

GRADUATE COUNCIL (GC)

MINUTES

Monday, March 28, 2022

1:30 – 2:20 PM

Zoom Only

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. Vice Chair's Report (1:30-1:40)–Vice Chair Ha****A. Graduate Group Chairs Meeting (3/17)**

Graduate visitation weekend was successful. Staff are currently working diligently to reimburse those who attended the event in person. There was also a discussion regarding an agreement related to the continuation of hybrid course offerings, especially for international students who may be unable to travel to UC Merced. Offering several courses in hybrid format has helped many students who were unable to physically attend UC Merced during the pandemic. Vice Chair Ha also reported that a panel of judges has been assembled for Graduate Slam. Furthermore, Vice Chair Ha reported on the Higher Education Emergency Relief Funds (HEERF), which are the COVID-related relief funds for graduate students. Members shared concerns about whether these funds are subject to tax and if they impact students' chances of receiving loans and green cards. Vice Chair Ha clarified that the funds are not received by the government and will not negatively impact students; however, they are subject to tax because HEERF is considered a source of income.

II. Consent Calendar (1:40-1:40)—Vice Chair Ha**A. The agenda (3/28/22)****B. [Minutes from the 2/28/22 meeting](#)****C. [Catalog Entries](#)****D. Course Proposals**

(NEW)

[ES - 242 - Geospatial Analysis for Watershed Science and Management](#)

(REVISED)

[QSB - 399 - University Teaching](#)**E. [Revised Form for the Approval of Petition to Appoint a Graduate Student as Teaching Fellow for Upper Division Undergraduate Courses](#)****F. Petitions for Graduate Students to Teach an Upper Division Courses**[Bolter, Abigail PSY 145 202220](#)[Dayer, Alex COGS-PHIL 110 202220](#)[Oh, Hyunsu SOC 180 202220](#)**Action:** The Consent Calendar was approved as presented.**III. Graduate Division Updates (1:40-2:00)—Interim VPDGE Chris Kello****A. Update on Admissions, Statements of Intent to Register (SIR) yields**

VPDGE Kello shared a report that showed the number of applicants, admits, and SIRs based on major and demographics. The number of applications received this year has been significantly lower compared to last year, with the largest decrease in Hispanic applications.

B. Budget model continued

The Graduate Division budget has increased to 6.7 million going forward. An additional one-time one million dollars has been allocated by the Chancellor.

IV. Consultation with Director of Admissions & Academic Services Tsu Ya (2:00-2:15)

A. [Graduate Student "Full Time" Status](#)

At UC Merced, 8 units define full-time status; however, academic appointments such as TAs, GSRs, and fellowships, require 12 units for full-time status. UCOP calculates full-time status as 12 units for 1 FTE. In order to align with UCOP's policy, Director of Admissions & Academic Services, Tsu Ya, recommended considering 12 units as full-time, rather than 8 units. VPDGE Kello and Director of Admissions & Academic Services Ya agreed to revise the language.

Action: VPDGE Kello and Director Ya will draft language and circulate to members for approval via consent calendar.

B. ["Credit by Examination"](#)

Credit by Examination states that a student can obtain credit by passing an exam rather than completing a course. Director Ya reported that Admissions & Academic Services has not received any requests for credit by examination for graduate students, only for undergraduate students. A member suggested keeping the credit by examination option for undergraduate students and to provide additional advertisement, so that students are more aware. VPDGE Kello agreed to consult with the Undergraduate Dean, as it is outside of GC's purview.

Action: Further discussion will take place at a future GC meeting, specifically regarding the question "Does GC want to remove 'Credit by Examination' or leave it?"

V. New Business? (2:15-2:20)

A. [SR 520 and 454](#)

SR 520 states that Entering foreign graduate students are required to pass the regular examination in English required of entering foreign undergraduate students. Some members of CoGD advocate for abolishing the English language testing requirement altogether, whereas others advocate for either rewording it.

Several sister campuses have changed their Regulations to ensure they are not requiring English testing based on national origin. Most campuses still require an English test. For example, at UC Merced, if an individual matriculates from a university in which English is not the language of instruction, then a test is required for that individual. Several other campuses use an index/list. There are several different ways that other campuses are implementing this requirement. Some are advocating for the removal of the requirement completely, while several advocate for leaving it to each campus to decide. Most campuses agree that English is the primary language of instruction at UCs, and therefore, some form of assessment is required.

Assessment standards can differ across campuses. Chair Hestir suggested that UC Merced implement its own process, just as was done for Graduate Record Examinations (GREs). However, the GRE situation creates an equity issue. For example, in admissions, if UCLA Chemistry requires GREs but UCM Chemistry does not, what does that mean, and should UC Merced consider a similar route with English instruction? There were recommendations to delegate this requirement to programs and departments, but there was significant opposition.

Chair Hestir discussed what assessment would look like at UC Merced if the Regulation were to be removed. A member noted that it is not clear that what is written corresponds to what is currently being practiced at

UC Merced. It appears that a test is given to both entering foreign undergraduate and graduate students. Chair Hestir stated that UC Merced currently requires a TOEFL (the Test of English as a Foreign Language) or the IELTS (International English Language Testing System). These tests are not required only for those who are going to be Teaching Assistants, but for all students that are coming from an institution in which English is not the primary language of instruction. It is a condition of admission, which is separate from a condition of employment, and must be negotiated with the union contract. The TOEFL is the current requirement practiced at most universities, but it is thought to be discriminatory because it includes a question asking the origin of the individual. The tests are also very hard to access in certain countries.

Chair Hestir suggested that, instead of removing the Regulation, GC propose new language to include in the Regulation. UC Merced is a primarily English-language institution, and it is important for students to adhere to that. The Regulation may be removed, and if so, GC will have to decide if UC Merced should create a policy regarding English-speaking certification. If GC decides to implement a requirement, members will need to determine inclusive language. Chair Hestir suggested defaulting to the CCGA handbook.

A member recommended looking at suggestions from other campuses, and Chair Hestir mentioned that other campuses have removed the foreign origin question. There are several campuses that are still requiring the test and some that have removed the requirement completely. Chair Hestir feels strongly about not delegating this requirement to departments.

A GC student representative suggested an option for enrollees to upload certification when they submit their application to UC Merced, and if they are unable to provide certification, they would be required to take the test. That way, they are not asked where they originate from. VPDGE Kello stated that UC Merced currently has a micro teaching certification/assessment, and that it may be difficult to get other institutions to implement this suggestion. A member feels that asking another institution to require their applicants to provide certification is more difficult than requiring the student to take a test. VPDGE Kello believes that UC Merced already has a list of institutions that certify speaking English.

Chair Hestir mentioned that the language in the test can be revised to appear less discriminatory. It can note that UC Merced is not concerned where the individual originated, but rather whether they can adhere to English speaking institutions.

Action: Chair Hestir will share GC members' comments with CCGA and will keep members apprised of how this situation evolves.

B. Awards Subcommittee - [Distinguished Graduate Teaching/Mentorship Award](#).

Selection Process: The Graduate Council (GC) will form an ad-hoc committee from its membership to serve as the GC Awards Committee.

Membership will include:

- A minimum of three Senate faculty (balanced representation from a range of academic areas and broad school representation)
- If additional expertise is needed, non-GC committee members will be appointed by Chair Hestir

Action: Vice Chair Ha volunteered to serve on the Awards subcommittee as a SSHA representative. The subcommittee is still in need of a volunteer from SNS and a volunteer from SoE. If any voting members are willing to volunteer, they are to contact GC Analyst and Vice Chair Ha.

VI. Executive Session: Bioengineering P&Ps and Continuing Student Fellowship (2:20-3:00)

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