

GRADUATE COUNCIL ANNUAL REPORT 2020-2021

During the academic year 2020-2021, the Graduate Council (GC) met seventeen times via zoom and conducted some business via email with respect to its duties as outlined in UCM Senate Bylaw [II.IV.3.B](#). Over the course of the year, guest attendees included Vice Provost and Dean of Undergraduate Education, Sarah Frey; Director of the Division of Management, Paul Maglio; Director of Financial Services, Graduate Division, Eric Cannon; Graduate Academic Counselor, Maria Nishanian; and Associate Registrar, Josh Reinhold. University Registrar Erin Webb and Library representative Jerrold Shiroma participated in meetings as consultants to the committee. A summary of Graduate Council's business for the year follows.

GC ADMINISTRATIVE ORGANIZATION

GC operated with three standing subcommittees that met primarily via email throughout the year. The CRF Subcommittee reviewed all requests for new graduate courses and modifications to existing courses, with its recommendations presented to the Council as a whole. The CRF Subcommittee also made suggestions for further improvements in the course review process through Curriculog (see "Graduate Education Policies" for more information).

Likewise, the Policy Subcommittee made recommendations to the Council as a whole regarding all graduate-related policies, including Graduate Group Policies and Procedures, Curriculum Advisory Board membership, Graduate Group catalog entries, and proposed policy and procedures for 5-year programs that would allow students to obtain their bachelor's and master's degrees in five years.

The Fellowship Subcommittee led GC's oversight of graduate fellowships and awards. The Subcommittee made recommendations to the Graduate Division on consolidation of smaller fellowships, and suggested modifications to the review process aimed at ensuring consistency of the reviews across applications.

Subcommittee memberships were as follows:

CRF Subcommittee: Stephanie Woo (SNS), chair; Sandie Ha (SSHA), Sarah Depaoli (SSHA)

Policy Subcommittee: Linda-Anne Rebhun(SSHA), chair; Jennifer Lu (SoE), Hrant Hratchian (SNS)

Fellowship Subcommittee: Boaz Ilan (SNS), chair; YangQuan Chen (SoE), Hrant Hratchian (SNS)

PROPOSALS FOR NEW PROGRAMS OR REVISIONS TO EXISTING PROGRAMS

Over the course of the year, GC reviewed the following:

- A proposal to establish a Master of Data Science and Analytics Self-Sustaining Graduate Professional Degree Program. GC recommended revision of the proposal following reviews by Senate Committees (CAPRA, CoR, D&E, and LASC) and the administration (EVC/Provost and the interim Vice Provost and Dean of Graduate Education, or VPDGE) on April 6, 2021. The GC leadership met with the proposal team to discuss the revision on April 28, 2021.
- A proposal to establish a Master of Public Health Degree Program with Professional Degree Supplemental Tuition. GC recommended revision of the proposal following reviews by Senate Committees (CAPRA, CoR, D&E, and LASC) and the administration (EVC/Provost and the interim VPDGE) on May 4, 2021.

Additionally, GC reviewed the proposal to establish the Gallo School of Management and provided comments as a part of the campus review process for establishing a new school.

GRADUATE COURSE REQUESTS

GC approved 58 requests for new courses or revisions to existing courses, including two University Extension courses. Following the policy change effective August 2020, requests for discontinuation of courses no longer require GC approval.

GRADUATE STUDENT APPOINTMENTS AS INSTRUCTOR FOR UPPER DIVISION COURSES

GC considered, and approved jointly with UGC, 37 requests to appoint graduate students as instructors for upper division courses. GC also approved requests for four reappointments.

NON-SENATE FACULTY APPOINTMENTS TO INSTRUCT GRADUATE COURSES

GC approved three petitions for non-Senate faculty members to teach graduate courses.

GRADUATE EDUCATION POLICIES

GC undertook the following actions regarding graduate education policy:

- *Course Proposals Review:* GC led a work group in 2019-2020 to review CRF policy and the Curriculog course request management system, with the goal of increasing the efficiency of the course proposal review process. The revised Curriculog workflows and form contents went into effect in August 2020. GC's CRF Subcommittee reviewed the revised Curriculog workflows and form contents in Spring 2021 and proposed further changes to clarify what information is required in some of the fields. With GC and UGC approval, these changes will be implemented effective August 2021.
- *Graduate Group Policies and Procedures:* While GC established the order by which Graduate Group P&Ps would be reviewed starting in Fall 2020, with the intention that all Graduate Group P&Ps would be on a three-year review cycle after the initial review, the implementation of the review cycle was postponed due to the severe impact of Covid-19 pandemic on all graduate programs.
- *CatCourses Auto-Populated Contents:* In AY 19-20, GC collaborated with UGC and IT and made available auto-populate critical policies to all courses in CatCourses effective Fall 2020. Following the procedure established in AY 19-20, the policy contents were reviewed and revised by the relevant units prior to GC and UGC approvals during Spring 2021. The revised contents, which included the addition of the UC Merced Principles of Community, were made available in CatCourses in June 2021. Based on faculty input, GC and UGC approved a revised review timeline to institute a comment period for faculty effective AY 21-22, and agreed on faculty suggestions made in AY 20-21 for consideration by the AY 21-22 Councils.
- *Faculty-Graduate Student Conflict Resolution:* In AY 19-20, GC and FWAFF conducted a confidential review of incidents where graduate students left their labs without communication with their advisors, and issued a joint memo urging the creation of a transparent infrastructure for the resolution of faculty-graduate student conflicts. A working group comprised of faculty and administration representatives, whose launch was delayed due to COVID-19, convened throughout AY 20-21. GC was represented by member YangQuan Chen, who, along with Interim VPDGE Kello (who co-chaired the working group), provided regular updates on the working group's activities to GC and shared GC feedback with the working group. GC leadership worked closely with the GSA president in revising the Graduate Student Rights and Responsibilities document that had previously been presented to GC by the then-VPDGE in August 2019. It is anticipated that AY 21-22 GC will continue to play a central role in further clarifying and defining the conflict resolution infrastructure for faculty and graduate students.
- *COVID-19 Emergency Educational Policies:* Policies enacted during AY 19-20 remained in effect throughout AY 20-21, including the Emergency Course Continuity (ECC) Policy, which provides instructional flexibility by allowing the transition to online modality without going through the standard approval process; an addendum to the ECC policy that allows students to request S/U grading for all courses until the third week after the final day of instruction; and the Emergency Educational Continuity Policy which grants automatic approval for graduate groups to modify program requirements, provided that they meet the minimum requirements set forth in Graduate Policies and Procedures Handbook. As the Campus declared return to in-person instruction in Fall 2021, GC debated how best to accommodate requests to temporarily alter the instructional modality of courses approved for in-person instruction only. GC drafted, and jointly approved with UGC on August 6, 2021, a policy to grant exception to in-person instruction to instructors (including TAs) who receive medical accommodation. Additionally, due

to unforeseen housing shortage for students, campus leadership proposed, and GC and UGC approved on August 17, 2021, delay of in-person (onsite) instruction from August 25 to August 30, 2021.

- *Thesis/Dissertation Advising*: In response to multiple faculty requests that non-Senate faculty, and Agriculture and Natural Resources (ANR) Researchers in particular, be able to chair thesis/dissertation committees, GC proposed amendments to the campus regulations which had precluded any exceptions from being granted by the VPDGE. The Merced Division voted in favor of the amendments, which would enable the VPDGE to make the exceptions, and the amendments went into effect, on May 4, 2021.
- *University Extension*: GC approved the addition of Dr. Zenaida Aguirre-Muñoz to the Curriculum Advisory Board of the Teacher Preparation Program (TPP). The TPP Workgroup, which was established in AY 19-20 and met twice in March 2020, did not convene during AY 20-21. Per mandate issued by the AY 17-18 GC, GC reviewed the Policy on the Establishment of UC Merced Extension Non-Degree Programs in consultation with the UC Merced Extension personnel (see below under “Consultation with Administration”).

GRADUATE GROUP POLICIES AND PROCEDURES AND BYLAWS

GC approved, effective as of September 28, 2020, revisions to the Policies and Procedures of the following program:

- Materials and Biomaterials Science and Engineering

GC also approved, effective fall 2021, the Policies and Procedures of the following program:

- Public Health

GC approved, effective immediately as of May 14, 2021, the revisions to the Bylaws of the following program:

- Public Health

SENATE AWARDS

GC recommended Fred Wolf for the Senate’s Distinguished Graduate Teaching / Mentorship Award.

GRADUATE FELLOWSHIPS AND AWARDS

Reviews for recruitment and continuing fellowships were conducted by a panel of faculty members recruited from graduate groups. GC reviewed the panel’s rankings and made a final recommendation to the Interim VPDGE. GC members reviewed the applications for the Outstanding Teaching Award and the Will Shadish Graduate Student Fellowship and made their recommendations.

PROGRAM REVIEW

GC’s PROC Liaison, Vice Chair Erin Hestir, kept GC abreast of the academic program review processes for the Bioengineering, Quantitative and Systems Biology, Cognitive and Information Sciences, Chemistry and Chemical Biology (graduate), Environmental Engineering, Materials Science & Engineering (undergraduate), Mechanical Engineering (undergraduate), Merritt Writing, and Writing Studies Minor programs. This includes making recommendations regarding the charge to the associated program review teams and discussion of the resulting team reports. Via GC’s PROC liaison, GC also received request for comments on, and made recommendations for, graduate student preparations for teaching responsibilities as well as for grant-writing.

REVISIONS TO DIVISION BYLAWS

In AY 19-20, per CRE’s request, GC recommended revisions to Division Bylaws pertaining to Graduate Council to best align with systemwide Bylaws and current campus practices, including the additional language to encompass postdoctoral educational policymaking, and advising of Extension on post-baccalaureate matters, in its duties. During AY 20-21, as a part of the Senate Anti-Racism Action Plan, all committees, including GC, reviewed their bylaws. GC’s review led to proposed revisions that clarified postdoctoral education is under GC’s purview; explicitly included Graduate Group Chairs as part of GC consultation; mandated consultation with senate and school staff on an at least annual basis; and made clear the committee’s commitment to promote diverse, equitable and inclusive campus. The proposed revisions to the Division Bylaws were approved at the Meeting of the Division in Spring 2021 and took effect on June 14, 2021.

CONSULTATION WITH ADMINISTRATION

Over the course of the year, GC consulted with the administration on various topics. Select highlights are as follows:

- *Graduate Student Funding Model:* In Fall 2019, GC consulted with Associate Provost for Academic Planning and Budget, Kurt Schnier, on further development of a graduate student funding model and recommended that the model be revised so that the drivers are not costs, as was presented, but instead respond to funding, especially grants. It was also suggested that the model clearly differentiate between self-funded and traditionally funded students; and numerically demonstrate the incentives for funding students with external grants, and for having large Master's programs. In November 2020 a revised model titled "Enrollment Management Model" was announced by Interim VPDGE Kello, which largely remained the same, except for differentiating externally and internally (i.e., campus-) funded students. As faculty concerns about the implication of the model were relayed to GC, the GC leadership convened meetings with the administration (one with EVC/Provost Camfield and the Senate leadership, and another with Interim VPDGE Kello and Associate EVC/Provost Kurt Schnier) and subsequently invited Associate EVC/Provost Schnier to a GC meeting. Upon these consultations, GC developed a Frequently Asked Question document that was distributed to department, graduate group, and school executive committee chairs on November 25, 2020. GC leadership continued to consult with administration on the model and the underlying budgetary concerns that led to its announcement, and anticipates continued discussion in AY 21-22.
- *Graduate Education during COVID-19 Emergency:* GC benefited from consultation with Interim VPDGE Kello, Vice Provost and Dean of Undergraduate Education (VPDUE) Sarah Frey, and Assistant EVC/Provost Laura Martin to ensure that UC Merced continue to provide graduate education and teaching opportunities in accordance with WSCUC accreditation while mindful of potential detrimental impact on graduate students and programs. Topics included Spring 2021 instructional planning; remote instruction for international students in Fall 2021; and temporary medical accommodation for instructors to remotely teach courses that are approved only for onsite instruction.
- *UC Merced Extension:* In Spring 2021, GC consulted with Jill Orcutt, Dean of University Extension and Summer Session, and Tammy Johnson, Director of University Extension and Summer Session, on the status of UC Merced Extension's non-degree programs. The consultation was prompted by the mandate of the AY 17-18 GC that the policy to establish Extension non-degree programs be reviewed in three years' time. The Extension personnel provided GC with a comprehensive overview of the programs, and had a candid discussion with GC members on what they see as challenges, such as making the tuition-based programs attractive to students who would not pay or pay very little tuition at other local institutions, and communication with the Senate during summertime. At a member's request, they provided additional information on summer sessions. GC did not mandate a review of the policy on the establishment of non-degree programs in three years but rather recommended an annual consultation with the Extension, opting to have the AY 21-22 GC determine its scope of consultation.
- *Appointments to grant-funded and other temporary positions:* In response to the proposed MAPP 500, under which the appointment process currently used for Senate faculty appointments would be followed in all academic appointment processes, the GC leadership consulted with Vice Provost for Academic Personnel Matlock and Assistant Vice Provost Anders on May 18, 2021 (the Chair of the Committee on Research as well as Senate staff also attended the meeting). It was agreed that MAPP 500 would not be issued until faculty concerns were addressed. A second meeting was scheduled during Summer 2021 but was postponed due to the postponement of a relevant systemwide meeting.

CAMPUS AND SYSTEM REVIEW ITEMS & OTHER REQUESTS FOR COMMENT

GC offered comment or otherwise took action on the following review items.

Campus Review Items

- Endorsed the *Five-Year Planning Perspectives 2020-2025* (9/3/20)

- Endorsed the proposed *Name Change for the Chemistry and Chemical Biology Department* (9/30/20)
- Commented on the *Proposal for A Minor in Critical Race and Ethnic Studies* (3/10/21)
- Commented on the proposed *Merced Academic Personnel Policies & Procedures (MAPP) 500* (4/29/21)
- Commented on the draft *Strategic Plan (2021-2031)* (5/7/21)

System Review Items

- Endorsed with comments the proposed revisions to *Senate Regulation 544* (9/30/20)
- Commented on the proposed *Curtailment Program* (10/21/20)
- Commented on the *Report of the Academic Council Task Force on Fully Online Undergraduate Programs at the University of California* (10/29/20)
- Commented on the report on the Innovative Learning Technology Initiative (ILTI) titled *Innovative Learning Technology Initiative: Recommendations for Future State* and accompanying updates (1/8/21)
- Commented on the proposed *Presidential Policy on UC Research Data and Tangible Research Materials* (2/12/21)
- Endorsed with comments the proposed *Presidential Policy on Classification of Gifts and Sponsored Awards* (3/24/21)
- Endorsed with comments the proposed revisions to *Senate Regulation 610-Residence* (3/24/21)
- Endorsed the proposed *Presidential Policy for the SARS-CoV-2 (COVID-19) Vaccination Program* (5/14/21)
- Commented on the proposed revisions to the presidential *Fee Policy for Graduate Student In Absentia Registration* (5/24/21)

Other

- Endorsed with comments the Registrar's proposal to update Curriculog to create an option for proposals to indicate variable course titles (3/24/21)
- Provided GC response to PROC request for ideas for better preparing graduate students in teaching and grant-writing (4/8/21)
- Endorsed with comments the Registrar's proposed language for faculty-initiated drop feature in CatCourses (4/21/21)
- Commented on the proposed revisions to the *Grade Appeal Policy* presented by the Committee on Rules and Elections (CRE) in response to a request from the Office of the Ombuds (5/25/21)

Respectfully submitted,

Hrant Hratchian, Chair and CCGA representative (SNS)

Erin Hestir, Vice Chair and PROC representative (SoE)

YangQuan Chen (SoE), Faculty-Graduate Student Conflict Resolution Infrastructure Workgroup representative

Sarah Depaoli (SSHA)

Sandie Ha (SSHA), Undocumented Student Support Workgroup representative

Boaz Ilan (SNS)

Jennifer Lu (SoE)

Linda-Anne Rebhun (SSHA)

Stephanie Woo (SNS)

Ex-Officio

Chris Kello, Interim Vice Provost and Dean of Graduate Education

Student Representative

Shayna Bennett, President, Graduate Student Association

Senate Staff

Naoko Kada, Senior Senate Analyst