

GRADUATE COUNCIL (GC)**Meeting Minutes****Monday, April 11, 2022****1:30 – 2:35 PM****COB 2 Room 392****I. Chair's Report (1:30-1:45)—Chair Hestir****A. Divisional Council (4/7)**

On October 6, 2021, CoR, FWAf, and GC transmitted a joint memo to Chancellor Muñoz and EVC/Provost Camfield regarding research infrastructure. The Chancellor and EVC/Provost provided a response on November 1, 2021. A Faculty Toolkit has been created, which provides resources from across campus to assist researchers in meeting the university's mission. In return, CoR drafted a response noting that research obstacles continue to be problematic. On February 24, 2022, Divisional Council reviewed CoR's draft response memo and offered suggested revisions.

B. CCGA (4/6)

Systemwide Senate continues to push back on the Regent's position to enforce hybrid modalities for increasing online education. The Academic Council has determined that remote teaching is not a reasonable accommodation under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). Chair Hestir stated that this will likely go to litigation. Academic Chair Horwitz provided a response to the Regents which included a rational set of remarks.

Chair Hestir reported that the systemwide administration has moved to remove the systemwide review of Masters and Self-Supporting Degree Programs, and the review of these programs has been delegated to the campus level. The systemwide Senate strongly disagrees and feels that there is value in their review of master's programs.

II. Consent Calendar (1:45-1:45)—Chair Hestir**A. The agenda (4/11/22)****B. [Minutes from the 3/14/22 meeting](#)****C. [Revised MIST P&Ps](#)****D. Petitions for Graduate Students to Teach Upper Division Courses**

[Brown, Madeline ENGR180 202220 \(recusal: Chair Hestir\)](#)

[Perez-Lopez, Edgar ENGR120 202220](#)

Action: The Consent Calendar was approved as presented.

III. Systemwide Review Items (1:45-1:55)—Chair Hestir**A. [Presidential Policy on Affiliations with Certain Healthcare Organizations](#)**

No action requested at this time. Member Hratchian will provide his comments by April 18, 2022. The proposal and associated comments will be discussed at the April 25, 2022 GC meeting. There were concerns about the extent to which this would limit opportunity and access to health care.

Member Hratchian reported that there is a basic idea that the UC should disaffiliate from certain groups of hospitals. One of the main concerns between UC Merced and UC Riverside was that there are not many health care options for faculty and students.

Action: Lead reviewer Hratchian's report will be discussed at the April 25, 2022 GC meeting.

IV. Graduate Division Updates (1:55-2:10)—Interim VPDGE Chris Kello**A. Update on admissions, Statement of Intent to Register (SIR)**

There has been a delay with admissions this academic year due to instructional budgets and staffing. VPDGE Kello reported that there are 250 admits for PhDs, and that the report on Master's admissions is forthcoming.

B. Grow your own partnerships

VPDGE Kello reported that UC Merced has partnerships with several campuses including California State Universities. A meeting is forthcoming to discuss the plans for Fall 2022.

V. [UC Merced Engagement in UC-HBCU Initiative \(2:10-2:20\)](#)—Chair Hestir**A. How to increase the number of UC-HBCU faculty grants awarded to UCM****B. How to increase UC-HBCU fellow doctoral enrollment**

Chair Hestir encouraged members to engage in discussion on how to increase UC-HBCU faculty grants and enrollment numbers. Chair Hestir wondered how UC Merced could more intentionally or systematically recognize the value of these two issues, and articulate the value of participants in these programs to the faculty and admissions committees. VPDGE Kello recommended reaching out to graduate student, Tyrome Sweet, as he may be able to provide insight on his perspective of the UC-HBCU Initiative.

Action: Student Tyrome Sweet will be invited to a future GC meeting to discuss UC-HBCUs.

VI. [Senate Regulations 520 and 454 \(2:20-2:30\)](#)—Chair Hestir

[SR 520](#) states the following: Entering foreign graduate students are required to pass the regular examination in English required of entering foreign undergraduate students. [See SR 454].

[SR 454](#) states the following: “An English language examination approved by the Board of Admissions and Relations with Schools is required to determine the proficiency of applicants for admission whose native language is other than English, unless they come with satisfactory credentials from an institution in which the language of instruction is in English. No credit is assigned on the basis of this examination. Applicants who do not meet the minimum level of proficiency required by the campus(es) to which they have applied will not meet the minimum requirements for admission to the University. (Am 17 June 2009)”

Some members of the Council of Graduate Deans advocate for abolishing the English language testing requirement altogether, whereas others advocate for rewording it.

Several systemwide campuses have changed their Regulations to ensure that it is not requiring English testing based on national origin. Most campuses still have an English test requirement of some sort. For example, on our campus, if an individual is coming 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 different ways that the other campuses are implementing this requirement. Some are advocating for the removal of the requirement completely, and other campuses recommend letting individual campuses handle this. There is even a push from some campuses to remove the English requirement completely. Most campuses agreed with the philosophy that English is the primary language of instruction at the UC, and therefore, students must have a way to gauge this; some form of assessment is required.

What those assessment standards are can differ across campuses. Chair Hestir suggested that we do what we have done with Graduate Record Examination (GRE), which is that campuses implement their own process. 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 we consider a similar route with English instruction.

There were recommendations to delegate this requirement to programs and departments, but there some push back.

Chair Hestir discussed what assessment would look like at UC Merced if the Senate Regulations were to be removed. A member mentioned that it is not clear that what is written corresponds to what is being practiced at UC Merced. It appears that a test is given to entering foreign undergraduate students which is also given to 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) exam. 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 which English is not the primary language. It is a condition of admission, which is separate from a condition of employment, which must be negotiated with the union contract.

TOEFL is the current requirement practiced at most universities, but it is thought to be discriminatory because there is a question asking the origin of the individual. The tests are also very hard to access in certain countries.

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

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

A GC student representative suggested having an option for enrollees to upload a certification when they apply to UC Merced, and if they are unable to provide certification, then they would be required to take the test. That way they are not asked about their origin. 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 provide certification is more difficult than having a student take a test. VPDGE Kello thinks we already have a list of institutions that certify speaking English because we already do this.

Chair Hestir mentioned that we can change the language in the test so that it is less discriminatory. It could 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 the situation evolves.

VII. New Business? (2:30-2:35)

No new business was discussed.

VIII. Informational Items

- A. [Fall 2022 New Student Enrollment Projection Update](#)

IX. Executive Session: Physics P&Ps–(2:35-3:00)

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