurs at GC.

## V. Representation on Subcommittees, Work Groups, and Systemwide Committees

### A. Campus Representation

- **Policy Subcommittee (3 members; ideally representation from each school)**  
This subcommittee reviews and makes recommendations to GC members on policies related to graduate education.

Continuing members discussed their previous experience working on the Policy Subcommittee and what type of work it entails. One item from AY 23-24 that the Policy Subcommittee addressed was the Graduate Policies and Procedures Handbook (GPPH) revision to the language regarding COIs on Graduate Student Committees. It was noted that this business will carry into this academic year in order to be finalized.

#### **Actions:**

- GC Chair John Abatzoglou (SoE; Subcommittee Chair) and Vice Chair Irene Beattie (SSHA) volunteered to serve on the Policy Subcommittee.
  - The GC Analyst will ask Member Arevalo if she would like to serve on the Policy Subcommittee or the Awards Subcommittee as the SNS representative.
- **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.

Continuing members discussed their previous experience working on the Course Proposal Subcommittee and what type of work it entails, including the review of new course proposals, revised course proposals, and Extension courses.

**Actions:**

- Members Susan Ge (SNS), Min Hwan Lee (SoE), and Sandie Ha (SSHA) volunteered to serve on the Course Proposal Subcommittee.
  - The GC Analyst will notify the Registrar, and CPS members will be added as course approvers in Curriculog.
  - The GC Analyst will share additional information/relevant policies with the subcommittee.
- **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 Abatzoglou).**

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 for the remaining two rounds (August 26 and December 2 Calls) to ensure each nomination includes a research/academic related abstract and will be supported by the appropriate amount and source of matching funds.

Continuing members discussed their previous experience working on the Awards Subcommittee and what type of work it entails, including the review of applications for the Graduate Student Supplemental Travel Award and the review of nominations for the Graduate Teaching/Mentorship Award.

**Actions:**

- Members Wan Du (SoE) and Jennifer Howell (SSHA) volunteered to serve on the Awards Subcommittee.
  - An SNS committee member will be identified to serve on this subcommittee.
- **Periodic Review Oversight Committee (PROC)**  
*Representative: GC Vice Chair Irene Beattie*  
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. The reader must read them in advance of the meeting and be prepared to weigh in on specific questions.); and participates in agenda item discussions, representing GC's perspective and deciding when GC may need to weigh in on PROC business.

**No Requested Action.**

B. Systemwide Representation

- **Coordinating Committee on Graduate Affairs (CCGA)**  
*Representative: GC Chair Abatzoglou*

CCGA advises the Senate and University administration on all matters regarding the promotion of research and learning related to graduate education.

**No Requested Action.**

**VI. GC AY 2023-24 Goals, Priorities, and Anticipated Business**

Chair Abatzoglou reviewed the preliminary list of goals and priorities with members.

Members discussed Initial Advisor Assignments, which is a carry-over priority item from last year. Currently, there is no policy in place for how advisors are assigned to students. VPDGE Hratchian provided examples to the committee as to why this is problematic. He added that while many departments have a method in place for assigning advisors, several departments do not. Having a policy in place would ensure that all students are assigned an advisor regardless of the department. Last year, it was decided that graduate group chairs would form a committee to discuss this item and provide GC with recommendations this Fall.

Chair Abatzoglou noted that he would like GC to review, and possibly approve, the new language for COIs on Graduate Student Committees that last year's Policy Subcommittee drafted. His hope is to have this addressed at the next GC meeting.

Members discussed how Composite Benefit Rates (CBRs) for Postdoctoral Scholars appear to be very unpredictable. Over the past years, faculty have seen large variabilities in fringe rates for Postdoctoral Scholars, which has made it challenging to budget for these types of hires. Members noted how this makes faculty hesitant to hire postdocs even though they are essential to advancing the university's research. VPDGE Hratchian stated that this happens because there is a very small pool of Postdoctoral Scholars at UC Merced. Therefore, the CBRs do not balance out and need to be adjusted every few years.

One item that might come to GC this academic year is the SJV Prime+ Program. Members noted that GC's role is unclear, as medical education curriculum is under UCSF's purview. One suggestion was to reach out to UC Riverside's Academic Senate, as UC Riverside had a similar program with UCLA's Medical School, and they may have some institutional knowledge regarding Graduate Council's oversight.

Chair Abatzoglou briefly stated that this academic year, GC may also have a role in addressing the Future of Graduate Education, Graduate Certificate Programs, University Extension, and the Curriculum Advisory Board (CAB).

**Action:**

- Members are to send Chair Abatzoglou and Vice Chair Beattie any additional goals for GC in AY 24-25.

**VII. Campus and Systemwide Review Items**

A. Proposed Revisions to Presidential Policy: Use of Externally Supplied Medications in UC Outpatient and Clinic Settings (Systemwide)

The responsibility and accountability for purchasing, mixing, and administering injectable medications resides solely with University of California Health System ("UC Health") pharmacists, and the physicians, nurses, and physician assistants who administer the drugs.

The policy includes several key issues outlined in Executive Vice President Rubin's [cover letter](#).

A member noted a concern with the policy stating that a UC pharmacy or UC pharmacist is needed, which is not available in the Merced area. Another noted concern was that if this is true, it could potentially undermine the clinical mission of the university.

**Action:**

- Member Howell will reach out to Dr. Vener to inquire about perceived concerns with the requirement of a UC pharmacy and pharmacist and report back to the group.

B. [Proposed Revisions to the Policy on Vaccination Programs](#) (Systemwide)

The proposed revisions can be found linked above within the Interim Program Attachments #3-7.

**Actions:**

- Members decided to decline to opine.
- The GC Analyst will notify the Senate Chair that GC declined to opine.

C. [Renaming of University Extension](#) (Campus Wide)

The suggested alternatives are “UC Merced Division of Professional Studies” or “UC Merced Division of Professional and Continuing Education”.

Members discussed the proposal and agreed with changing the name of University Extension. Members preferred the second proposed option, “UC Merced Division of Professional and Continuing Education”, as the first option, “UC Merced Division of Professional Studies”, implies that the unit is a professional school. Members further noted that including “Continuing Education” in the title may be advantageous, as there is already a great deal of interest in continuing education within the community. Communicating this more clearly could be beneficial to the unit.

**Actions:**

- Members decided to opine, showing support for a name change to “UC Merced Division of Professional and Continuing Education”.
- Chair Abatzoglou volunteered to serve as the lead reviewer.
- The GC Analyst will draft a memo based on the committee’s comments and send to Chair Abatzoglou and Vice Chair Beattie for review.
- GC Voting members will be invited to review the draft memo prior to transmittal to the Senate Chair.

**VIII. VPDGE Hratchian’s Report**

A. Graduate Enrollment Update

VPDGE Hratchian informed members that enrollment this year is projected to remain relatively flat. This is partly due to many incoming students not getting their visas approved. He added that many students who have passed their 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> year are now graduating, which has been beneficial for enrollment. VPDGE Hratchian anticipates that enrollment will remain flat for another year or two before increasing. He added that it is important to note that some programs in SNS and SOE are growing despite enrollment numbers.

VPDGE Hratchian stated that a little more than 40 percent of UC Merced’s students who are employed are employed as GSRs, which is on par with other UCs. This is an increase from previous years and positive news for UC Merced.

B. Graduate Budgeting

VPDGE Hratchian informed members that the Graduate Division budget has remained flat. He added that other UC campuses are in a deficit and experiencing cuts, and he would like to be proactive in case UC Merced experiences similar cuts.

C. Priorities for AY 24-25

VPDGE Hratchian shared the following Graduate Division priorities for AY 24-25:

- Determining better ways to ensure student success first as a narrative
- More effective communication and process development
- Scalability in order to serve the increased number of graduate students
- Staff success
- Pushing on high-impact practices
- Working with GC and CAP to value faculty mentorship
- Working with APO to make Postdoctoral Scholar hiring easier

**IX. Any Other Business**

No other business was discussed.

**X. Informational Items**

A. [GC AY 23-24 Annual Report](#)

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 1:30pm.

Attest: John Abatzoglou, GC Chair