

Graduate Group Chairs Meeting
Monday, September 27, 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
Vanessa Leyva, Paul Roberts, Pakou Thao (Graduate Group Coordinators)
Sandie Ha (Graduate Council Vice-Chair)

Graduate Division Staff Present: Asmeret Asefaw Berhe, Eric Cannon, Jesus Cisneros, Angel Comer, Ashley Eagleson, Cassie Gunter, Heath Jackson, Chris Kello, Maria Nishanian, Jennifer Quiralte, Will Lee-Ladouceur, Tsu Ya

ANNOUNCEMENTS

- The next Graduate Division Virtual Office Hour will be held on Tuesday, October 5 from 12-1PM.
 - Moving forward, virtual office hours will only occur once at the start of each semester. Other opportunities to meet with the dean, in-person, will be made available to students throughout the academic year.
- Introduction of the New Graduate Admissions Specialist, Angel Comer
 - Angel began her position on Wednesday, September 1, and has experience in admissions counseling, housing and residence life, and human resources. She has a bachelor's degree from Colorado State University, Pueblo, and is currently pursuing a master's degree in Educational Administration.

MINUTES

1. Dean's Updates & Discussion Items (Interim Dean Kello)

- PhD Admissions Management: Interim Dean Kello has collected a list of all PhD students enrolled this fall by graduate program, and estimated a number of PhD graduations based on this list, as well as, historical times to degree in each program. These estimates also include attrition; totaling 104 graduations. All remaining students will be counted as needing funding for AY 2022-23. Please review the email from Interim Dean Kello, sent on Monday, September 27 at 11:54am for further details.
 - **ACTION: Interim Dean Kello will send each Graduate Group Chair a template of their program's student list, graduation numbers, and enrollment estimates, for review and feedback. In addition, Chairs will be asked to provide non-TA funding estimates for each graduate group.**
- Graduate Housing: We are looking at the possibility of a project of on-campus graduate housing as one of the next capital projects for the University. A focus group with GSA and senior leadership will be held in the coming weeks to further discuss this undertaking.
 - With regards to the housing shortage, there was only 1 graduate student who utilized the hotel accommodation provided by the campus, while 2 other graduate students are currently living on-campus. All others have been able to secure housing, that we know of.
- Academic Counseling & Forms: Interim Dean Kello presented a proposal to routinely include the graduate academic counselor, Maria Nishanian, and ask her assistance to lead the handling of the following four graduate student actions: change of advisor, change of degree, educational leave, and part-time status. Our intention is to catch the cases where these actions could benefit from academic counseling in terms of degree progress, well-being, conflict management, and career trajectories.
 - **DECISION: Effective Monday, October 4, Graduate Group Chairs are asked to please start directing students to Maria regarding these actions, as well as, include her on interactions regarding these actions and the associated forms. Graduate Division will also include instructions on the forms to contact the graduate academic counselor for guidance.**

2. Graduate Resources (Cassie Gunter)

- GradEXCEL: To date, all rosters have been received from those graduate groups who will be participating. Next, Cassie will hold an orientation for the mentors, today through the end of the week, in order to provide an overview of the expectations for the program. After which she will connect the mentors and mentees. Mentor logs will be due within 2 weeks.
- Campus Resources Available to Graduate Students: Writing and Statistics tutoring is no longer provided by Graduate Division. Graduate tutoring is now offered through the University Writing Center, both in-person

and online (drop-ins or by appointment). For more information, please reference the email from gradresources@ucmerced.edu sent on Wednesday, September 8 at 4:41pm.

- For other basic needs such as food insecurities, please refer students to basicneeds@ucmerced.edu.

3. Recruitment (Will Lee-Ladouceur)

- Webinars: The Recruitment & Outreach Events calendar is now accessible online at <https://graduatedivision.ucmerced.edu/prospective-students/choose-merced/recruitment-events>.
 - For those graduate groups who have not yet scheduled a webinar, and would like to, please reach out to Will Lee-Ladouceur, wcll@ucmerced.edu for more information.
- Digital Marketing Update: Jess Ventura will be handling the digital marketing for each program's webinars, but please email her if you need to make any changes or additions to your posted content.
 - We continue to work with the digital marketing firm, Accelerate, in order to improve on all graduate program websites, and to make sure they rise higher in web searches.
 - Other questions:
 - Q. What are the resources for conducting webinars? Are they archived on a website?
 - A. We use Zoom to manage registrations, as well as to host the webinars. We can also record the webinars for distribution at large. Yes, they can be archives on either the Graduate Division website or on your program website.
 - Q. Regarding the application fee waivers, do graduate groups use this as an incentive for those attending webinars? And if so, who picks up the tab?
 - A. Yes, graduate groups can use fee waivers as an incentive for attending their webinar. Each group has a code that they can use for waivers, with the tab being placed on the graduate group. As an alternative, we can give you the full list of graduate preparatory programs that qualify for fee waivers, as well as students that have financial need, as they are also given waivers through the Graduate Division.
 - Q. Are application fee waivers only for U.S. Citizens and Permanent Residents, or are they also applicable to International Students?
 - A. Application fee waivers are for Domestic and Permanent Resident applicants only.

4. Graduate Programming & Events (Jen Quiralte)

- COVID Guidelines: Outdoor events/social activities will be permitted October 1 – Thanksgiving. Reports of a possible surge following the holiday(s) is anticipated, and may result in a modification of the current COVID guidelines for in-person gatherings.
- Graduate Visitation Weekend: Jen Quiralte provided an overview of the previous year's VGVW and began the discussion of what it might look like this Spring. Given the uncertainty of COVID-19, it was suggested that we transition to a hybrid format, where we offer both in-person and virtual sessions. Chairs are encouraged to send any questions or ideas to jquiralte@ucmerced.edu.
 - Suggestion: Picnic at the lake, weather permitting.
 - *This item will be further discussed over the course of the next few meetings.*

5. Admissions & Academic Services (Tsu Ya)

- Enrollment & Census Report: The U.S. Census report was released on September 15, providing us with a snapshot of fall 2021 enrollment numbers.
 - 772 enrolled (728 PhD, 44 masters)
 - This is an increase of 30 students, or 4% enrollment in comparison to last year's enrollment growth (742).

6. Financial Services (Eric Cannon)

- USAP Budgets: USAP budgets are still in progress. In general, we are looking to keep the dollar amount per PhD student at a minimum of \$2,000 per student. A memo and spreadsheet detailing the allocations and formula will be sent out to each graduate group once budgeting is complete.
- Masters Incentive: Graduate Division will meet with Vice Chancellor, Kurt Schnier to discuss a campus-wide master's incentive for self-funded master's students. The goal is to have the funds all go out at once. More details to follow in the coming weeks.

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

- Graduate Council is working on revision to further clarify some of the policies related to support for graduate students. Some of these include, the flexibility for NRST support, as well as the definition of who can serve on the committee chair of PhD students.

- Consultation with Academic Personnel Office (APO) regarding faculty hiring processes is still in progress. GC will provide further updates once the meeting between GC and APO has taken place.
- GC has received questions from some of the Graduate Group Chairs regarding responsibility and supervision of Teaching Fellows and TAs. According to the APM, this is the responsibility of the Department Chair, but GC is working with APO on recommendations to revise the map and get further clarification on this.
- Summer Session calendaring: GC recently endorsed a proposal that Monday only courses in the summer should be discouraged, since three Mondays currently fall on a holiday.
- There is some confusion over the definition of instructional modalities at both the graduate and undergraduate level. The definition of hybrid courses is different, and GC is working to unify those now.
- GC proposed a moratorium on hybrid and online course modality approval. This is because WASC programs which offer over 50% of courses online, are considered online degree programs.

The meeting adjourned at 2:01 P.M.