

Graduate Group Chairs Meeting

Thursday, April 14, 2022

11:00 AM – 12:00 PM

MEETING MINUTES

Graduate Group Chairs Present: John Abatzoglou, Paul Almeida (SOC Representative), Chris Amemiya, YangQuan Chen, Chih-Chun Chien, Kevin Dawson, Mariaelena Gonzalez (PHE Representative), Rowena Gray, Christine Isborn, Sarah Kurtz, Brad LeVeck, Changqing Li, Rowena Gray, Martin Hagger, Christine Isborn, Sarah Kurtz, Roummel Marcia, Paul Smaldino, Fred Wolf (QSB Representative)
Monica Garcia, Paul Roberts (Graduate Group Coordinators)
Sandie Ha (Graduate Council Vice-Chair)

Graduate Division Staff Present: Asmeret Asefaw Berhe, Eric Cannon, Jesus Cisneros, Ashley Eagleson-Renteria, Heath Jackson, Chris Kello, Maria Nishanian, Jennifer Quiralte, Tsu Ya

ANNOUNCEMENTS

- MIT is bringing back standardized testing for applicants. Next year, programs should consider whether they want to bring back the requirement for scores or make it optional/considered. Note: We expect applicant pools will dwindle down if the requirement were to be put in place at this time.
- UC Merced's Graduate program rankings went up, with QSB moving up by 31 spots!

AGENDA

1. Dean's Updates & Discussion Items (Chris Kello, Jesus Cisneros)
 - Funding Update: We received an extra \$1M permanently in the fellowship budget, and as a result, have set the stage for a driver-based budget, which will go into effect next year.
 - These additional funds will be used to increase our number of both recruiting and continuing fellowships, as well as to fund the R1 fellowships.
 - The R1 fellowships have outperformed our acceptance rates and while not all have been accepted/spent, there will be another opportunity to apply next year, and most of the funds can be rolled over.
 - Reminder: Tomorrow, Friday, April 15 is the deadline to accept the R1 Fellowship award.
 - The dean would also like to provide each of the graduate groups with additional funding to their operating budgets. The dean requested feedback from the chairs on how budgets should be increased;
 - Increase to USAP budgets – leaving it up to each department.
 - Adding another dissertation fellowship.
 - Increasing the number of summer fellowships
 - Flexible student fellowships.
 - Broadening Graduate Pathways Partnerships (a.k.a Grow your Own): There is a lot of activity still, with trying to build partnerships between CSUs, HBCUs, etc., to get more diverse applicants into our applicant pool(s).
 - We have a few partnerships currently underway with Bakersfield, Sacramento, Benedict College, Princeton Pathways, etc., and while still small-scale, please know this is a continued priority of the Provost.
 - Graduate Group Chair Feedback Survey: We will request feedback from current graduate students, graduate support staff, and core and affiliate faculty in your graduate group on Monday, April 18.

This feedback will be considered as part of your overall Graduate Chair & Program Review. All survey responses are anonymous and confidential.

- **ACTION: Ashley will send a copy of the survey questions out to the chairs by the end of the day, requesting changes and/or additions before it's distributed.**
- Graduate Group End of Year Reports (Jesus Cisneros): We will be sending out a request for review and response to the Graduate Group End of Year Reports by Wednesday, April 20. Chairs are asked to please review the data we have compiled for your program, and complete the additional questions, including projected enrollment numbers through Fall 2024.
- Community College Faculty Diversification Fellowship (Jesus Cisneros): We currently have the application open for the [Bakersfield College Faculty Fellowship Program](#). This program is a pathway for PhD, Masters, and recent alumni who are interested in becoming tenure track faculty at a community college. Last year we had two PhD students participate in the program and hoping to expand this year. Please see email sent on 4/1/21 for more information on how students can apply.
- Adelante HSI Preparing Future Faculty Summer Bootcamp (Jesus Cisneros): The Adelante Future Faculty Bootcamp is for PhD Candidates and Postdoctoral Scholars that are getting ready to start applying to the academic job market. Priority will be given to individuals who are applying to the academic job market in Summer/Fall of 2022, and whom demonstrate a potential to contribute to diversity in the Professoriate. We anticipate a cohort of no more than 8 PhD students.
 - **ACTION: Jesus will send an email out by the end of day tomorrow with information on how students can apply to participate in the program.**

2. Graduate Programming & Events (Jen Quiralte)

- Grad Slam: Jessica Wilson of QSB will represent UC Merced at this year's systemwide Grad Slam Competition on May 6 from 11am-1pm. Graduate Division will livestream the event on-campus and encourages all to log on and vote for our campus champion, <https://gradslam.universityofcalifornia.edu/>.
- Dissertation Bootcamp will be held Monday-Thursday, May 23-26, all day, in the following locations: Library, 360, 362, 397.

3. Graduate Resources (Jesus Cisneros)

- Summer Bridge Update: Currently, 10 students have accepted our invitation for Summer Bridge. Next week, we will follow-up with any outstanding invitations and set a deadline to reply by the end of the month (date TBD, but faculty will be cc'd). Once that deadline passes, we will send another call to fill any remaining spots in early May.

4. Admissions & Academic Services (Tsu Ya)

- Applications & Admissions Update:
 - 970 applications received to-date
 - 153 SIRs (132 PhD, 21 MS)
 - Reminder: Tomorrow, Friday, April 15 is the SIR deadline.
- Spring 2022 Graduation Numbers:
 - 50 PhD graduation applications
 - 8 Terminal Masters
 - 8 MATW

5. Graduate Counseling (Maria Nishanian)

- Mentorship Training Workshop: The CIMER Faculty Mentorship Training was a huge success, with 23 faculty participating from across all 3 schools. We will soon reach out to faculty to participate in a debrief luncheon.
 - This training workshop will become available to Postdocs at a later date.

6. Financial Services (Eric Cannon)

- Fellowships: There was a slight delay with the review of the larger fellowships, but we quickly switched over to our backup Grad Div Committee and all reviews have now been conducted.
 - The review of smaller continuing fellowships is still underway and will be completed soon. If you receive questions from students about the status of their application, please apologize on our behalf and let them know an announcement will go out soon.
 - We need additional faculty volunteers to help review applications for the End of Year teaching fellowships, so we plan to reach out to faculty who volunteered in previous years to see if they're willing to serve.
 - **ACTION: Eric will send the review of larger fellowships over to Graduate Council for certification by the end of the day tomorrow and announce the awards as soon as we hear back from GC.**
 - **ACTION: Chris, Sandie and Eric to take the issue of timing/lack of faculty volunteers for reviews to Graduate Council to reach a resolution for future years.**
- NRST: An email recently went out regarding the NRST Waiver Extension for international students, and we've since notified all new graduate students of the policy changes. Because we are unable to confirm when our current students are advancing, we will reach out to them individually for clarification.

7. Recruitment (Jesus Cisneros)

- The recruitment team has shifted gears from "You're admitted now what" email campaigns to pre-GROW activities.
- We will return to in-person recruiting events for the upcoming admissions cycle. Jess recently participated in two events, in both San Francisco, CA and South Carolina.
 - This Monday, April 18, Jess will attend a McNair Research Conference in Seattle, WA.
- We hope to fill our vacant Recruitment & Retention Manager position by fall 2022.

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

- Continuing Fellowships: GC is still in conversation on potential solutions to ensure the timeline works for everyone.
- Virtual Defense & Qualifying Exams: GC is in discussion about whether we should continue to allow remote qualifying exams and virtual defense. General members are in agreement that we should encourage in-person, but provide case by case flexibility for exemption as needed.
 - It's important for students to be able to communicate difficult concepts in-person vs. to a computer screen. There is also some value in having in-person discussion with the committee, as well as, having friends and family attend to support the student during their defense.
- New Senate Regulation: There is now a requirement of having English testing for entering graduate students who come from foreign countries. Recent concerns were raised by the Council of Graduate Deans re: the requirement of English testing based on country of origin is problematic as it may be discriminatory. There is talk about whether we should we abolish this language and requirement overall, or simply revise the language so that it is not based on country of origin. If abolished, each campus will have to determine their own policy. Based on conversations, it is important that our students can effectively participate in English instruction as both a TA and as a student. Therefore, the overall message seems to be that changing the language may be the way to go. To-date, no decision has been made by GC.
 - Dean Kello mentioned the adjustment of country of origin to level of education attained.
 - **ACTION: Sandie to take back to GC, feedback from the chairs on the addition of a checkbox for the chairs to indicate whether they've talked to the student and approve of them based on adequate screening.**