

GRADUATE COUNCIL (GC)**Draft Meeting Minutes****Monday, March 14, 2022****1:30 – 2:25 PM****COB 2 Room 392**Zoom URL:<https://ucmerced.zoom.us/j/8312699469>

Zoom Phone:1 669 900 6833, Meeting ID: 8312699469

Documents available in box

Graduate Council Duties

**I. Chair's Report (1:30-1:40)—Chair Hestir****A. Divisional Council (3/10)**

Senate Chair Westerling is advocating for a consistent mask removal policy to reduce confusion. DivCo supports the administration's position not want to extend remote instruction as an accommodation beyond Spring 2022. UC General Counsel has determined that remote teaching is not a reasonable accommodation under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). There was also an update regarding the MacKenzie Scott gift spending plan which included increases in faculty Senate grants, as well as awards to students who participate in service.

**B. Joint GC Chair/UGC Chair/VPDUE/VPDGE Meeting (3/2)**

One of the issues that VPDGE Kello flagged was whether the remote qualifying exam and dissertation exam will continue to be allowed. Chair Hestir stated that this will be an ongoing discussion.

**C. CCGA (3/2)**

The Council of Graduate Deans has submitted a soft inquiry to CCGA to remove systemwide Senate Regulation 520 or rewording the Regulation, which states that entering foreign graduate students are required to pass the regular examination in English.

The Council of Graduate Deans proposed to remove this Regulation from Senate Regulation 454, which pertains to undergraduate students.

**D. PROC (3/8)**

Chair Hestir reported that there are ongoing program reviews at the PhD level. Political Science (site visit 2/10-2/11 2022; response pending), and Applied Math (site visit 3/14-3/15/22)

**II. Consent Calendar (1:50-1:50)—Chair Hestir****A. The agenda (3/14/22)****B. Minutes from the 2/14/22 meeting****C. Course Proposals**

(NEW)

ECON - 250 - Graduate Development Economics

**Action:** The Consent Calendar was approved as presented.**III. Graduate Division Updates (1:50-2:10)—Interim VPDGE Chris Kello****A. Virtual Defense, Qualifying Exams, Committee Meetings for Spring 2022 and beyond**

VPDGE Kello reported on in-person dissertations and qualifying exams, stating that a decision should be made soon about whether Graduate Division will to continue to allow an exception or if the policy will be revised. A member recommended to continue to offer qualifying exams remotely due to

difficulties in scheduling them. The additional flexibility would benefit faculty since qualifying exams are very time-consuming. Another member noted that if remote exam options continue to be allowed, faculty are not encouraging a research and learning environment. Vice Chair Ha supported the idea of having in-person exams with flexibility for case-by-case exceptions. The Graduate Student Representative stated that learning to time-manage and research presentations for professors in person is part of the entire experience. Chair Hestir recommended that an exception could include a formal justification written to the VPDGE which will be approved on a case by case basis. Chair Hestir suggested that VPDGE Kello modify the existing policy regarding in-person dissertations and qualifying exams, and GC will review the revisions at a future GC meeting.

**Action:** VPDGE Kello will modify policy and include suggested language. The revised policy will be circulated and voted on at a future GC meeting.

**IV. Discussion Item: Conflict Resolution Infrastructure (2:10-2:20)—Chair Hestir and Maria Nishanian, Graduate Division**

This item was discussed at the February 14 GC meeting. GC received comments from all three School Deans, as well as some department chairs and graduate group chairs, FWAF, and CoR, synthesized here. Original comments are here.

VPDGE Kello and Academic Counselor Nishanian reviewed members' comments and provided edits to the draft, available here.

VPDGE Kello and Academic Counselor Nishanian discussed their edits on the draft. Discussions included whether the position of the Academic Advisor would be necessary on the UC Merced Faculty/Graduate Student Conflict Management Flowchart. A member noted that directing students to an Academic Advisor instead of directly to the Graduate Group Program Chair would be an escalation, as the Graduate Group Program Chair is qualified to advise the student on their specific needs. Academic Counselor Nishanian stated that she directs students straight to the Graduate Group Program Chair but that sometimes students feel more comfortable consulting with an Academic Advisor instead of the Graduate Group Program Chair. It was recommended to give students the option to choose who they would like to seek advising from based on their comfort level.

**Action:** Naoko will work with Maria Nishanian on further revisions to the draft. The revised draft will be circulated to voting members for review via email.

**V. New Business? (2:20-2:25)**

No new business was discussed.

**VI. Executive Session: Physics and Quantitative and Systems Biology P&Ps (2:25-3:00)**

Executive Session Agenda and materials were provided to the prospective attendees.