

Graduate Group Chairs Meeting
Tuesday, May 5, 2020
9:00 A.M. – 10:00 A.M. | Zoom

Meeting Minutes

Graduate Group Chairs Present: Chris Amemiya, Ramesh Balasubramaniam, Irene Beattie, Anita Bhappu, Martha Conklin, Courtenay Conrad, Justin Cook, Kevin Dawson, Gerardo Diaz, Sayantani Ghosh, Marcelo Kallmann, Sarah Kurtz, Roummel Marcia, Erik Menke, Victor Munoz, Jan Wallander, Irene Yen
Hrant Hratchian (Graduate Council Vice-Chair), LeRoy Westerling (Graduate Council Chair)

Graduate Division Staff Present: Eric Cannon, Ashley Eagleson, Heath Jackson, Chris Kello, Jennifer Quiralte, Tsu Ya, Marjorie Zatz

Guest: Kurt Schnier (Associate Provost for Academic Planning & Budget)

Announcements

Graduate Policies and Procedures Handbook has been updated and is on the Graduate Division website.

Agenda

1. Dean Updates – 5 min – Dean Zatz, Associate Dean Kello, Assistant Dean Cisneros

- Virtual Commencement will take place at 10am on Saturday, May 16 via Zoom and we encourage you all to watch. There will be some added recognition of PhD students since they cannot be hooded at this time.
- Those chairs who will be transitioning out/stepping down this year and have not yet been contacted are asked to please email Dean Zatz when your program has nominees for the position of graduate group chair. Nominations should be solicited consistent with the group's bylaws. Preference where possible is for two nominations to be brought forward.
- Chairs who have not yet turned in their completed End of the Year Reports are asked to please do so as soon as possible. Deadline was May 1.
- The Acting Associate Dean position has been posted and several applications have been received. The pool is very strong. We hope to make an appointment by the end of the month.
- Chairs expressed their concerns re: COVID-19 and related items including on-campus research, Live Health, deadlines and extensions by exception. Discussion ensued on the following:
 - Planning efforts for fall 2020 and possible form(s) of instruction
 - Will students who travel to their home countries during summer break be able to return to campus in the fall?
 - Will there be a self-quarantining requirement of students and faculty before entering the labs, especially of anyone who travels outside of the city?

- Enrollment numbers and TAships – will we be able to place TAs if students defer until spring?

ACTION: Dean Zatz will get clarification on what having to take online courses means for residency requirements.

OUTCOME: See attached handout re: Temporary Amendments to Residency Policy

2. Graduate Council – 10 min – LeRoy Westerling & Hrant Hrachian

- GC Chair, LeRoy Westerling has been appointed Vice Chair of the Senate for AY 2020-21. Congratulations LeRoy and thank you for your service!
- Chair Westerling received feedback that communication of graduate issues is not as high as it should be at the campus-level; accordingly, there needs to be strong graduate group specific communications from chairs to faculty and down to the students they are advising.
- Changes to the Curriculog system aimed at reducing the Course Request workload – everyone is asked to please look at the CRF Policy Workgroup letter and let Chair Westerling or Vice Chair Hrachian know if there are any suggested revisions.

ACTION: Chairs who plan to make extensions/changes to their graduate program policies and procedures due to COVID-19 are asked to please send that information to a central source that will be designated in either the Senate or Graduate Division so that all changes can be tracked and recorded by Graduate Council (e.g., Pass or No Pass instead of grades, extensions to time to advancement, etc.).

3. Graduate Funding Model – 10 min – Kurt Schnier

- Kurt Schnier reported that he has received recommendations from graduate chairs to determine the targeted amounts needed to create TA/GSR lines out of master's incentive funds.
 - What are the proper incentives to support these?
 - What are realistic expectations of students you can fund in this way, in order to support a broader PhD program?
 - Associate Provost Schnier will first pilot and then make changes as deemed necessary.
- No new reports on the USAP Funding Model or partial tuition coverage for graduate students on grants.
- Associate Provost Schnier is working on a process for carry forward requests that are COVID-19 related. Approach will be that perhaps not all requests are granted due to limited resources and financial climate, but requests will be archived so that when/if funds are available, we can help support them.

4. UC-HSI Doctoral Dissertation Initiative Professional Development Plan – 5 min – Associate Dean Kello

- UC Merced was one of 6 grant recipients for the inaugural UC-Hispanic Serving Institutions Doctoral Diversity Initiative (UC-HSI DDI) grants. With these funds we intend to offer at least one of the following three professional development opportunities designed to prepare our students for the professoriate. We are asking for your thoughts on these initiatives. They include:

- Preparing Future Faculty Bootcamp – summer training program for doctoral students getting ready to enter the academic job market, with an emphasis on postdoctoral researcher positions.
- CSU/CCC Career Day – faculty from HSI community colleges and CSU campuses are invited to speak with our grads and postdocs about faculty career paths in their institutions.
- CSU/UC Student Exchange – we fund interested graduate students to spend a few days at a CSU campus, learning about CSU faculty careers and interacting with the undergrads and master’s students there. Then, we would recruit students to our campus to learn about UC research and PhD programs, hosted by those graduate students who visited the CSU campuses.

5. GROW Planning – 5 min – Jennifer Quiralte

- We are working on how to host GROW virtually in the fall. Further communication (e.g., dates, preliminary FAQs, etc.,) will be shared with the group during the week of May 18.
 - Anita Bhappu suggested that current students host an informal virtual meet-and-greets to help bridge connections between current and new students.
 - Irene Yen suggested the use of Zoom breakout room technology to allow students to meet in small groups and “break the ice.” Also, to allow introverted students to weigh in via the chat feature.

6. Annual Review of Students – 5 min – Dean Zatz & Heath Jackson

- The Graduate Student Annual Review system is still being streamlined; thanks to the EECS students who are testing it at the moment. The forms are available at <https://grip.ucmerced.edu/fmi/webd> under Grad Student Annual Review if you wish to view them. If you would like to use the online program for this year’s reviews, please let Heath Jackson know the date that you plan to send out the call for students to fill in the form and he’ll make sure to run tests for your group and send you the updated instruction guides for both students and faculty. All instructions and links will be available online as soon as the testing period is complete.

ACTION: Dean Zatz will send out a query to see which groups are using the new online tool versus the previous year’s procedure.

OUTCOME as of 5/15/20: With thanks to EECS for piloting it, the file maker solution to student review forms is not ready for broader use this year. Chairs are asked to please use the procedure from last year and work with your school staff to send out your forms. Once all data are compiled, send Dean Zatz your completed spreadsheet with information on meeting dates and outcomes for each student (and copies of any improvement plans for students who are not making satisfactory progress) **by July 31**. A summary report template will be emailed to each graduate group the week of May 18.

7. Funding – 10 min – Eric Cannon

- We were awarded funds as part of the CARES Act to be able to provide direct support to student populations with the highest need.
 - Funds will be disbursed to those students who have a FAFSA on file, which verifies Title IV eligibility.

- Funds are only available to domestic students (e.g., US citizen/permanent resident), though a separate process will be shared with ineligible students on how to request special circumstance funds which will be a coordinated use of federal, institutional and emergency funds.
- Institutional funds will be identified to provide some assistance to students who are undocumented and who filed a Dream application.
- A process will be communicated with graduate students shortly on how to submit a FAFSA or Dream Act.
- For students who had summer internships that fell apart, please have them email Eric Cannon as soon as possible for possible summer support. Deadline was May 1.

OUTCOME: See 5/6/20 email from Vice Chancellor, Charles Nies, re: CARES Act Funding for Student Aid and visit [Student Resource page](#) for more information.

8. Roundtable/Other Business+ – 10 min – Dean Zatz & All

- Dean Zatz expressed her tremendous gratitude to everyone for their hard work and service to their colleagues and their graduate students this academic year. She stated that she will miss working with this group as she transitions into the position of Interim Vice Chancellor for Research, but Chris Kello will be fabulous as Acting Dean. Best wishes to all!
- Reminder: GGC meetings will reconvene in August, but important information and updates will continue to go out to chairs throughout summer.

The meeting adjourned at 10:02 A.M.

** Associate Dean Kello remained on the call to continue the discussion on student funding and remote instruction for international students who may not be able to obtain a visa.