

Graduate Council (GC)
Minutes of Meeting
April 5, 2016

Pursuant to call, the Graduate Council met at 1:30 pm on April 5, 2016 in room 362 of the Kolligian Library, Chair Michael N Dawson presiding.

I. Vice Chair's Report – Ramesh Balasubramaniam

a. PROC Meeting March 30, 2016

- i. Many topics were discussed dealing with various programs up for review. Nothing concerning graduate education was covered.

II. Graduate Division Proposal for a Professional Development Course – Associate Dean Chris Kello and VPDGE Marjorie Zatz

The proposed course is similar to the professional development seminar series offered last year. The Graduate Division offers a large number of workshops that address professional development. Scheduling faculty and guests from industry to present stand-alone sessions is becoming more difficult when numbers are small, and student engagement is lacking somewhat. The Graduate Division proposes a one-credit course designed to organize the multiple offerings into one coherent and regularly offered course, enhancing student engagement as well as improving the logistics of scheduling a specific time and location. A course taken for credit would also provide opportunities for students to engage in related professional development activities, such as pre-doctoral fellowship proposal preparation or CV/resume preparation, and would thus improve the commitment to attend by students.

A member raised a question regarding potential overlap with existing syllabi. Associate Dean stated that preliminary reviews show an impossibility to avoid overlap, but the content of the course is built from the most applicable and broad of interest subject matter, from their understanding.

Another question was raised about this proposal becoming a curriculum item, versus a workshop, and if the curriculum is originating from faculty, why not go through Sociology? VPDGE responded that most of the other UCs are offering this material in a course format. Chair pointed out that, if some Graduate Groups are doing this, and others are not, perhaps this is an opportunity for coordination. Vice Chair stated that Graduate Groups doing this on their own could lead to a dilution of effort, where a centralized effort would be stronger.

A member asked about the potential for replication of material among the schools, and voiced a concern about using a "one-size-fits-all" model. Associate Dean responded that what is already being done is very close to being a workshop, this proposal would focus on logistics, providing a framing to help the sessions become more regularly offered.

A question was raised about drawing the line on what would be acceptable curriculum to come from the Graduate Council versus individual units. Vice Chair recommended drawing the line at anything disciplinary, for example, "Quantitative Methods" would be disciplinary, but topics like "how to prepare for an interview" would be allowed.

A member asked if students should be held accountable. Associate Dean stated that they do not want to burden students, and the assessments align with learning outcomes, with the course being a simple Pass/Fail. Due to the content of the course, if a student wished, however unlikely, they could retake it for up to four credits over two years.

Chair asked if it would be possible to offer within the Graduate Groups, rather than separate

from them. Associate Dean does not see an issue in doing so.

Graduate Groups would be given the option to opt-in to the Graduate Division proposal, or to organize their own, specialized version. Graduate Groups would submit a CRF using this proposed framework. Each group would select their PLO. If a student were interested in taking the course, but their Graduate Group chooses to opt-out, the student could attend via another graduate program, as there are no existing pre-requisites. The student could also sit-in on the course. Graduate Council would review the requests in the same manner as any other proposed CRF.

III. Piloting Summer Competitive Edge program – VPDGE Zatz

VPDGE reported that these types of programs, common at other UC's, are usually for domestic, under-represented students. In a full-blown program, students would arrive two months before instruction begins. Our pilot would be abbreviated, with students arriving one month before instruction. They will begin work with faculty and receive assistance with pre-doctoral fellowship proposals, writing support, statistical and programming support, and preparation for entering doctoral programs. Students will receive a small stipend to cover their living expenses. Each Graduate Group will receive selection criteria, and they would choose one student, for a total of 14 participants in the program. A timeframe is still being determined.

IV. Consent Calendar

- a. March 15th meeting minutes – Approved
- b. April 5th meeting agenda – Approved

V. Course Conventions document

The issue of a B- being a failing grade continues to come up in discussion, where syllabi often do not state B/B- as the split point for a pass or fail. Members agreed that the grades page on the Registrar's Office website is ambiguous, and should be re-written to state that a B- is not a passing grade.

Graduate Council reviewed draft memo and approved content.

ACTION: GC to send memo to Registrar.

VI. TOEFL minimum speaking score

UC Merced has one of the highest requirements for TOEFL Speaking score, and the Mechanical Engineering graduate program has proposed a clarification to the Graduate Division admissions website. This revised text is presented for Graduate Council consideration. The committee agreed with the proposed revision to the admissions website, and also agreed to revisit the idea of amending the minimum TOEFL Speaking requirement to Fall 2016, when a full assessment of what impact the scores have can be conducted.

ACTION: Chair will draft a memo to VPDGE containing the approved text revisions for amendment to the Graduate Division admissions webpage.

VII. Request – University Librarian to teach Interdisciplinary Humanities (IH) 205 Fall 2016

Graduate Council has received a request from the IH program to have the University Librarian, Haipeng Li, be listed as the instructor of record for IH 205 for Fall 2016. He would be working closely with Donald Barclay and Emily Lin. The Chief Librarian is senate faculty, and the committee supports the request from the graduate program for the University Librarian to be

listed as an instructor.

ACTION: GC Analyst will contact the Academic Personnel Office and verify if the University Librarian has instruction as part of his duties.

Graduate Council agrees that the request for the University Librarian to teach should be submitted for review annually.

VIII. Approval of New Undergraduate Courses and Undergraduate Course Changes

The committee discussed conjoined courses and how particular courses fit into the curriculum. Conjoined courses, where the benefit is for undergraduates, is very clear. However, when core courses in graduate programs are conjoined, issues have arisen. The committee agreed that revisions to the existing policy may interact with the adoption of an automated CRF system, and would address the benefits of having conjoined courses and how those are reviewed. Graduate Council will offer their checklist to the undergraduate groups, as OPRAAS stated that there is nothing comparable on the undergraduate side.

ACTION: Chair will send a memo to UGC by 5:00PM April 5th.

IX. Senate Award Nominations

VPDGE wanted to state that she has been approached to write letters of support, and she has declined each request, due to the feeling of inappropriateness.

ACTION: Chair will put together a list of reviewers that are least-impacted and contact them directly.

X. CRF Process

The concept of making existing deadlines 'hard' is supported by the Registrar, Undergraduate Council, and the Graduate Council. The Registrar, UGC, and Graduate Council have further discussed moving to a single, annual deadline, allowing more time for planning, coordination, review, and scheduling. This could be introduced along with the implementation with the new CRF management system.

VPDGE brought up the possibility of a conversation between the Graduate Council Chair and the Graduate Group Chairs about the content of the review, because concerns were raised about the timing as well as the depth of the review. Vice Chair stated that only a minority do not follow the current template, and agreed that having the conversation with graduate groups would help them inform their junior faculty, also making it very clear that the deadline is not negotiable. Chair agreed that a strategy for working with that minority was important.

VPDGE will send a memo to graduate group chairs with an update on the situation of CRFs about which enquiries had been made.

Attest:

Michael N Dawson, GC Chair