

Graduate Group Chairs Meeting
Wednesday, December 16, 2020
10:30 A.M. – 11:30 A.M. | Zoom

Meeting Minutes

Graduate Group Chairs Present: Chris Amemiya, Irene Beattie, Anita Bhappu, Martha Conklin, Courtenay Conrad, Justin Cook, Martin Hagger (PSY Representative), Christine Isborn, Sarah Kurtz, Roummel Marcia, Shawn Newsam, Paul Smaldino, Victor Munoz, Irene Yen
Monica Garcia, Tomiko Hale, Paul Roberts (Graduate Group Coordinators)
Erin Hestir (Graduate Council Vice-Chair)

Graduate Division Staff Present: Asmeret Berhe, Eric Cannon, Jesus Cisneros, Ashley Eagleson, Heath Jackson, Chris Kello, Jennifer Quiralte, Jessica Ventura, Tsu Ya

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

- PhD Admissions Update
 - Applications To-date
 - 579 applications in the faculty review bin
 - 20+ waiting for payment
 - 800 in progress
 - Slate
 - The Graduate Admissions team held a virtual Slate training/review session on December 10, which covered how to review applications and how to advance applications forward for admissions recommendation. The updated [faculty guide](#) is now available on the Graduate Division website under Faculty/Staff Resources, as well as on the homepage of the Slate reader.
 - If you or your faculty require additional training, please contact gradadmissions@ucmerced.edu to schedule a meeting.
 - Fellowship Nominations Update
 - We currently have three full/2-year fellowships;
 - a. Chancellor's Fellowship for Inclusive Excellence
 - b. Eugene Cota-Robles Fellowship
 - c. Graduate Dean's Recruitment Fellowship
 - In addition, we now have three \$7,000 summer fellowships that have been created out of what used to be top-off funds.
 - We are accepting Chair nominations for the AY 2021-22 Graduate Division Recruitment Fellowships, with a submission **deadline of January 29, 2021**.
 - a. All nominations should be submitted in Slate via the review form.
 - b. All nominations should include a brief description of the qualifications of nominees addressing a subset of questions.
 - c. The fellowship review process will be blind to GRE scores.
 - d. The use of statements is still TBD by Graduate Council.
 - An email will go out before winter break with further information and instructions on this process. (See Eric Cannon's email on 1/6/21 for more details).
 - Digital Marketing Update
 - Search Engine Optimization: We are currently monitoring initial analytics, and while it is a slow process, we have noticed a 20% increase in website

traffic. We will continue to observe the trends and work with Excelerate to improve our websites.

- Digital Marketing Ads: Given the current fiscal constraints, additional marketing efforts will be postponed until Summer 2021. We plan to largely focus on master's programs during the first phase. For questions regarding digital marketing, please contact Jess Ventura, jventura9@ucmerced.edu.
- PhD Admissions Management
 - We presented a spreadsheet model that projected capacities for graduate programs to fund PhD students based on instruction budgets and estimates of internal and external funding available for research assistantships and fellowships. However, the pandemic has put a huge strain on university finances, as well as our current graduate students, making it critical that we start aiming at targets and understanding how admissions will go for each graduate group. We do have a directive from the Provost to curb admissions and control enrollment growth of PhDs because of the current fiscal situation. Given this immediate need to scale back, we will revisit this again in summer 2021.
 - Suggestion to look at the TA loads that are being developed.
- UC HSI-DDI Competition/UC HBCU
 - There are two systemwide competitions aimed at broadening the diversity in graduate programs. We will have proposals going in across the campus in various contexts; if this is something that you're interested in applying for, please send your inquiry to Interim Dean Kello and he will send you the proper guidance.
 - UC HSI DDI: <https://www.ucop.edu/graduate-studies/initiatives-outreach/uc-hsi-ddi.html>
 - UC HBCU Initiative: <https://www.ucop.edu/uc-hbcu-initiative/>
- Graduate Division Academic Planning Phase 2
 - We received feedback from CAPRA and the Provost on phase 2 of the academic plans for the schools and divisions. After returning from the break, we will share this outline and request feedback from the chairs.
- Giving Thru UC Merced Update
 - The fundraising effort for the campus kicked off on December 1 and will run through the end of the month. To date, Graduate Division has received more than \$20,000 in donations to help fund graduate education at UC Merced. **(As of January 2021, this amount has increased to \$36,00).**
 - Interim Dean Kello thanked the Graduate Group Chairs for their generosity and ongoing support of our graduate students.

2. TA Training Workgroup (Asmeret Berhe)

- Campus-wide Instructional TA Training: There has been discussion about what we can do to improve the training and preparation of our graduate students who are serving as TAs within research and graduate groups. Some questions that arose during the first Graduate Instructional Training Workgroup meeting were;
 - How can we standardize expectations for TAs?
 - How we can think about the general evaluations of TAs that we receive and make them more useful?

- Can we create opportunities for graduates to work with CETL to develop their ideas and present and publish on pedagogical research?
- Should we give certificates to those who participate in these trainings, who will pursue teaching focused careers?
- Can we develop a model that includes putting one teaching fellow within each school, which would provide more support for the junior TAs?

3. Graduate Visitation Weekend (Jennifer Quiralte)

- Discussion ensued on the Virtual Graduate Visitation Weekend proposal;
 - GVW will be held on February 18 & 19, 2021. There will be no in-person events or sessions.
 - Graduate groups will not be provided any funding related to travel, food, or reimbursements.
 - We are looking into some sustainable options for swag, but no decisions have been made. (As of January 2021, each group will be given \$50 per prospective admit for swag).
 - If your graduate group is interested in utilizing the Graduate Division to help with a webinar, please reach out to Jess Ventura, with at least a two-weeks' notice.
 - We will send out additional information, as well as a revised schedule for review, after returning from the break. (See Jennifer Quiralte's email on 1/15/21 for details).
 - Suggestion to separate out the panels by school.

4. Graduate Council Vice Chair's Report (Erin Hestir)

- Graduate Council Vice Chair, Erin Hestir provided an update on Graduate Council recent activities;
 - The Support Services for Undocumented Students Workgroup reported to Graduate Council that there are 11 undocumented students currently on campus. There are a number of projects that UC Merced is working on in support of our undocumented students, which can be found at undoc.ucmerced.edu.
 - Graduate Council has requested that in the spring this workgroup engage with the Committee on Research and the Office of Research to provide input for how PIs and graduate groups can engage undocumented graduate students in research.
 - Graduate Council is reviewing the Innovative Learning Technology Initiative as well as the Academic Planning targets, and finalizing a 4+1 program policy, which will be submitted to UGC for review.

5. Other Business (All)

- Annual Student Progress Report Format (Heath Jackson)
 - In Progress – Tabled for discussion until the next Graduate Group Chairs Meeting.
- Change of advisor form check boxes (Tsu Ya)
 - In Progress – Tabled for discussion until the next Graduate Group Chairs Meeting.

The meeting adjourned at 11:29 A.M.