

**Graduate Group Chairs Meeting**  
**Wednesday, September 23, 2020**  
**10:30 A.M. – 11:30 A.M. | Zoom**

**Meeting Minutes**

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Graduate Group Chairs Present: Chris Amemiya, Irene Beattie, Anita Bhappu, YangQuan Chien, Chi-Chun Chien, Martha Conklin, Justin Cook, Kevin Dawson, Christine Isborn, Sarah Kurtz, Roummel Marcia, Shawn Newsam, Paul Smaldino, Jan Wallander, Irene Yen  
Erin Hestir (Graduate Council Vice-Chair)

Graduate Division Staff Present: Eric Cannon, Jesus Cisneros, Ashley Eagleson, Heath Jackson, Chris Kello, Tsu Ya

## Agenda

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

- Fall & Spring In-Person Instruction
  - It is unlikely that there will be any in-person instruction during fall 2020. While there is discussion of having a small number of in-person courses in the spring, a contingency plan will be developed in the event that there is another large influx of COVID cases preventing this option. Discussion ensued on the following;
    - Request for faculty be allowed the flexibility to informally meet with students in small groups of 3-4, outdoors if possible, as students are starting to feel isolated.
    - Graduate students conducting research on campus need lounge space with access to microwaves/fridges/food storage.
    - With spring being online, the entire cohort of the MM students will receive an online degree this year. What are the implications of this?
    - Request for further guidance on international student visa requirements.

**ACTION: Interim Dean Kello to look into the abovementioned items and report back at the next GGC Meeting.**

- International Student Deferrals
  - There are just over 50 MS and PhD deferrals for Fall & Spring. We foresee some issues related to employment and are working with APO on individual cases of those who are abroad and wanting to work remotely. How urgent is it to have students start working in the spring vs. being deferred to fall 2021? Discussion ensued on the following;
    - International students are continuing to go to labs, but their visa appointments keep getting pushed back. For students auditing courses remotely (full classes this semester), can they count these units in the Spring at once or do they have to spread these out? They are hoping that the "clock" starts this semester rather than a semester or year later.

- Are there any issues with international master's students having 1/2 of their 2-year residency being entirely remote – will it create any problems with them graduating?
- Suggestion to set up telework agreements and pay student tuition out of GSR or Fellowship funds.

**ACTION: Interim Dean Kello to look into the abovementioned items and report back at the next GGC Meeting.**

- Change of Advisor Process
  - Graduate Division is in consideration of formalizing this process. For example, we would require a meeting to occur with all parties involved prior to form approval. Discussion ensued on the following;
    - Consensus to schedule an initial meeting with all parties involved as it will help to eliminate issues between the advisor and the mentee.
    - Request to create a communication/process flow where Graduate Group Chairs are consulted earlier in the process.
    - Suggestion to include a written portion (e.g., advisor commitment), which also details funding plans.
    - Since the change of advisor process differs across disciplines, chairs asked for flexibility among certain graduate groups (e.g., can meetings be waived on a case by case basis).
    - Request for Graduate Division to clean-up the language of the form as there are different types of chairs involved (e.g., graduate advisor, committee chair, chair of the exam committee, etc.).
    - Can there be some reference to the handbook, outlining the advisor's role and/or capacity?
- Graduate Group P&P Template
 

**ACTION: Due to time-constraints, this item was tabled. Interim Dean Kello will follow-up with an email update.**
- Academic Planning Update
 

**ACTION: Due to time-constraints, this item was tabled. Interim Dean Kello will follow-up with an email update.**
- Update on Fall 2021 Admissions Management
 

**ACTION: Due to time-constraints, this item was tabled. Interim Dean Kello will follow-up with an email update.**
- Annual Student Progress Report Format
  - Due to time-constraints, this item was tabled until the next meeting.

## **2. Graduate Council Vice Chair's Report (Erin Hestir)**

- Graduate Council Vice Chair, Erin Hestir provided an update on Graduate Council & PROC recent activities.
  - The MBSE P&Ps are in review.
  - The new course proposals for COGSCI 210, IH 242, ME 292 and MBSE 295 are currently under review. ME 245 and MIST 290 are in the queue.

- Graduate Council will be considering a policy review for the self-supporting graduate professional degree and how that aligns with the current handbook.
- Graduate Council will be considering a policy review of the 5-year annual review process.
- The ongoing program reviews currently in process will continue. PROC is in discussion of some principles for adapted expectations for annual assessment reviews. Chairs can expect to receive guidance as they formulate these policies.
- There will likely be a revised timeline for academic reviews based on several requests from programs for revisions.

### **3. Other Business (All)**

- The program support staff will be send out a funding call on Thursday, October 1 to all faculty in Science & Engineering and Natural Sciences. Faculty are asked to please enter their TA requests into GRIP as soon as possible, following the call. For more information on this process, please reach out to your program coordinator or email Heath Jackson at [hjackson2@ucmerced.edu](mailto:hjackson2@ucmerced.edu).
- Kurt Schnier will attend the next Graduate Group Chair's Meeting to discuss in more detail, the updates and changes regarding Fall 2021 Admissions Management.

**The meeting adjourned at 11:31 A.M.**

**Next Graduate Group Chairs Meeting: Wednesday, October 21 from 10:30AM – 11:30AM.**