

Graduate Group Chairs Meeting
Monday, August 30, 2021
1:00 P.M. – 2:00 P.M. | Zoom

MEETING MINUTES

Graduate Group Chairs Present: John Abatzoglou, Chris Amemiya, Irene Beattie, Alberto Cerpa, YangQuan Chen, Chih-Chun Chien, Martha Conklin, Kevin Dawson, Sidra Goldman-Mellor, Rowena Gray, Martin Hagger, Christine Isborn, Sarah Kurtz, Brad LeVeck, Changqing Li, Roummel Marcia, Paul Smaldino, Fred Wolf (QSB Faculty)
Vanessa Leyva, Pakou Thao (Graduate Group Coordinators)
Sandie Ha (Graduate Council Vice-Chair)

Graduate Division Staff Present: Eric Cannon, Jesus Cisneros, Ashley Eagleson, Cassie Gunter, Heath Jackson, Chris Kello, Jennifer Quiralte, Will Lee-Ladouceur, Tsu Ya

ANNOUNCEMENTS

- Graduate Division will host Virtual Office Hours on Tuesday, September 7 from 12:00-1:00PM.

MINUTES

1. Introduction of New Graduate Group Chairs and Graduate Council Vice Chair

- Alberto Cerpa, Electrical Engineering & Computer Science
- Sidra Goldman-Mellor, Public Health
- Rowena Gray, Economics
- Martin Hagger, Psychological Sciences
- Brad LeVeck, Political Science
- Changqing Li, Bioengineering
- Sandie Ha, Graduate Council Vice Chair

2. Dean's Updates & Discussion Items (Interim Dean, Chris Kello)

- 7th year extension to academic student employee total length of service
 - On June 19, 2021, Provost Michael T. Brown approved a temporary extension of the Chancellor's authority under APM – 410, Teaching Assistants and Graduate Student Instructors and APM – 420, Readers, to grant a seventh year extension (a maximum of 21 quarters/14 semesters) to the total length of service rendered in any one or any combination of the titles.
 - University policy provides that “the total length of service rendered in any one or any combination of the following titles may not exceed four years, yet under special circumstance, the Chancellor, upon recommendation of the department chair and the dean of the school or college, may authorize a longer period, but in no case for more than six years.
 - As a temporary extension of the Chancellor's authority, following the same local procedures already in place, a seventh-year extension is permissible for matriculated students at UC during the quarters/semesters in which instruction is substantially impacted by COVID-19. This approval does not mean a guarantee of funding during the extension period.
- Returning to In-person Instruction & Events
 - Chairs are asked to please review the, “Graduate Dean Welcome Letter” that went out this morning, for information on COVID-19 guidelines.
 - To protect the community from the delta variant, [face coverings](#) returned to California and UC Merced, along with [asymptomatic testing](#) requirements and [daily health checks](#) as part of the current [COVID-19 protocols](#) on campus.
 - We are taking precautions to limit events at the start of the semester, and the campus has provided guidance for all [instructors and TAs](#) coming back to teach, including handling positive [COVID-19 cases in the classroom](#), and handling [compliance with protocols](#).
 - **ACTION: Interim Dean Kello will continue to try and push for outdoor space that faculty can reserve for meetings without having to pay for set-up.**
- Chair Feedback on Box Graduate Student Annual Reviews (Heath Jackson)
 - Overall, 7 graduate groups participated in this year's piloting of the new Excel/Box method of tracking student annual reviews. Due to the success of this year's pilot, Interim Dean Kello has instructed the Graduate Group Chairs use this process for all future reports.

- Feedback;
 - Start the review process earlier in the semester (i.e., early June).
 - Set-up timely reminders for student and faculty deadlines.
 - Provide general instructions to the chairs on how to download and set-up Excel tools needed to run the program on your computer.
 - Provision for comments to be recorded in the form.
 - Note: Online data replaced the input spreadsheet because the chairs have equations that can pull information from each file into a master sheet.
 - **ACTION: Heath will prepare drafts of improved communication, create detailed instructions for using Box Tools and Box Drive, and set-up a schedule of reminders.**
- Graduate Division Events & Deadlines Calendar for AY 2021-22 (Assistant Dean Cisneros)
 - The Graduate Division Deadlines Calendar will be emailed out to the chairs by the end of next week. It will also be added to the Graduate Division website for general reference. **COMPLETED-9/7/21.**
- PhD Enrollment Management
 - We are beginning to shift to a model where we need to manage our funding and grow within our bounds, within our means, and within our capacity. Thus, we will start asking chairs to provide numbers on students such as;
 - how many students you have enrolled
 - how many you expect to graduate this year
 - GSR funding
 - TA budgets
 - Kurt Schneir will meet with Provost Camfield on September 15 to further discuss school allocations. More information to follow.

3. Graduate Resources (Cassie Gunter)

- Summer Bridge Debrief
 - Overall, it was a huge success, with 19 incoming PhD students who participated from across all disciplines.
 - Participants met in-person 3 days/week, for 6 weeks, attending seminars and workshops with administrators, faculty, and staff; working on fellowship proposals and interacting with faculty mentors as they embarked on their graduate journeys.
- GradEXCEL
 - The GradEXCEL Peer Mentor Program faculty call for mentors went out on August 25, with an application deadline of September 8. This program is for first-year PhD students.
 - The following graduate groups have confirmed their participation;

• Physics	• MBSE
• Political Science	• SOC
- Housing Update
 - Several more students used temporary housing this year than in the past, mainly due to the Merced Station delays and Merced housing shortages. This resource is only available until August 31. Anyone who still needs housing after August 31, will be moved to a hotel accommodation through September 30, with no cost to the student. Cassie is still waiting to hear back from Vice Chancellor Nies on the number of graduate students in hotels.
 - If you have any students who are still unable to find housing at this time, they can submit a request for hotel accommodations to the Interim Dean of Students, Armando Contreras. <https://forms.office.com/Pages/ResponsePage.aspx?id=o-nf9HjKmEm3p-bQaS6s5pdhhfmTCKIKjyQfGoqAymxURFpMWFIR1RYUEo1U0hTTIJGME8yUVVQSS4u>
 - Funds are also available to those with financial hardships due to unexpected, unforeseen, and unavoidable emergency expenses. <https://studentaffairs.ucmerced.edu/dean-students/emergency-funds>
 - As a last resort, there is also the option of graduate students applying to live on-campus (no singles).
 - Note: Some graduate students are being housed in unfinished dormitories (i.e., no shower).
 - **ACTION: Kevin will email ckello@ucmerced.edu and cgunter@ucmerced.edu the names of those students being affected.**
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4. Graduate Programming & Events (Jen Quiralte)

- GROW Debrief
 - Jen expressed her gratitude and thanks to all who assisted with GROW. Overall, it was a huge success, with 142 students in attendance!
 - A separate debrief meeting will take place sometime in the next couple of weeks. Jen will reach out to the Support staff to schedule, but please feel free to also email your feedback.
 - There are several students who were delayed, and unable to attend orientation in-person. For those who missed GROW, we will upload their assignments via CatCourses. Once submitted, we will check them off as having completed their requirements.

5. Admissions & Academic Services (Tsu Ya)

- GRE Requirements
 - If *optional* was selected, the system will treat it as being *not required*, so we will not have those student scores available if you need them.
 - We are in the process of finishing up cycle prep and hope to go live with the application shortly after Labor Day.

6. Financial Services (Eric Cannon)

- Meetings with the chairs are still in progress.
- We will be offering master's incentive, but otherwise, the fellowship budgets will remain flat. *Due to time constraints, we will further discuss this item during the next GGC meeting.*

7. Recruitment (Will Lee-Ladouceur)

- Annual recruitment meetings with the Graduate Group Chairs are still in progress. If you have not had a chance to meet, please email jventura9@ucmerced.edu to schedule a call.

8. Graduate Council Vice Chair's Report (Sandie Ha)

- Graduate Council & UGC are working closely with the Admin to ensure the start of the semester; this included moving the start of in-person instruction to August 30, to accommodate the housing crisis issues.
- Worked on temporary exception to the CRF review for online classes to accommodate instructors with medical or dependent care accommodations.
- GC will continue to work with the Graduate Group Chairs on updating P&Ps when necessary.
- Beginning in the spring, our exception from the Western Association for Schools & Colleges for the waiver for COVID-related online instruction, will end. Moving forward, we need to make sure that only a certain number of classes are available online, otherwise it will affect different programs for accreditation. This is especially true for master's programs. Therefore, GC will be working closely with Graduate Division this semester, to ensure that Graduate Group Chairs understand the rules and the responsibility for accreditation.
- GC will meet with APO soon, to clarify hiring processes for Postdocs and Graduate Students, to clarify TA supervision responsibilities.
- GC will continue to work with the GSA as to develop a Graduate Student Rights & Responsibilities documentation, as well as, will work with Graduate Division to implement recommendation from the 2021 Conflict Resolution Working Group.

The meeting adjourned at 2:02 P.M.