



320 STEPHENS HALL
UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

December 1, 2014

MARY GILLY
Chair, Academic Council

Subject: Doctoral Student Support Recommendations

Dear Mary,

On November 17, 2014, the Divisional Council (DIVCO) of the Berkeley Division of the Academic Senate discussed the Doctoral Student Support Recommendations, informed by commentary of our divisional Committee on Academic Planning and Resource Allocation (CAPRA) and Graduate Council (GC). While we support the broad goals of the recommendations, the discussion in DIVCO, as well as the committee reports, highlighted the challenges of practical implementation and the shortcomings of a “one-size-fits-all” approach to this complex issue.

Specific comments on each one of the four topics addressed in the recommendations are included below:

Non-resident supplemental tuition (NRST)

DIVCO supports the intent of this recommendation. We agree with GC:

If sufficient additional funds are found to fund the recommendations related to NRST, it was noted that it would generally enhance departments’ ability to offer international graduate students competitive financial packages. NRST makes it expensive for faculty to attract international students, which is an unfair disadvantage compared to domestic students and should be seriously considered. It was also noted that departmental funding of NRST relief varies by department and is not transparent to students.

With respect to the first two options, GC reported:

Members were unequivocal that it is critical that UC spend the time and effort necessary to ensure that there are sufficient additional resources to fund these initiatives so that existing resources are not diverted from other current compelling needs to pay for them. If

individual departments or faculty are asked to fund these initiatives with existing funds, it would be devastating to the units and would diminish Berkeley's competitiveness for graduate students.

Absent specific new resources to fund Options 1 and 2, DIVCO supports Option 3, which encourages the development of strategies at the campus level and dissemination of successful models to other campuses.

Net Stipend Competitiveness, Multi-Year Funding, and Transparent Offer Letters

With respect to the recommendations on net stipend competitiveness and multi-year funding, while we recognize the importance of offering competitive stipends in order to attract the best graduate students, DIVCO agrees with CAPRA that implementing a systemwide policy is not the best way to achieve this goal:

Given the heterogeneity in the funding sources and policies concerning graduate student multi-year funding, CAPRA is not supportive of a blanket multi-year funding policy for all graduate students on campus or system-wide. CAPRA agrees that multi-year funding may be a useful policy objective for quantifying campus initiatives for increasing graduate student funding through public/private partnerships, fellowship funding, and philanthropy.

With respect to transparent offer letters, the UCB Graduate Division already has instituted such a requirement. We believe, however, that campus oversight of current practices on doctoral student compensation could be strengthened.

Professional Development

Here again, while DIVCO agrees with the broad aims of these recommendations, we question the potential effectiveness of these proposals. We agree with CAPRA:

CAPRA believes that the highly specific needs of individual graduate students are better addressed within the career development services offered on the UC Berkeley Campus and within the various divisions, schools and colleges on our campus. CAPRA does not agree that the "one-size-fits-all" type of informational website, proposed in Options 1 and 2, is a good use of resources since both employers and students are more likely to be very focused on specific skill sets through their graduate programs. Option 3 [which decouples the role of the campus-based staff, who would develop and expand professional development programming on their home campuses, from the development of the portal] is more closely aligned with our view of successful career development programs at the graduate level although we are concerned about the cost versus benefits of the proposed employment database portal that is included in this option.

Diversity

DIVCO agrees with its reporting committees that the recommendations aimed at increasing graduate student diversity should be funded and implemented. We believe, however, that the proposals are too focused on particular doctoral student cohorts and

limited in their financial scope to make a significant difference. We believe that more can and should be done to advance this important goal.

In sum, DIVCO supports the aims of the proposals on graduate student support. Given the significant resource implications, we do not support their implementation unless a mechanism for funding them is identified.

Sincerely,



Panos Papadopoulos
Chair, Berkeley Division of the Academic Senate
Chancellor's Professor of Mechanical Engineering

cc: Nancy Wallace, Chair, Committee on Academic Planning and Resource Allocation
Lisa Alvarez-Cohen, Chair, Graduate Council
Linda Song, Associate Director staffing Graduate Council
Diane Sprouse, Senate Analyst, Committee on Academic Planning and Resource Allocation