

**GRADUATE COUNCIL (GC)****May 17, 2016****Documents available at: [UCM Box](#)**

Pursuant to call, the Graduate Council met at 1:30pm on May 17, 2016 in room 362 of the Kolligian Library, Chair Michael N Dawson presiding.

**I. Graduate Student Space (AVC Abigail Rider)**

AVC Abigail Rider provided information about the current status of graduate student space on campus, and asked questions to the committee members regarding their personal space issues.

- a. Project 2020 is in the final stages of selection, with the preferred developer being selected in June, and construction starting in Fall. The development schedule lists deliveries for Housing in 2018, and the first half of the lab development in 2019, with the second half in 2020, along with the rest of the planned development. The development being spread out over this time is due to the labor market and potential competition with San Francisco for construction workers. If there are large spikes in construction here, local costs would be much higher to pay for the limited number of workers.

The 2020 plan includes lots of lab space, academic office space, and student activity space. As enrollment continues to grow, so do constraints between current graduate students and available space. The space planning committee has a project to identify all of the designated graduate student spaces, counting current graduate students, and tracking what the admissions numbers are for the Fall. Some of the older labs have write-up space built into lab space, and an effort is being made to move students out of the labs through write-ups, to address safety issues. This write-up space is not being considered as graduate student space. GC members are welcomed to provide the current situation with their personal environments.

The 2020 plan will focus on every graduate student having a work station clustered as close to their PI as possible, and as near to their designated lab space as possible. In the current environment, one GC member has graduate students scattered across campus, adding difficulty in communication and collaboration. AVC Rider stated that a room in SSM was just converted to graduate student space, creating 21 new work stations. Additional rooms are being identified for conversion, as well as the use of trailers. One GC member was fully supportive of a trailer, as it addresses the space issues before the new buildings are ready. AVC Rider described the issues with trailers, including the high cost and where they would be physically located.

A question was raised about graduate students being assigned a single seat somewhere on campus, and would it be enough, or would a special space be needed for TA meetings or other specialized work. The consensus is that as long as the space is properly configured, a single seat would be enough. Computers would need to be secured, such as within an access-controlled location like a lab, and set up for remote access. The 2020 plan currently includes oversized lab space to allow for growth. Campus is currently at a 2:1 ratio, the plan has the ratio at 4.5:1, for graduate students per PI.

The Chair asked about utilizing more outside space. AVC Rider suggested the new SE2 breezeway, which offers shade, or the Quad, Additional outside furniture would be a low cost investment that could facilitate more outdoor use. A member raised the issue of additional whiteboard space. AVC Rider suggested there may be issues raised that are best answered by Facilities Management. Tempered glass with white backing was suggested as an alternative.

AVC Rider asked about the current furniture and space utilization in areas such as large open areas in SSM and COB. A member stated that undergraduates often sit in the spaces assigned for graduate students, dis-incentivizing the graduate students to use their assigned spaces. Assignments are not consistent across the schools, where SNS seems to

have the greatest number of assigned spaces.

Assoc. Dean Kello added that assigned spaces are less likely to be used due to privacy issues, where enclosed areas, or those with doors, are more likely to be used. Vice Chair replied that there is a huge demand for the open cubicles, but the assigned students may not use them, and those with a need for them cannot use them due to not having the assignments. People hoard space, and will demand space even if they do not have a need. No group will provide a true estimate of their space needs are.

AVC Rider stated that counting heads would provide more accuracy to space needs. The numbers for next Fall are considered accurate. They will redesign the layout for a system of closed cubes for comparison. She will provide GC with as much information as she can.

## II. Chair's Report – Chair Dawson

- a. CCGA Meeting, May 4
  - i. ME proposal has been approved by CCGA.
  - ii. ECON had some questions about FTEs.
  - iii. A report on mental health for graduate students across the UC.
- b. Spring Meeting of the Division, May 9
  - i. Provost was asked many questions about 2020 and SAFI. Issues that Grad Council has brought forward regarding planning for the success of graduate programs within GCs review, along with conversations held at CCGA, are helping to advance the discussion about how to plan academically.

A member added that Deans and the Provost can still write program support letters as they did before SAFI. The Chair stated that, from the May 4 CCGA meeting, both programs reviewed well, pointing out the GC is doing their job well. Questions that were asked to the graduate groups were answered thoughtfully. The difference in the decision between the two programs was essentially that ME had a strong letter from the Dean, and a reinforcing letter from the Provost, where the Deans letter for ECON was not as strong, and there was no letter from the Provost. A letter from the previous SSHA Dean stated that growth would include twice as many additional lines as what was stated in the most recent letter, and this uncertainty in where the lines are going with the SAFI contributed to ECON not being approved. The Chair added that the strategic academic focusing structure is set up for firm commitments to be made to programs within schools is through the letters by the Deans. There is opportunity for more strategic prioritization of positions within the process. A member asked how a Dean can estimate what they may have in the future, without certain assurances about the numbers. It appears that the recent letter from the SSHA Dean reflects this concern.

The Chair stated that there are a variety of solutions going forward. With the feedback from CCGA, Graduate Council will remain a channel for a variety of views, both institutionally and systemwide, in terms of what makes a successful program and how that can inform the process in terms of both Foundations hires and Pillar hires.

Vice Chair asked if, after the survey, are there a number of things likely to change? A member replied that CAPRA had a meeting with the Provost prior to the survey going out, and the agreement was that the survey would provide information about people's perceptions of how it is going, should it move forward, or are people happy with how it is going forward. The Provost stated that if there is a desire for things to change, he is open to that discussion, but that it should be a larger conversation, and not just in CAPRA, which that committee agreed with.

c. Graduate Group Chair's meeting, May 10

The message to the Graduate Council is that there the GG Chairs have a lot of work to do, with a series of inefficiencies in the processes and policies primarily due to the unfamiliarity with these processes. The first meeting of the CRF software review committee will come with modifications and improvements of the process.

A question was raised about the possibility of raising stipends for directors, with agreement that the current amount not being sufficient for a course buy-out. A member added that the amount should be different for each person at 1/6 of salary. This topic will be raised at the Academic Structure Planning, and a topic for DivCo. With support, this effort should resolve the issues within 1-2 years.

**III. Vice Chair's Report – Vice Chair Ramesh Balasubramaniam**

a. PROC Meeting, May 11

PROC had a very busy year, 15 academic programs were reviewed: 9 majors, 4 stand-alone minors, 1 grad program, 1 general education review. PROC reflected on how they could improve for next year, with next year's slate not looking as busy.

**IV. Consent Calendar**

- a. Approval of May 17 meeting agenda - Approved
- b. Approval of May 3 meeting minutes - Approved
- c. Approval of April 19 meeting minutes - Approved
- d. Approval of April 5 meeting minutes - Approved

A member asked about support for moving forward with proposing a new graduate student award for an overall well-rounded student, with the possibility of naming it after Professor William Shadish. The members supported the notion, but the question of funding the award being heavily discussed. A question was raised about, if a graduate student was recognized this year with no financial aspect to the award, would it undermine the future possibility of getting an endowed award later? Assoc. Dean Kello supported the concept, but if a donor is involved, the donor would be likely to want their name associated with the award. The Chair spoke with VC Hoffman, and Development thinks it is a good idea, with some possible donors. The naming of the award would be a challenge. At the same time, GC should be at liberty to make recommendations to Development for things they think should make happen. VC Hoffman will try to speak to the Chancellor soon. If the University finds funds now, the amount could be back-filled by donations. A member asked about decoupling the funding from the award, so that a graduate student could receive the award now. GC can create an award, select an awardee, and make the recommendation to the Graduate Division.

**ACTION:** The Chair of the awards subcommittee will draft a proposal for review by the award subcommittee members, and forward to the Senate Chair and VPDGE.

**V. Review update: Graduate Group Policies & Procedures, Graduate Advisors' Handbook**

- a. A member had a question about some of the content within the CHEM P&P. The Chair advised to note down findings and comments, and forward them along for subsequent review. Vice Chair noted that issues with CHEM may come up in their next program review.

**VI. One-year extension of IIGP request from CCGA**

Graduate Council endorses the one-year extension request.

**ACTION:** Chair to prep memo before the end of May, sent to CCGA for the last meeting of the year (June 6).

**VII. Other Business**

None.

**VIII. Consultation with VPDGE Zatz (Associate Dean Chris Kello)**

A survey has been distributed systemwide about graduate student satisfaction with their advisors. UC Student Association has drafted a strongly-written statement to the Regents, Grad Deans, and other parties, with 75-80% being satisfied, and the rest not satisfied, but for unclear reasons. The statement highlights topics to be addressed to improve the student satisfaction level. When the statement was written, it was acknowledged that UC Merced data were not available.

**IX. Upcoming business**

No discussion (see agenda for list of items).

**X. Executive Session**

None.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 3:03pm.

Attest:

Michael N Dawson, GC Chair