

GRADUATE COUNCIL (GC)**MEETING MINUTES**
Tuesday, October 29, 2024
12:00pm – 1:30pm
ZOOM

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

Pursuant to call, the Graduate Council met at 12:00pm on October 29, 2024. Chair John Abatzoglou presiding.

I. Executive Session – Voting Members Only

No minutes were recorded during the Executive Session. The action items were shared with GC voting members.

II. Consent Calendar – Chair Abatzoglou**A. Today's Agenda****Actions:**

- Today's Agenda was approved as presented.
- The GC Analyst updated the Senate website accordingly.

B. [October 15 Draft Meeting Minutes](#)**Actions:**

- The October 15 Meeting Minutes were approved as presented.
- The GC Analyst updated the Senate website accordingly.

C. [GC's Draft Memo Re: UC Merced's Interim Policy on Expressive Activities and Assembly: Protests, Demonstrations, Non-University Speakers and Signage on Campus and in University Facilities](#)**Actions:**

- Chair Abatzoglou invited members to review the memo and share any edits with Melanie, Petra and Chair Abatzoglou by 4:00pm, Friday, November 1, 2024.
- In the absence of comments/edits by the deadline, the memo will be considered approved and sent to the Senate Chair.

D. [GC's Draft Memo Re: Conflict Resolution on Graduate Committees](#)**Actions:**

- Chair Abatzoglou invited members to review the memo and share any edits with Melanie, Petra and Chair Abatzoglou by 4:00pm, Friday, November 1, 2024.
- In the absence of comments/edits by the deadline, the memo will be considered approved and sent to VPDGE Hratchian and Associate Dean of Graduate Studies Ghosh.

E. Courses

B

Action:

- GC approved the following courses, and Curriculog was updated accordingly:

[EECS - 224 - Large Language Models](#) (New, Spring 2025)

[EECS - 235 - Solar Cells, Modules and Systems](#) (Modify Existing; Crosslisted with MBSE 265, ES 265, PHYS 265; Fall 2025)

[ES - 265 - Solar Cells, Modules and Systems](#) (Modify Existing; Crosslisted with MBSE 265, EECS 235, PHYS 265; Fall 2025)

[MBSE - 265 - Solar Cells, Modules and Systems](#) (Modify Existing; Crosslisted with ES 265, EECS 235, PHYS 265; Fall 2025)

[PHYS - 265 - Solar Cells, Modules and Systems](#) (Modify Existing; Crosslisted with ES 265, EECS 235, MBSE 265; Fall 2025)

Action:

- GC agreed to return the following course to the proposer for clarification regarding the number of contact hours per week, and Curriculog was updated accordingly:

[QSB - 286 - Cooperative-based Graduate Research Experience \(COOGRE\)](#) (New, Spring 2025)

III. Curriculum Advisory Board (CAB)/Extension Program

CAB members Mayya Tokman and Zenaida Aguirre-Munoz joined the discussion.

In AY 22-23, GC voting members discussed the restructuring of CAB and Senate oversight. Voting members voted to endorse keeping CAB and to develop a joint Senate-Administration Working Group comprised of CAB members, GC voting members, the Dean of Extension, and School Deans (or their delegates) to review Extension/post baccalaureate courses/TPP requests. The next steps are to send an update on the progress or direction to the Senate Chair.

At the October 1, 2024 GC meeting, members met with Dean of University Extension Annette Roberts Webb and Director of Extension and Degree Completion Michael Pierick to discuss concerns with CAB. During the discussion, Dean of University Extension Annette Roberts Webb requested guidance from GC on how to improve CAB especially in terms of the charge and turnover.

Vice Chair Beattie stated that CAB does not currently have a charge, term limits for membership, nor an outline of committee composition, which will need to be formalized. Vice Chair Beattie then introduced the two remaining Senate faculty members serving on CAB, Mayya Tokman and Zenaida Aguirre-Munoz. She informed them that GC had previously met with University Extension Dean Annette Roberts Webb who mentioned that the CAB portfolio may be expanding, as other types of courses that do not fall under Teacher Education might be added as Education courses. There is also the potential to bring in an individual with expertise in Teacher Education from another UC campus. Vice Chair Beattie inquired about the current workload and what CAB members see as a potential path forward for institutionalizing CAB.

CAB member Tokman stated that the majority of the issues with CAB are structural. She added that oversight in terms of University Extension has improved with the new leadership, however, there is still no direct oversight of CAB. Updates are received periodically, however, nothing formal is received from

GC nor another Senate body. CAB member Tokman suggested that CAB needs somebody with more targeted expertise, especially when it comes to teaching credential courses. Also, it would be valuable for CAB members to receive information pertaining to the course, such as who is teaching it, how it is being taught, what content is being delivered, etc.

CAB Member Tokman informed GC members that because there is not enough expertise at UC Merced related to Teacher Education, they have been seeking a collaboration with CalTeach and have also been exploring the idea of a graduate degree in a Master of Education.

Vice Chair Beattie sought clarification on what CAB would need on a routine basis from a Teacher Education Program. CAB member Tokman replied that regular updates on the state of the program such as the number of students, who is teaching, where the classes are held, and how the courses are being administered would be helpful.

CAB member Aguirre-Munoz noted that regular, quarterly updates would be helpful, as well as clarification on the direction that University Extension is shifting to with their programs, as it would be beneficial to ensure there are individuals with the proper expertise to review courses for University Extension's various programs. Vice Chair Beattie added that with regular graduate level courses, there is a review through a curriculum committee, and then the courses come to GC to review. The curriculum committee level review is essentially what is missing in terms of a review of the content. For this reason, it would be valuable to have some type of departmental level review of the courses prior to CAB's review.

One member asked whether the individuals who are hired to teach the courses are hired regularly or on demand. CAB Member Tokman responded that the instructors are not Senate faculty or even lecturers, and members of CAB are unsure of who is ultimately hired because University Extension handles the hiring process. Vice Chair Beattie added that it might be valuable to establish qualifications for instructors.

CAB Member Tokman believes there needs to be clearer collaboration between GC, University Extension, and CAB in order for the program to be successful. There needs to be a joint agreement on the responsibilities, needs, and oversight.

Actions:

- GC will continue to collaborate and develop a charge for CAB.
- Further discussion will take place at a future GC meeting.

IV. Consultation with VPAP Hansford

- A. [Assembly Bill 810](#)
- B. [Senate Bill 791](#)

VPAP Hansford introduced two new bills that were recently passed that aim to make it less likely for higher education institutions in the State of California to hire individuals who have engaged in misconduct at their previous places of work. UCOP has since provided detailed guidance on campus implementation. Now, all academic hires must complete a misconduct disclosure form before the UC can hire them. If an individual reveals a relatively recent (within the past 7 years) history of employment misconduct, then the Academic Personnel Office (APO) will reach out to their previous employer for more information in order to determine if the individual is still eligible for hire at UC Merced. VPAP Hansford added that this will hopefully help to improve

campus climate, however there will most likely be challenges with implementation, particularly when dealing with graduate student appointments due to the large number of hires.

VPAP Hansford informed GC members that implementation will need to occur by January 1, 2025. This will apply only to incoming graduate students for Fall 2025, not existing graduate students. He added that the misconduct disclosure form will only need to be completed once per individual; it will not need to be completed each semester.

VPAP Hansford has been working with the Graduate Division on implementation, and language will be added to the offer that graduate students receive stating that their admission/funding is conditional on them completing an employee misconduct disclosure form. When a student accepts an offer from UC Merced, they will then be sent a survey link to the official UC disclosure misconduct form. If a student reports misconduct, APO will make an effort to reach out to the previous employer for more information. VPAP Hansford would then like to consult with Campus Council and a Senate representative before making a final decision. He added that he would like to begin this process as early as possible in case the student is not eligible for hire and the program being affected can plan accordingly. Because of an earlier timeline, exceptions such as late admits may be less feasible.

Members questioned how this would affect international students, as their admittance process is typically lengthier and more complicated due to Visas, language competency interviews, etc. VPAP Hansford agreed that this was a very important consideration that his office will need to consider and address.

Graduate Student Representative Casper asked how the university is going to help a student in the event that they are unable to be hired due to previous misconduct. For example, provide the student with a fellowship instead of a TA or GSR appointment. VPAP Hansford replied that he has explored options with VPDGE Hratchian but would not be able to provide a fellowship linked to employment.

Chair Abatzoglou stated that another challenge may lie in the possibility of giving graduate students a second chance even if they had a misconduct violation in the past. He added that many individuals begin graduate school as an opportunity to improve and retrain themselves, and perhaps APO can take into consideration if the student has taken measures to remedy their previous misconduct. VPAP Hansford agreed and added that it would also depend on the level and type of misconduct that was reported, as the ultimate goal is to keep the campus community safe.

Action:

- Further discussion will take place at a future GC meeting.

V. Chair's Report – John Abatzoglou

A. October 21 Divisional Council Meeting

EVC/P Dumont reported that due to the negative state budget outlook for next year, the UC may receive a budget cut. UC Merced will begin a budget exercise to strategize and determine where the campus can reduce costs by 5% in anticipation of next year's budget cut.

EDI Chair Nobile presented a proposal from EDI regarding hate speech and bias in student

evaluations. Chair Abatzoglou noted that this may be an important consideration for GC when graduate students are employed as TAs and are evaluated by their students.

VI. Vice Chair's Report – Irene Beattie

A. October 21 PROC Meeting

Vice Chair Beattie stated that PROC is mainly dealing with undergraduate program reviews at this time, so not much is relevant to GC.

B. [SSHA Reorganization Proposal](#)

At the October 15, 2024 GC meeting, Vice Chair Beattie agreed to serve as lead reviewer. A draft memo with her comments is available [here](#).

[SSHA Graduate Chairs' March 11, 2022 memo](#) includes information relevant to the proposed restructuring plan.

Vice Chair Beattie reviewed the SSHA Reorganization Proposal and summarized her comments. She stated that the main issue is that the proposal does not address several items related to graduate education and noted concerns related to sufficient staff support. She requested input from GC members regarding whether language should be included in GC's memo referencing the lack of staff support that was included in the SSHA Graduate Chairs' memo from March 2022. Members agreed with incorporating such language into the memo in an effort to encourage campus leadership to pay closer attention to equitable allocations of graduate staff across students and programs.

Members discussed the concern of GC not being assigned as a lead reviewer for the proposal. They agreed to add language at the beginning of the memo emphasizing the importance of considering graduate students and graduate groups, as the current proposal focuses mainly on undergraduate students and programs.

Actions:

- Members discussed the memo and recommended including language to reference SSHA Graduate Chairs' 2022 memo.
- The GC Analyst will revise the draft memo based on the committee's comments and circulate it to voting members for their review and approval via email.

VII. Campus Wide Review Item

A. [SOE Proposal for an Electrical Engineering Minor](#)

The School of Engineering would like to offer the new program beginning in Fall 2025.

Comments are due to the Senate Chair by **Friday, November 22, 2024**.

Actions:

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

VIII. Any Other Business

No other business was discussed.

IX. Informational Items from VPDGE Hratchian

- A. [FY25 Primary Block Grant Allocation](#)
- B. [Master's Incentive Program Allocation](#)
- C. [Fall 2025 Enrollment Tables](#)
- D. [AY 23/24 Employment Data Tables](#)

Chair Abatzoglou summarized the informational items from VPDGE Hratchian noting that the data is useful from a transparency perspective. He encouraged members to review the documents if they had not already done so.

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

Attest: John Abatzoglou, GC Chair