GRADUATE COUNCIL (GC)
MEETING MINUTES
Friday, February 21, 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 21, 2025. Chair John Abatzoglou presiding.

I.   **Consent Calendar – Chair Abatzoglou**
  A. Today's Agenda

      Action:
        ➢ Today's Agenda was approved as presented.

  B. February 7 Draft Meeting Minutes

      Action:
        ➢ The February 7 Meeting Minutes were approved as presented.

  C. A Request from SNS Professor Baxter for Exception to GC's February 3, 2025 Deadline to Submit a Hybrid Undergraduate/Graduate Degree Proposal, Effective Fall 2026

      Actions:
        ➢ The request was approved as presented.
        ➢ The GC Analyst notified Professor Baxter and Executive Director Paul.

  D. SSHA Petition for Graduate Student to Teach Upper Division Courses
      Beylin_Natalie_PSY 156_202520
      Majeed_Rabia_PSY150_202520

      Actions:
        ➢ The petitions were approved as presented.
        ➢ The GC Chair signed the petitions, and the GC Analyst notified VPDGE Hratchian.

  E. Proposed Graduate Group Revisions to University Catalog AY 2025-2026 Content
      Bioengineering
      Quantitative Systems Biology

      Actions:
        ➢ GC approved the Bioengineering and Quantitative Systems Biology Catalog AY 2025-2026 Content revisions.
        ➢ The GC Analyst notified the Graduate Division and Registrar accordingly.

  F. Courses
      Members expressed concerns with several of the courses, specifically pertaining to modality and credit hours (contact and non-contact hours). Many of the courses are online courses but noted both

online and traditional face-to-face options. Members then discussed the difference between synchronous and asynchronous online courses in terms of contact and non-contact hours. Some of these concerns may reflect differences in the nature of PACE courses versus traditional academic courses for which faculty in GC are not well versed on.

Action:

> GC agreed to return the following courses to the proposers for clarification on the course modality and the appropriate number of contact/non-contact hours. Curriculog was updated accordingly:
> COGS - 250 - Cognitive Science Graduate Seminar (Modify Existing; Spring 2026)
> EDUC - X315 - Single Subject Methods: English and Language Arts (Modify Existing; Summer 2025)
> EDUC - X315.2 - Single Subject Methods - English Language Arts (New; Summer 2025)
> EDUC - X316 - Single Subject Methods: History and Social Science (Modify Existing; Summer 2025)
> EDUC - X316.2 - Single Subject Methods - History & Social Sciences (New; Summer 2025)
> EDUC - X317 - Single Subject Methods: Math (Modify Existing; Summer 2025)
> EDUC - X317.2 - Single Subject Methods – Mathematics (New; Summer 2025)
> EDUC - X318 - Single Subject Methods: Science (Modify Existing; Summer 2025)
> EDUC - X318.2 - Single Subject Methods – Science (New; Summer 2025)
> EDUC - X320 - Foundations of Education in PK-3 (New; Fall 2025)
> EDUC - X321 - Education and the Inclusive Classroom (New; Fall 2025)
> EDUC - X322 - Child Development and Learning: Conception through PK-3 (New; Fall 2025)
> EDUC - X323 - Health and Wellness: Educating the Whole Child for PK-3 (New; Spring 2026)
> EDUC - X330 - Integrated Literacy, ELD, and Humanities in the P-TK Classroom (New; Spring 2026)
> EDUC - X331 - STEAM in the P-TK Classroom (New; Spring 2026)
> EDUC - X332 - Equity, Inclusion, and Diversity (New; Spring 2026)
> EDUC - X333.1 - Teaching Performance Assessment Support Seminar 1 (New; Spring 2026)
> EDUC - X333.2 - Teaching Performance Assessment Support Seminar 2 (New; Spring 2026)
> EDUC - X334 - PK-3 Practicum (New; Spring 2026)
> EDUC - X340 - Integrated Literacy, ELD, and Humanities in the K-3 Classroom (New; Spring 2026)
> EDUC - X341 - STEAM in the K-3 Classroom (New; Spring 2026)
> EDUC - X342 - Data Driven Decision Making IFSPs, IEPs, and Transitional Plans (New; Spring 2026)
> EDUC - X380 - Bilingual Authorization - Spanish BLA Fieldwork Experience (New; Summer 2025)
> EDUC - X485 - AP Content and Pedagogy for Teachers (New; Summer 2025)
> GSTU - 210 - Research Proposal for Advancement to Candidacy (Modify Existing; Fall 2025)

Action:

> GC approved the following course, and Curriculog was updated accordingly:
> PH - 285 - Introduction to Health and Biomedical Ethics (New; Fall 2025)

II.   Chair's Report – John Abatzoglou
  A. February 11 Divisional Council Meeting

Divisional Council members reviewed GC's Policy for Graduate Students Teaching Graduate Students. While members supported GC's comments, they offered a suggestion to remove GC as an approver of IoR requests under item 6. Divisional Council then unanimously endorsed GC's proposed policy revisions with the additional modification.

Divisional Council members discussed the UCSF Memorials to the Regents. The UCSF Academic Senate has proposed two Memorials to the UC Regents, seeking to expand Senate membership to include faculty with appointments greater than 50% in the Health Sciences Clinical and Adjunct series. A Senate Faculty Forum was held on February 19, 2025 and the [recording of the forum](#) was distributed to all UC Merced faculty on February 20, 2025.

III. Discussion: Artificial Intelligence (AI) – Chair Abatzoglou

At the February 7, 2025 GC meeting, members discussed Artificial Intelligence (AI) in relation to academic integrity. Currently, the Office of Student Rights and Responsibilities (OSRR) oversees academic honesty and misconduct through the [Academic Honesty Policy](#) and the [Code of Student Conduct](#).

Additional information for addressing AI in courses & syllabi can be found [here](#).

A member noted that there are varying disciplinary norms regarding the use of AI for academic research. Also, the university grants degrees that signify that students with a PhD have independent expertise in certain areas; however, if the student is using AI to complete their dissertation, for example, then the university is not fulfilling its role in granting those degrees. Furthermore, if a student uses AI in a way that rises to the level of an academic integrity issue, then the issue does not go to the Graduate Division, but rather to OSRR. It was added that issues with AI not only touch on academic integrity, but also on professional norms and integrity.

VPDGE Hratchian added that there is also a broader concept than AI to consider regarding student misconduct. The University considers plagiarism to be misconduct, which is handled by OSRR. If there is a case of potential research misconduct, then it goes to OSRR to determine if academic disqualification is necessary. The Graduate Division is not involved in this process. Independent of AI, it does not seem sensible that the Graduate Division or Graduate Dean do not get to opine on cases of academic disqualification. VPDGE Hratchian added that the Graduate Division does not currently have a standing body to adjudicate such cases, yet OSRR does. A body within the Graduate Division would need to be created if the structure were to change.

Action:
➢ This topic will be added to a future GC agenda for further discussion.

IV. Consultation with Associate Dean of the Graduate Division Sayantani Ghosh and Business Intelligence Analyst Jessica Chackoria
A. UC Graduate Student Experience Survey (UCGSES) Results
B. UC Merced Retention and Completion Results

Business Intelligence Analyst Jessica Chackoria presented a [slide set](#) to GC members on doctoral student retention based on the UCGSES survey data. The UCGSES survey is a survey that UCOP administers every two years. Therefore, the data included in slide set, linked above, include results from Spring 2023.

Key findings from the analysis included:

- Students who report high satisfaction are significantly less likely to leave without a degree.
- Belongingness is the strongest driver of satisfaction.
- Beyond structural factors like funding and program quality, students' experiences (how satisfied students feel, whether they feel like they belong, and their perceptions of their progress) also influence retention.

Based on the key findings, practical recommendations included seminars and colloquia, Graduate Division social events and gatherings, GradSLAM participation, Degrees of Determination, Research Week 2025, ReGROW, Summer Bridge, Faculty mentor training, the GradEXCEL Peer Mentor Program, the Entering Research Workshop Series, and the Entering Mentoring Workshop Series.

One member inquired about the measures in the survey that predicted a 30% variance for overall satisfaction, as well as the additional factors that could have accounted for the other 70% of the variance. Business Intelligence Analyst Jessica Chackoria responded that a larger sample size could have helped to capture such data. Regardless, the survey is believed to be comprehensive.

One member asked if the variables that were not found to be significant were reviewed as well. Business Intelligence Analyst Jessica Chackoria clarified that many of the variables were highly correlated with each other, so it would be false to say that they were not significant at all; however, when looking at each variable overall, certain ones emerged as significant with sizable path coefficients. She added that she did try to use factor analysis to ensure that the variables were consistent with each other; however, the sample size was not large enough for a robust factor analysis. She also confirmed that she checked the internal consistency of the variables.

One member suggested that another practical recommendation to improve climate and make individuals feel more included could be to have graduate students serve on committees and attend various meetings to ensure that their input and opinions are valued.

The Graduate Student Representative asked about the scale that was used to measure mentorship. Business Intelligence Analyst Jessica Chackoria noted that there was a long list of options to select and mentioned a few to the committee. The Graduate Student Representative added that this is important, as there is a systemwide push to increase mentorship and the accountability towards mentorship.

V. **Waiver Policy for In-Person Graduate Defenses – Chair Abatzoglou**
Faculty with ADA-based accommodations to work remotely have concerns about the policy requirement in the Graduate Policies & Procedures Handbook (page 39) mandating in-person attendance at graduate defenses. Some faculty members make every effort to attend defenses in person, but often times they are unable to do so and are then required to fill out last-minute waivers so that they can attend the defenses remotely.

Members reviewed the current UC Merced policy, as well as policies from other UC campuses.

VPDGE Hratchian informed members that when a student or a member of a committee is unable to attend a defense in person, they will typically write to the Graduate Division with the petition request, as noted in the policy. He added that the number of petition occurrences is relatively low and often approved.

Members discussed the policy and how GC is not an appropriate body to weigh in on ADA issues, as it is

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not about campus policy, but rather what is legally appropriate. VPDGE Hratchian noted that if a request came from someone with an ADA-based accommodation, the Graduate Division would always approve it and is unsure if those with ADA-based accommodations even need to submit a petition. For good reason, the Graduate Division is unaware of who does and does not have an ADA-based accommodation, so it is unclear on how best to proceed. VPDGE Hratchian suggested that perhaps there is specific language that could be added to the policy that notes individuals with an ADA-based accommodation do not need to submit a petition. Additionally, the Human Resources Office would be a good resource for guidance on accommodations.

Actions:
➢ VPDGE Hratchian will reach out to the Human Resources Office for guidance on accommodations.
➢ This topic will be added to a future GC agenda for further discussion.

VI. **[APO's Response to Senate Feedback on the Proposed MAPP Revisions](#) – Chair Abatzoglou**
In Fall 2024, all Senate committees were invited to review the proposed revisions to sections 2013, 2014, 2053, and 2054 of the Merced Academic Personnel Policies & Procedures (MAPP). These sections govern appointments and review for Senate faculty in the Professor and Teaching Professor series. Vice Provost for Academic Personnel Hansford responded to the Senate's feedback on the proposed revisions to MAPP Sections 2013, 2014, 2053 and 2054. All Senate leads have been invited to review the proposed MAPP revisions and share any substantive concerns.

Relevant documents include the following:
1. A formal [cover memo](#) which includes a summary of VPAP Hansford's responses and select revisions.
2. [Clean](#) and [tracked-changes](#) versions of MAPP 2013 (new revisions highlighted in yellow).
3. [Clean](#) and [tracked-changes](#) versions of MAPP 2014 (new revisions highlighted in yellow).
4. [Clean](#) and [tracked-changes](#) versions of MAPP 2053.
5. [Clean](#) and [tracked-changes](#) versions of MAPP 2054.

Actions:
➢ GC members agreed that they did not have any substantive concerns with the revisions.
➢ The GC Analyst notified Executive Director Paul that GC did not have any substantive concerns with the revisions.

VII. **Campus and Systemwide Review Items – Chair Abatzoglou**
A. [Proposal for a new Non-Degree Program from the UCM Division of Professional and Continuing Education (PACE): PK-3 Early Childhood Education (ECE) Specialist Instruction Credential](#) (Campus Wide)
The proposal has been reviewed and endorsed by PACE. The WSCUC Substantive Change Specialist has been consulted, and all WSCUC requirements have been met.

The guiding policy governing the establishment of a non-degree program is available [here](#).

Additional resources to help guide the Senate's review may be found at the links below:
[Preparing the UCM Extension Non-Degree Proposal](#)
[Professional and Continuing Education (PACE) Handbook](#) (beginning on page 3)

The Division of Professional and Continuing Education hopes to implement this proposal in Fall

2025.

GC is a lead reviewer.

At the January 24, 2025 GC meeting, Vice Chair Beattie agreed to serve as lead reviewer. Her comments are available here.

Comments are due to the Senate Chair by **Friday, February 21, 2025.**

Vice Chair Beattie summarized her comments to committee members, highlighting that the program had been reviewed by a faculty body, as is done with new PACE courses. Vice Chair Beattie believes the program will be very valuable. Within the memo, Vice Chair Beattie noted friendly suggestions to consider potential synergies with UC Merced's Natural Sciences Education (NSED) minor. She also recommended that UC Merced faculty or staff be added to the advisory board to enhance campus collaborations.

Actions:
- ➤ The draft memo was approved as presented.
- ➤ The GC Analyst transmitted the finalized memo to the Senate Chair.

B. [Proposal for a Dual Degree Program Leading to a Bachelor of Science (B.S.) Degree from UCM and Doctor of Medicine Degree from UCSF](#) (Campus Wide)
The proposal packet includes:
- The dual degree proposal itself, which follows Appendix W (pp.83-84) of the September 2023 revision of the [Coordinating Committee on Graduate Affairs Handbook](#).
- A letter from the Executive Committee of each of UC Merced's three schools. I thank them for their reviews, which have strengthened the proposal.
- The BS/MD Dual Degree Supplement. This document responds to questions and need for additional context raised by the Executive Committees that could not easily be accommodated in the proposal itself because the desired information does not align with the questions in Appendix W.
- Letters from the Interim Dean of the School of Natural Sciences, the University Librarian, and Chief Information Officer.
- The UCM-UCSF MOU.

The following documents are available to help guide the review:
- [Academic Degree Programs: UGC's Review/Approval Policy](#)
- [Procedures for Submitting Proposals for Graduate Emphasis Areas and Graduate Programs](#)
- [CCGA Handbook](#) (Appendix W, page 83) and the [Compendium](#) (Section II.B1. Establishment of New Graduate Degree Programs, and Appendix A of this document)
- [Policy and Procedures for Establishing Hybrid Undergraduate/Graduate Degree Programs (Jan. 2024)](#)

GC is a lead reviewer.

At the January 24, 2025 GC meeting, Member Frank agreed to serve as lead reviewer. Her comments are available here.

Comments are due to the Senate Chair by **Friday, March 7, 2025.**

Chair Abatzoglou summarized Member Frank's comments, highlighting that with respect to financial impact, state funds have been allocated to the program, and therefore should not be any financial burden on the university. Also, in terms of the Medical Education building, there may be a potential concern with the impact of the shade on the nearby greenhouse facility, as well as the new building's effect on space challenges.

Actions:
➢ The draft memo was approved as presented.
➢ The GC Analyst transmitted the finalized memo to the Senate Chair.

C. [Proposed Revisions to Senate Bylaw 170 and Rescission of Senate Bylaw 192](#) (Systemwide)
These amendments propose the elimination of UCOPE, with its remaining responsibilities reassigned to UCEP. This restructuring reflects the evolving landscape of preparatory education oversight, as many of UCOPE's core functions have become redundant. With the discontinuation of the University's Analytical Writing Placement Examination (AWPE) in 2022, individual campuses have taken on the management of their own placement assessments, reducing the necessity for a dedicated systemwide committee.

Comments are due to the Senate Chair by **Friday, March 7, 2025.**

Actions:
➢ GC members declined to opine.
➢ The GC Analyst notified the Senate Chair that GC declined to opine.

D. [Policy on Assurance of Safety Standards](#) (Campus Wide)
The proposed policy aims to establish a comprehensive process for identifying and addressing safety deficiencies and non-compliance issues. This policy is intended to promote a safe and supportive environment for all members of the UCM community, including faculty, staff, students, and visitors. It will apply to all academic and research activities, encompassing teaching and research laboratories, fieldwork, shared research support facilities, and machine shops used for academic and research-related purposes.

Comments are due to the Senate Chair by **Friday, March 21, 2025.**

Actions:
➢ Chair Abatzoglou invited members to review the proposed revisions and share any comments with Petra and Chair Abatzoglou by **10:00am, Monday, March 3, 2025**.
➢ In the absence of comments by the deadline, the GC Analyst will notify the Senate Chair that GC declines to opine.

E. [Proposed Revisions to APM-500, Recruitment](#) (Systemwide)
The policy revisions respond to the need to address two new bills signed into state law that add and amend sections 92612.1 and 92612.2 of the California Education Code, effective January 1, 2025 (reference Senate Bill (SB) 791, Postsecondary education: academic and administrative employees: disclosure of sexual harassment, and California Assembly Bill (AB) 810, Postsecondary education: hiring practices: academic, athletic, and administrative positions).

Comments are due to the Senate Chair by **Friday, April 4, 2025.**

Actions:
- ➢ Chair Abatzoglou invited members to review the proposed revisions and share any comments with Petra and Chair Abatzoglou by **10:00am, Monday, March 3, 2025**.
- ➢ In the absence of comments by the deadline, the GC Analyst will notify the Senate Chair that GC declines to opine.

VIII. VPDGE Hratchian's Report

A. Graduate Visitation Day

VPDGE Hratchian informed members that Graduate Visitation Day is on February 28, 2025. He added that all are welcome to attend the reception at the end of the evening; however, outside guests are not permitted due to limited space.

The week of March 10th is Research Week. On Monday, March 10, 2025, faculty and graduate student scholarships will be specifically highlighted. Related to this, Undergraduate Research Opportunities Center (UROC) is hosting a poster session symposium for undergraduate and graduate researchers, and the invitation for abstracts has been distributed. VPDGE Hratchian noted that these are great opportunities to highlight the amazing research occurring on campus, especially with the recent R1 announcement.

B. Graduate Admissions Update

Graduate Admissions numbers ended up being 2-3% higher than last year. Also, there were concerns earlier in the year regarding the distribution of international to domestic applications; however, the number of international applications has increased from previous years.

VPDGE Hratchian informed members that at the February 20 PROC meeting, there was a discussion about what happens when programs do not authentically engage in program reviews. PROC members discussed how to encourage engagement by showing that the process benefits student outcomes.

IX. Any Other Business

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 1:00pm.
Attest: John Abatzoglou, GC Chair