

GRADUATE COUNCIL (GC)**MEETING MINUTES****Friday, February 7, 2025****11:30am – 1:00pm****ZOOM**

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

Pursuant to call, the Graduate Council met at 11:30am on February 7, 2025. 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****Action:**

- Today's Agenda was approved as presented.

B. [January 24 Draft Meeting Minutes](#)**Action**

- The January 24 Meeting Minutes were approved as presented.

C. SSHA Petitions for Graduate Students to Teach Upper Division Courses[Balla Jessica PSY 120 202520](#)[Das Amreeta POLI 135 202520](#)[Griffith Zoe PSY 125 202520](#)[Simpson Danielle PSY 130 202520](#)**Actions:**

- The petitions were approved as presented.
- Chair Abatzoglou signed the petitions, and the GC Analyst notified VPDGE Hratchian.

D. [Request for an Expedited Review of GSTU - 210 for Fall 2025](#)**Actions:**

- The request for an expedited review of GSTU - 210 for Fall 2025 was approved as presented.
- Voting members will review the course once it reaches GC's step in Curriculog.
- The GC Analyst notified Associate Dean of Graduate Division Ghosh.

E. Courses[MGMT - X405.3 - Project Management Execution & Risk](#) (New; Fall 2025)[MGMT - X405.4 - Project Management Methods](#) (New; Fall 2025)[MGMT - X405.5 - Project Management Capstone](#) (New; Fall 2025)[MGMT - X405.6 - Associate Project Manager Bootcamp: CAPM Exam](#) (New; Fall 2025)

[POLI - X421 - California State Government Overview](#) (New; Spring 2026)

[POLI - X422 - California Lobbying and Budget](#) (New; Spring 2026)

[POLI - X423 - California Elections, Direct Democracy, and Rulemaking](#) (New; Spring 2026)

[POLI - X424 - California Legislature, Process, and Drafting](#) (New; Spring 2026)

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

Action:

- The courses were approved as presented and Curriculog was updated accordingly.

III. Chair’s Report – John Abatzoglou

A. January 28 Divisional Council Meeting

There is significant uncertainty at this time regarding the recent Executive Orders and their impact on federal funding. It is still unclear how students and faculty research funds will be impacted, which will be important for GC to monitor in terms of supporting graduate education.

There is a large working group at UCOP that has been tasked with addressing Artificial Intelligence (AI) issues. Systemwide guidance from this working group is forthcoming.

B. February 5 CCGA Meeting

There are continued discussions surrounding transitioning to a common calendar between UC campuses.

UC is planning on a 5% budget reduction, which is less than the 8% reduction that was originally considered. However, budgets are still unclear due to the impact of the Los Angeles fires on state funds.

CCGA held discussions regarding the uncertainty of federal funding and its potential impact on graduate education. Because many graduate students are supported on grants, the future of recruiting and funding students will depend on faculty’s ability to secure federal grants. The Federal Government is also looking at potentially reducing Facilities and Administrative (F&A) caps. Additionally, there may be an impact on federal grants associated with Hispanic Serving Institutions (HSI).

Prior to today’s meeting, Chair Abatzoglou circulated the Academic Planning Council (APC) Future of Doctoral Programs at UC Final Report to GC voting members. VPDGE Hratchian noted that one of the main takeaways from the report is the list of recommendations, specifically what was labeled as ‘bold recommendations’. The Graduate Division has begun reviewing the recommendations and noting where UC Merced is working to meet or has already satisfied the recommendation.

Action:

- The APC Future of Doctoral Programs at UC Final Report will be added to a future GC agenda.

IV. Consultation with Vice Provost for Academic Affairs and Strategy Christiane Spitzmueller**A. Master's Degree Programs**

VPAAS Spitzmueller joined the meeting and informed members that the idea for additional Master's degree programs emerged from the Shared Governance Retreat in Fall 2024, where participants explored opportunities for growth at UC Merced. She noted that there will be opportunities to grow the undergraduate population; however, over the next several years the demographics of high school students in California may present challenges. There are also growth opportunities beyond the undergraduate level that can support UC Merced in terms of revenue, such as Master's degree programs. VPAAS Spitzmueller and her team office have explored programs that would be successful based on student demand, competitive intensity, and labor market prospects.

VPAAS Spitzmueller presented a [slide set](#) containing twelve Master's programs for consideration. Two lists were presented in terms of their projected success for California and the Central Valley. In terms of labor market demands for California, there is an expected significant job growth in education and in healthcare. Another area of job growth includes business-related positions. The presentation included labor market projections for this year, along with the projected median annual wages for various degree fields and the total projected job openings in California for individuals with a Master's degree. Based on the analytical data, the Master's degree programs that would be successful at UC Merced include Business, Computer Science, Education, Psychology, and a 4+1 Master's degree in Engineering.

Following the presentation, members shared their thoughts on potential Master's programs, as well as the PhD-to-Master's student ratio at UC Merced. One member asked VPDGE Hratchian how many undergraduate students aim to continue at UC Merced to obtain a Master's degree. VPDGE Hratchian responded that it is a small number of students, possibly less than 10%.

Members discussed the vision of the overlap with existing PhD programs in terms of coursework. For example, it could be logistically challenging to provide a high level of feedback to PhD students in seminars with the addition of faculty time dedicated to Master's students. Members expressed concern with the potential effect on the quality of current PhD programs.

Members further discussed the potential for revenue by creating more Master's degree programs. It was noted that there would need to be a balance between the proper number of students to generate revenue and not overstressing the campus's capacity to support them. For this reason, it would be most efficient to create Master's programs where PhD programs already exist. Members also discussed self-funded Master's students and whether this is what is primarily done at other campuses. VPDGE Hratchian confirmed that on other campuses, Master's students are primarily self-funded. VPAAS Spitzmueller added that it depends on the field of study, as students in certain programs are often funded by their employer.

A suggestion was to consider online or hybrid degree programs. This would be beneficial, as many Master's students already hold a professional job position and would not be able to attend courses during the day. Because UC Merced does not offer a large number of night courses, online or hybrid courses may be a viable option that caters to the needs of the community. VPAAS Spitzmueller added that this would align with UC Merced's access mission.

Action:

- VPAAS Spitzmueller will share her slide presentation with GC members.

V. Vice Chair’s Report – Irene Beattie

A. January 30 PROC Meeting

PROC is continuing to discuss a conjoined review process. The Sociology program is currently undergoing review and is the first program to pilot the conjoined undergraduate/graduate review process.

There was a suggestion from PROC members to possibly create common questions to provide to review teams so that similar answers are acquired. There are also discussions about potentially revising the PROC charge so that reviews align with the desired outcomes. An important consideration is the resources available and the interplay between different programs within a department.

Action:

- The GC Analyst sent an email to GC members to determine an alternate for the February 20 PROC meeting.

VI. [Proposed Revisions to the Policy for Establishing Hybrid Undergraduate/Graduate Degree Programs](#) – Chair Abatzoglou

In Fall 2024, a faculty member contacted the Senate and GC leadership regarding a potential exception to GC’s [Policy for Establishing Hybrid Undergraduate/Graduate Degree Programs \(HDP\)](#) to allow for an increase in the number of units from the graduate level course work to be counted toward undergraduate degree requirements.

The GC Analyst and Chair Abatzoglou proposed the following revisions noted in bold, underlined font, and available in the documents linked below.

Page 2, number 5 of the policy:

“HDP programs allow for 12 units of graduate level coursework to count toward undergraduate degree requirements. Each HDP program sets its upper limit of graduate level units which can be counted towards the Bachelor’s degree, but the upper limit should not exceed 12 units, **unless otherwise approved by exception by the Graduate Council (GC).**”

[Policy for the Establishment of Undergraduate/Graduate Hybrid Degree Programs](#) (Word)

[Procedures for Submitting Proposals for Graduate Programs and Undergraduate/Graduate Hybrid Degree Programs](#) (Word)

VPDGE Hratchian requested clarification on whether the double counting of coursework referred to undergraduate-level coursework to count toward graduate degree requirements or graduate-level coursework to count toward undergraduate degree requirements. Members confirmed that it was for graduate level coursework to count toward undergraduate degree requirements. Furthermore, there is already a program considering an HDP proposal and encountering an issue with the number of units, as it would be a program that partners with UCSF.

Members discussed who would have the authority to count the course, as courses are typically counted within the term that the student first completed them. Registrar Webb stated that challenges will arise when an undergraduate student at UC Merced attempts to double-count the coursework as part of a graduate program at UC Merced. As the joint program with UCSF proposes the first years be completed

at UC Merced, and then graduate years be completed at UCSF, Registrar Web does not foresee any problems arising with this proposal. She added that the exception language in the policy would allow GC to have control and influence in potentially complicated situations.

Actions:

- GC voting members unanimously approved the proposed revisions to the policy.
- The GC Analyst drafted a memo containing the committee's approval and transmitted it to the UGC Chair on February 11, 2025.

VII. Any Other Business

VPDGE Hratchian informed members that Graduate Visitation Day will take place on February 28, 2025, and that Research Week will take place during the week of March 10, 2025' .

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 1:00pm.

Attest: John Abatzoglou, GC Chair