January 20, 2011

Daniel Simmons  
Chair, Academic Council

In Re: UCLA Response to the Proposed Revisions to the Self Supporting Graduate Programs Policy

Dear Dan,

Thank you for the opportunity to review and opine on the proposed revisions to the Self Supporting Graduate Degree Program (SSGDP) policy. Upon receipt of the proposal, I asked that the UCLA Graduate Council, the Council on Planning and Budget, the Committee on Community and Continuing Education, and the various Faculty Executive Committees to opine. All other committees were welcome to opine as well, and the Executive Board, which speaks for the Division on such matters, considered all responses in its deliberations. All responses are attached for your review. For reasons I shall outline, the UCLA Academic Senate cannot support the revisions as proposed.

Although the Executive Board is supportive of updating and clarifying UC policy on SSGDPs, there are a number of concerns in the proposal for this policy as drafted. In general, the Executive Board and other UCLA agencies are concerned that the definition of what could become an SSGDP is so broad as to encompass virtually any degree program that is not a Ph.D. program. Hence there are a number of required changes that would have to be made in this proposal before it would be acceptable. They are as follows:

1. While the proposal states that the aim of SSGDPs is to facilitate meeting the needs of “populations of working adults not served by UC state-supported programs”, as written, this is not a necessary nor sufficient condition for creation of such a program. The Executive Board strongly believes that the criteria for SSGDPs should involve the MERGER of items II.A.1, II.A.1.a, and parts of II.A.1.b, so that it reads:

   **II.A.1. Self-supporting graduate degree programs must fulfill a demonstrated higher education need and/or workforce need, and they should typically serve a non-traditional population such as full-time employees, mid-career professionals, international students, and/or students supported by their employers.**
It is not necessary that the remainder of that section, II.A.1.c or d, be included, as these are dealt with later in the document.

2. The issue of overall teaching workloads needs to be addressed more specifically. How would faculty be expected to teach in these programs; is “overload” the only option, or is “buyout” of state-supported classroom teaching an option? What are the limits for which a faculty member can teach in SSGDPs, and what are the implications for the research activity in the department or school? If the financial incentives for increased teaching are so great that they overwhelm the incentive for a faculty member to spend time on scholarly research, this could have devastating implications for the University’ reputation. Defined limits are needed for teaching in SSGDPs.

3. There is a related concern that some of these SSGDPs could become second rate programs that would merely serve as a financial source for departments and schools, to the detriment of the units’ overall reputation. This policy needs to have a reaffirmation of the role of the Senate in admissions, setting of academic requirements, curriculum, potential transferability of classes from an SSGDP to a state-supported program (if at all), etc. Moreover, the statements that suggest that UC Extension can “administer” the program are sufficiently vague that there is concern. It should be clarified in the policy that UC Extension does not offer these SSGDP degrees, per UC Senate Regulations, despite the valuable administrative support it may provide.

4. There should be clarification on processes to deal with SSGDPs that fail, that is, those programs which cannot become self-supporting after a few years or do not have sufficient quality to remain a UC program. What happens to the students in such a failed program? Specificity and clarification on this issue are needed in the SSGDP policy.

5. Many of the features of the proposed policy on SSGDPs are similar to those proposed in a report by a recent (July, 2010) UCLA Joint Senate-Administration Task Force on “Non-Traditional Programs, Including Self-Supporting Degree Programs and Certificate Programs”. This report can be found online.

Thank you again for your inviting us to review and opine upon this matter. UCLA would welcome the opportunity to review the proposal again, after significant revisions have been made.

Sincerely,

[Signature]

Ann Karagozian
Chair, UCLA Academic Senate

Cc: Martha Kendall Winnacker, Executive Director Systemwide Senate
    Jaime R. Balboa, Chief Administrative Officer, UCLA Academic Senate
January 6, 2011

To: Ann Karagozian  
Academic Senate, Chair

From: MarySue Heilemann  
Committee Continuing and Community Education, Chair

Re: Senate Item for Review: Policy on Self-Supporting Graduate Programs

The following (items 1-5) solely reflect my concerns about the Senate Item for Review: Policy on Self Supporting Graduate Programs; the Committee on Continuing and Community Education (CCCE) chose not to opine. The last two items (items 6 & 7) were submitted on behalf of CCCE Ex-Officio member, Cathy Sandeen.

After reviewing the letter from Dr. Farid Chehab, (Chair of the Coordinating Committee on Graduate Affairs or CCGA), the letter from Provost Pitts introducing the revised policy, and the revised policy document on Self Supporting Programs, some concerns have been revealed. Due to these concerns, which are detailed below, endorsement of the policy is not possible at this time. More analysis and explanation is needed on the issues raised below.

1. On behalf of the Coordinating Committee on Graduate Affairs (CCGA), Dr. Farid Chehab stated in his 4/10/10 letter,

"CCGA members concurred with the 1996 policy that a new SSP should serve a public need, especially in professional fields that are in high demand such as in Physical Therapy and Audiology. The new policy should state that no academic SSP should be established."

However in his letter, Provost Pitts noted that the new revised policy deleted the designation of “professional” because one existing SSP program (Master of Fine Arts in Writing) is not a professional program. Since the CCGA recommended that new SSPs be professional and not academic, this raises a concern that should be discussed and analyzed. It does not seem wise to delete the recommendation of the CCGA without good reason. In addition, it is unclear if there is only one or if there are more than one existing programs that are “academic” and not “professional.” A more complete report on this is needed. Together, the issues and facts need to be considered more carefully in
light of CCGA’s recommendations (copied above) that “no academic SSP should be established.” Specifically, a greater analysis of the recommendations and the current situation is needed before the initiative can be accepted.

2. The criteria for development of a self-supporting graduate degree programs in the newly revised policy requires the program to meet only one of the following:
   a. fulfill a demonstrated higher education and/or workforce need;
   b. serve a non-traditional population, such as full-time employees, mid-career professionals, international students, and/or students supported by their employers;
   c. be offered through an alternative mode of delivery, such as online instruction;
   d. be alternatively scheduled, such as during evenings and weekends.

The problem with these criteria is that they are very broad. In fact, an SSP need only seek to, for example, “fulfill a demonstrated higher education need” in order to meet the criteria. That is, since only one item needs to be met according to the revised policy, no other criteria need to be met if the item in letter “a” is fulfilled. There are various concerns related to this. For example, the CCGA recommended that the “targeted SSP students would be best described as ‘academically qualified graduates who could be in training, working or looking to enhance their careers.’ However, if item “a” is the only criteria for the SSP that is fulfilled, according to the revised policy, the students in the SSP may not have any interest in enhancing their careers. In addition, as alluded to in item 1, this further removes the revised policy from CCGA’s recommendation that the SSP serve a public need, especially in professional schools, and once again, that “no academic SSP should be established.”

3. In his letter, Provost Pitts stated that:

“There is some concern that the flexibility proposed in this revision would create incentives for existing graduate programs to give up their state support and convert to self-supporting programs. We do not believe that these policy revisions do that - in almost all cases, the additional revenue generated by such a conversion would not be enough to offset the loss of current state support received by the campus.”

The key point of concern here is the estimation that this would be the case “in almost all cases”. However, this estimation may be grossly understated. Rather, it may be the case that in “several” cases or in “many” cases this initiative would serve as a potent incentive for existing graduate programs to give up their state support and convert to self-supporting programs, which would deny the purpose and vision of the UC system. Indeed, the revised policy as written would set up the possibility for a graduate program to “convert” to an SSP very nicely. Further analysis and editing in need
because if the policy is approved as is, a variety of its stipulations would make it very tempting for programs to “convert” to SSPs, such as the following:

a. SSPs would be held to same standards of quality as regular programs,

b. SSPs programs would be established by academic departments and staffed with ladder-rank faculty on the same basis as regular state programs.

c. Teaching faculty would be appointed through regular campus processes irrespective of academic series.

d. The Dean of the school or college offering the SSP and the Academic Vice Chancellor would be responsible for assuring that program publicity and marketing meet the highest standards of quality and accuracy.

e. Once established, the SSP will be overseen by the divisional Graduate Division to ensure adequate progress of students according to campus criteria.

f. In terms of Admission and Enrollment, standards for the part time self-supporting program would be comparable in effect to those for the regular state-supported programs.

g. Campuses will be allowed to offer courses which are available to students in the SSP or in the state supported program. However, the initiative ensures that access to courses offered as part of the SSP programs must be equally available to all qualified SSP students.

h. SSP fees would be based on a full and accurate assessment of all program costs, including but not limited to faculty instructional costs, program support costs, student services costs, and overhead (the ability to set the fees at a high level, is likely to be very attractive to a program that is tempted to convert to an SSP)

i. State funds will be used to “start up” the SSP, but if the program fails to reach self-support in line with its phase-in plan, state funds will be withdrawn from its support.

j. Program deficits will be covered by the campuses (which is very attractive for the SSP because the campus must bail out the SSP in terms of any program deficits). However, the initiative states that state funds cannot be used to cover any deficit, except during the start-up years under the approved phase in plan.
4. The revised policy, with its very broad criteria, is likely to lead to a tremendous number of new SSPs forming within the UC system on all campuses. It is likely that a great deal of time and energy will be funneled towards SSP development and implementation and therefore, this must be considered before the policy is approved. Despite the assurance that faculty will be paid for their time devoted to the teaching in SSPs, there is no clarity in relation to how faculty who spend time on an SSP (instead of on their regular teaching, research, and service), will be compensated. Also, what will be the effect of putting their efforts into the SSP rather than into their state-supported teaching, their research, or their service activities? What will be lost in terms of the mission of the UC? It is unclear if the creation of the SSPs will drain faculty from their current students, projects, and commitments. If we are to be true to the mission and vision of the UC system and its charge, it would be wise to consider how such a policy could change the climate of the UC system.

5. The revised policy will greatly increase the workload of the Graduate Division, the workload of faculty, and that of staff including IT staff (among others). It is unclear how this will be handled during the “start up” time of an SSP and how the growth will be handled once the SSP in underway. In particular, online courses are very time intensive, in particular for faculty. This is problematic for the reasons listed in item 4 above.

6. The role of the UC Extension is mentioned in the policy section of the revised document but not in the implementation section. It should be addressed in both. Because the UC Extension is de facto self-support, the new policy emphasizes that the financial review of self-support programs is less onerous when working with Extension than if a department were to operate one on its own. The importance of this is that it encourages more program development while protecting state resources. It should be clarified, however, that the UC Extension helps with SSP’s but they do not offer the degrees (i.e., they assist the department that is offering the degrees).

7. There is a concern regarding return to aid, because it is not advisable that it be a specified percentage. There should be some return to aid for SSPs, but this should be left flexible.

Cc: Jaime Balboa, Chief Administrative Officer, Academic Senate
    Dottie Ayer, Assistant to Chief Administrative Officer, Academic Senate
    Brandie Henderson, Policy Analyst, Academic Senate
January 6, 2011

Professor Ann Karagozian  
Chair, UCLA Academic Senate

Re: Policy on Self-Supporting Graduate Programs

Dear Professor Karagozian,

The Council on Planning and Budget discussed at its meeting on November 29, 2010, the proposed changes to University policy governing Self-Supporting Programs that Provost Pitts recently submitted to the Senate for consideration (Pitts to Simmons, 10-29-10). In preparation for our meeting, Council members also reviewed the April 2010 CCGA statement on SSPs. It is our understanding that this statement is the product of discussions over a two-year period.

The reaction of most individual members of CPB and the Council as a whole is ambivalence. On the one hand, we agreed that the current policy, dating from 1996, is in need of revision. It defines the parameters for SSPs too narrowly, and it lacks sufficient guidelines for oversight of existing and proposed SSPs. As Provost Pitts notes, nine of the forty SSPs now in existence violate the 1996 policy that programs be part-time, not all are “professional” in the narrow sense that they prepare students for specific jobs, and the range of student populations served is substantially broader than specified in the 1996 Guidelines. Furthermore, consistent with recommendations from the Committee on the Future, CPB supports campus efforts to establish new revenue-producing academic and professional programs, as long as they meet the high standards of the University and do not negatively impact on core programs.

We note parenthetically that revenue-producing programs need not be fully self-supporting; professional degree fees (PDFs) are proliferating among traditional masters degree programs from Business Administration to Social Welfare.

On the other hand, we are concerned that the changes proposed err in the other direction; specifically, the list of criteria for SSPs, and the apparent standard that programs need to meet just one of the criteria, is so broad that they would seem to include virtually all University academic programs, other than Ph.D. programs, which are explicitly excluded. We do not agree with the ‘slippery slope’ perspective that such broad criteria will induce ALL programs to convert to self-supporting status. Most academic programs and many professional ones are simply not in a market position to set tuition levels so high that they would be greater than the sum of current income streams (PDF + marginal cost of instruction + tuition + non-resident fees). For example using that logic, the UCLA Public Affairs master’s program would have to charge it’s students $5,199 + $10,000 + $10,300 + $12,245 = $37,744 (we are grateful to Associate Vice Chancellor Glyn Davies for this point and example). We believe that most existing General Fund-supported professional programs, and virtually all academic ones, will continue to prefer the Degree Fee option (PDF or equivalent) to full self-supporting status. Still, at a minimum, we believe that the criteria for SSPs should not be set so loosely that they could encourage unwise conversions or seduce departments and schools into devoting excessive energy to SSPs.

We find the latter point especially vexing. The draft policy revisions contain substantial normative language on the importance of traditional teaching, research and service, as well as guidelines for compensation, course approval, etc...all designed to maintain a healthy balance between revenue enhancement and the core academic values of the University. But we do not think that any set of nicely-stated principles can prevent faculties from devoting too much of their energy to revenue enhancement...
generally and SSPs specifically. Faculties are composed of people, a large portion of whom are getting along in years, and whose energy is not boundless. UCLA already has one major professional school whose SSPs rank among the best of their type, while their core program is ranked substantially lower (AGSM). Without dwelling on the specifics of this example (which are complex and controversial, especially now that the School is seeking complete self-supporting status), we do believe that this is not a healthy state of affairs.

We support the updating and modest broadening of the criteria for SSPs, especially if accompanied by improved guidelines for oversight. We do not believe that this will lead to a tidal wave of conversions, and we specifically urge strong Academic Senate oversight to ensure that schools and departments not neglect their core programs as a result of pursuing revenue enhancement. The revised language appears to be sufficient, but it might be stated even more emphatically.

We also recommend that the statement of criteria (Section A.1) be strengthened and clarified. The proposed language currently reads:

“Self-supporting graduate degree programs should meet one or more of the following criteria:
   a. fulfill a demonstrated higher education and/or workforce need;
   b. serve a non-traditional population, such as full-time employees, mid-career professionals, international students, and/or students supported by their employer;
   c. be offered through an alternative mode of delivery, such as online instruction;
   d. be alternatively scheduled, such as during evenings and weekends.”

We suggest a re-phrasing that incorporates the first two points: “Self-supporting graduate/ professional degree programs should fulfill a demonstrated workforce or academic need, and/or serve a non-traditional population, such as full-time employees, mid-career professionals, international students, or students supported by their employer. This is a necessary standard to consider any proposal; to be approved the proposed program must also be fiscally sound and meet the standards of quality, oversight and non-interference with core General Fund-supported academic programs stated in these Guidelines.”

Items c. and d. should be omitted from this section. They are methods of delivery and while they may describe many SSPs, they are not necessarily criteria. We suggest that it would be more appropriate to state elsewhere in the document that SSPs are ordinarily scheduled during evenings or weekends, or online, in order to not conflict with core programs.

We hope that these thoughts will assist the Executive Committee in its formulation of our Division's position on the proposed revision of SSP guidelines.

Respectfully,

David Lopez
Chair, UCLA Council on Planning and Budget

cc: Andy Leuchter, Vice Chair, Academic Senate
    Robin Garrell, Immediate Past Chair, Academic Senate
    Jaime Balboa, Chief Administrative Officer, Academic Senate
    Linda Mohr, Assistant Chief Administrative Officer, Academic Senate
    Members of the Council on Planning and Budget
MEMO

Date December 22, 2010

From Andrea Fraser
Chair, Faculty Executive Committee
School of the Arts and Architecture

To UCLA Academic Senate
Jaime Balboa, CAO

RE SOAA FEC Response to proposed revisions to Policy on Self-Supporting Graduate Programs

The Faculty Executive Committee of the School of the Arts and Architecture reviewed the proposed revisions to the Policy on Self-Supporting Graduate Programs as requested. At our November 19 meeting, we voted that we cannot endorse the revised policy without further revision, as detailed below.

In his letter accompanying the revised policy, Provost Pitts emphasizes that the aim of the revisions is to facilitate the establishment of self-supporting degree programs. These are seen as an important source of income in a period of declining state funding. Secondarily, Provost Pitts notes the need for greater accountability and transparency in the creation and administration of these programs.

The proposed revisions serve the first of these aims by eliminating “part-time” and “professional” as qualifiers of the programs that may be established under the policy, and by requiring programs to meet only one rather than all of four criteria. With these changes, virtually all non-doctoral graduate programs would be eligible to pursue self-sufficiency.

However, our committee found that the revisions do very little to further accountability and transparency in the creation and administration of self-supporting degree programs. The paragraphs detailing accountability for publicity and marketing, faculty salaries, and oversight of academic quality have hardly been changed. [In particular, see 11.C.2., 11.C.4., and the paragraph on “Faculty FTE” under “Implementation Guidelines.”]

Anecdotal evidence of abuses in these programs indicates that the existing mechanisms of accountability have not been sufficient. We believe that these mechanisms must be strengthened in proportion to the flexibility provided by the new policy and to the expansion of these programs that is likely to result from that flexibility.

In addition to these reservation, we also are concerned that paragraph 11.C.5., exempting programs administered through UC Extension from obtaining fee approval from the President, constitutes an enormous loop-hole that potentially allows programs covered by
the policy to function outside of the public service mission of the UC system, of which accessibility is a key component.

Paragraph 11.C.5 also begs the question of the relationship between UC Extension and the campus units housing self-sufficient graduate programs that UC Extension may administer. Anecdotal evidence suggests that many campus units do not feel that this relationship is equitable and that UC Extension takes a high percentage of fees that are out of proportion to the services it provides. We feel that the revised policy must include further review and clarification of the role of UC Extension for these programs.

More broadly, our committee noted that the revision of the Policy on Self-Supporting Degree Programs is only the most recent of a steady stream of policies and reports that have been put before the FECs in the past few quarters, which revolve around the relationship between curricular and program issues and various strategies to cut costs and generate revenues. These include a number of proposals relating to on-line and remote instruction; the Anderson School proposal for self-sufficiency; and issues of graduate and undergraduate professional degree fees. With these policies and reports, we have been asked to comment piecemeal over months on what are, in fact, core issues of the purpose and structure of the UC system, which is being transformed bit by bit from a public university system into an increasingly privatized collection of programs existing under very different economic and institutional conditions. The fragmentary nature of our review of this transformation may be not only a symptom of the fragmentation of the UC system; it also may be enabling that fragmentation. This transformation raises fundamental issues of pedagogy, including the integrity of degrees, the identity of departments, schools, and the university itself, as well as of the ethics of faculty engagement with students both in class and on-line. The SOAA FEC suggests that the Academic Senate initiate a more holistic discussion about these changes that will establish the long-term goal of maintaining the University of California as an integrated public university system that is the greatest institution of higher education in the world.
January 3, 2011

To: Ann Karagozian, Chair
UCLA Academic Senate

From: Raymond Knapp, Chair
UCLA College Faculty Executive Committee

Re: College FEC response to the “Review of Policy on Self-Supporting Part-Time Graduate Professional Degree Programs”

Thank you on behalf of the College Faculty Executive Committee for the opportunity to review and opine on the Academic Council’s proposal to revise the Policy on Self-Supporting Part-Time Graduate Professional Degree Programs. We discussed the proposal at our November 19, 2010 meeting after Professor Steven Nelson, Chair of the Graduate Council, introduced the proposal and offered background. On December 9, 2010, a formal vote to endorse the comments of this letter was conducted electronically (11 approve, 0 oppose, 1 abstain). The following summarizes the FEC’s concerns and attempts to capture the tone of our discussion. At present, the FEC cannot endorse the revisions to the policy unless the following issues are addressed:

1. The list of four criteria (see Section 2A) for identifying graduate programs that would be eligible to operate under a self-supporting model confuses the perceived need for the program (criteria one and two) with method or style of instruction (criteria three and four). As written, the mode of delivery stands on an equal footing with the need for a program, which should be given priority; moreover, the proposed policy leaves open the possibility that any graduate program—regardless of academic benefit or style of instruction—could be offered under a self-supporting model.

2. The revised policy must clearly address the larger philosophical question of whether a part-time self-supporting graduate program is curricularly the same, albeit pedagogically different, from a regular, full-time graduate program, or if not, is the part-time self-supporting graduate program fulfilling an unmet academic need. This is particularly important when programs seek to identify transfer opportunities and/or cross-enrollment paths between programs (see Section 2C).

3. Self-supporting programs that operate under an “alternative schedule” and do not align with the current academic calendar will negatively affect student eligibility for campus services, medical insurance, and liability coverage. Moreover, non-conforming calendar programs will create problems with visa compliance, payment and academic deadlines, certification for VA benefits, grade collection and degree awarding. The FEC recommends all self-supporting graduate programs be required to conform to the academic calendar of the University, or if not, impact statements be obtained from administrative offices on campus that provide critical student services (e.g. Registrars Office, Financial Aid Office, Ashe Center, Dashew Center for International Students and Scholars, etc.).
4. While the proposed revisions state "regular and self-supporting programs must separately account for their resources," the FEC would like clarification regarding what administrative entity would be responsible for monitoring how programs keep state-support and self-supporting funds separate (if this is indeed possible). If the responsibility resides at the departmental level, the policy must articulate a set of guidelines or principles that direct departments to develop a self-audit/compliance capability. The FEC believes it is critical that self-supporting graduate programs do not place state-funded programs at risk.

5. The proposed revised policy states "self-supporting programs should be established by academic departments and staffed with ladder-rank faculty on the same basis as state-supported programs" (see Section 2C). The requirement that ladder-rank faculty be involved in the instruction of self-supporting programs is laudable, but it seems likely there will be an adverse effect on state-supported programs. For example, if departments choose to mount courses on an overload teaching schedule, the question of sustainability arises. Or, if departments hire ladder faculty specifically to teach in a self-supporting graduate program, the University runs the risk of becoming the financial guarantor of salaries and benefits should the program fail to reach self-sufficiency or is closed. While the FEC understands that self-supporting programs offer revenue opportunities for departments, we remain concerned about the potential negative impact self-supporting programs will have on graduate and undergraduate instruction.

6. The FEC feels the role of University Extension must be further clarified. Many Senate Regulations governing the administration of graduate programs outline rules concerning enrollment, residency, and scholarship requirements. Moreover, the Graduate Division has established rules about time-to-degree and leaves of absence. If Extension is expected to assist in the administration of self-supporting programs, what are the University’s expectations concerning the enforcement and monitoring of these policies?

7. The FEC understands that systemwide policies are necessarily abstract if they are to have application across campuses; however, the proposed revisions raise serious unanswered questions about the long-term consequences of redefining part-time graduate professional programs to include self-supporting academic programs. Before the FEC can consider the benefits and costs of moving and/or creating graduate programs under a self-supporting model, we must have a clearer understanding about the effects the proposed revisions will have on both graduate and undergraduate degree programs.

Our membership appreciates the consultative process and understands this proposal is a work-in-progress. We welcome an opportunity to opine on future drafts or responses to the issues raised in this letter. In the meantime, you are welcome to contact me at knapp@humnet.ucla.edu with questions. Kyle Stewart McJunkin, Academic Administrator, is also available to assist you and he can be reached at (310) 825-3223 or kmcjunkin@college.ucla.edu.

cc: Jaime Balboa, Chief Administrative Officer, Academic Senate
Lucy Blackmar, Assistant Vice Provost, Undergraduate Education Initiatives
Kyle Cunningham, Senior Policy Analyst, Academic Senate
Jisoo Kim, Principal Policy Analyst, Academic Senate
Linda Mohr, Assistant Chief Administrative Officer, Academic Senate
Steven Nelson, Chair, Graduate Council
Joseph Watson, Chair, Undergraduate Council
Faculty Executive Committee, UCLA School of Theater, Film and Television

January 5, 2011

Ann Karagozian, Chair
Academic Senate Executive Office
University of California, Los Angeles
3125 Murphy Hall
Los Angeles, CA 90095-1408

Dear Ann:

On behalf of our FEC Chair, Joe Olivieri, and as the FEC Coordinator, we wanted to inform you that the FEC’s final response for the proposal paper called “Policy on Self-Supporting Graduate Programs,” was the Committee endorses the policy revisions as written.

If you should have any questions, please feel free to contact me at 310-825-3758. Thank you.

Sincerely,

Michele Medina
TFT’s FEC Coordinator
School of Theater, Film and Television
January 4, 2011

To: Professor Ann Karagozian, Chair
    UCLA Academic Senate

From: Professor Joseph B. Watson, Chair
      UCLA Undergraduate Council

Re: Undergraduate Council Response to the Senate Item for Review: Policy on Self-Supporting Graduate Professional Degree Programs

On behalf of the Undergraduate Council, I am writing to inform you that the Council reviewed and discussed the proposed revision of the 1996 Policy on Self-Supporting Part-Time Graduate Professional Degree Programs and its Implementation Guidelines at the December 3rd meeting and that the Council agreed that the following concerns should be conveyed:

1) It should be ensured that the proposed revision does not dilute state-supported programs in any way by taking away faculty time and commitment.
2) As proposed, self-supporting graduate degree programs would only have to meet one or more of the four criteria listed (See Section II-A-1). Self-supporting graduate programs should require stronger criteria in order to maintain rigor.

The Undergraduate Council thanks you for the opportunity to opine on the proposal. If you have any questions regarding the concerns raised in this letter, please feel free to contact me (x57587; jwatson@mednet.ucla.edu) or Academic Senate Principal Policy Analyst Jisoo Kim (x51194; jkim@senate.ucla.edu).

Cc: Jaime Balboa, Chief Administrative Officer, Academic Senate
    Kyle Cunningham, Senior Policy Analyst, Academic Senate
    Jisoo Kim, Principal Policy Analyst, Academic Senate
    Linda Mohr, Assistant Chief Administrative Officer, Academic Senate
    Steven Nelson, Chair, Graduate Council
January 10, 2011

TO: Executive Committee, UCLA Academic Senate

FROM: Steven P. Wallace, PhD  
Chair, UCLA School of Public Health  
Faculty Executive Committee

RE: Policy on Self-Supporting Part-Time Graduate Professional Degree Programs

Thank you for soliciting our input on the proposal referenced above that Provost Pitts has provided to the Academic Senate for feedback. Overall, our FEC unanimously endorses the document contingent upon the following revisions (6 endorse with revisions, 0 endorse without revisions, 0 opposes policy change):

- Amend II.A.1. The current proposal requires only one of the four criteria to be met. At a minimum, any new degree program should meet criteria a. “fulfill a demonstrated higher education and/or workforce need.” Self-supporting programs should, in addition, meet one of more the other criteria (b-d: non traditional students, alternative delivery mode, alternative schedule).

- Amend II.C.1. The current language allowing courses to enroll both state and fee paying students in the same class at the same time without restriction will be problematic in terms of accounting of state resources. It would make the use of resources more transparent if each campus (or School, or other unit) developed a system of tracking student units to assure that the total units taken cross-type (self-supporting in state-supported and vice versa) balanced within 10% (or similar range) of the number of exchanged units. If there is an imbalance, then the unit should be required to restrict the cross enrollment from the oversubscribed students sufficiently to bring it into balance.

- The role of Academic Senate faculty in the design and oversight of the academic program (admissions, curriculum, etc.) should be made more explicit.
January 19, 2011

Ann Karagozian, Chair
UCLA Academic Senate

Dear Ann,

At its meetings on November 19 and December 10, 2010, the Graduate Council reviewed the revised policy on self-supporting degree programs. As you know, the Council requested an extension of the deadline to respond in order to consider the proposed revisions to the UCOP policy in the context of the recent report of the UCLA Task Force on Self-supporting Degree Programs and Certificate Programs, which it was able to review at its meeting on January 14, 2011. Despite the three occasions for discussion, the Council did not formally vote to endorse the proposed revisions due to the general consensus that policies and procedures for self-supporting programs are currently lacking clear consideration of the potential threat to existing, traditional programs. The Council feels that a much larger philosophical discussion needs to take place concerning the issue, only a piece of which is framed by the revised policy.

The Council’s discussions are summarized below, which raise additional issues to consider as the University moves forward with expanding the policy on self-supporting programs. The Council acknowledges that the policy revisions are in response to the increasing number of inquiries about self-supporting programs and the need for policies to be broad enough to cater to diverse populations and programs. The UCLA Graduate Council has already received a number of these inquiries and is aware of at least one proposal in the College of Letters and Science that will likely be submitted for CCGA review by the end of the academic year.

The Council appreciates being included on the review of these policy revisions, as records show no such request was made before the original policy was implemented in 1996. Although Council members are resistant to expanding self-supporting graduate program offerings, they acknowledge the political and financial motivations of doing so. The Graduate Council is concerned about saturating the market with self-supporting programs and ultimately not being able to maintain the quality of education for which UC is celebrated. Due to such concerns, the Council cautions the administration about the potential for conflicts when encouraging implementation of self-supporting programs in an era where financial motivations may trump academic priorities; such a situation presents a precarious dilemma that calls for an even closer scrutiny of entrepreneurial programs that many in the academic community feel may threaten the foundation of the University of California.

With respect to the revised policy, Council members questioned what was meant by “regular faculty participation” in the self-supporting programs and whether this provision assumes that faculty will be teaching on an overload basis or on a buy-out basis. If the latter, Council registers its concern about the impact this would have on the faculty’s involvement with traditional students and proposes that the policy be more specific about these distinctions. Nonetheless, if the former is the intent, the Council questions the ability of faculty to maintain a long-term commitment to teaching on an overload basis and the potential for negatively impacting both their research and their accessibility by traditional students. In other words, the wider the proliferation of these programs, the less likely faculty are to be able to uphold the status quo, which is already threatened by State budget cuts.

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Additionally, despite the provision that the policy will not apply to PhD Programs, which the Council strongly endorses, there is nothing in the policy that prohibits self-supporting programs from feeding into PhD programs. Council members felt that such a provision should be noted and that self-supporting programs only be approved as terminal degree programs to avoid unnecessary confusion. The Council also felt that any proposal for a new self-supporting program should be able to explicitly identify its target audience and provide clear justification for a “demonstrated need” of the curriculum before it will be given serious consideration. Towards this end, members noted that the policy could provide, or at least recommend, procedural guidelines for proposals, including a provision for a detailed business plan to which the program is to be held accountable. Members commented that the revised provision (II.A.1) is too vague and that self-supporting programs should have a configuration of the stated criteria, as opposed to just one, to ensure stronger differentiations from traditional programs.

Council members also noted that there have been several instances of professional, “part-time” students experiencing difficulties with accessing campus services availed to traditional students that are able to be on campus during normal business hours. In many cases, self-supporting programs will be administered on evenings and weekends, making it seemingly difficult, if not impossible, to provide the same level of services offered to students enrolled in day programs that are conducted during the workweek. On the converse, the revised policy has no provisions for “regular” students interested in courses offered through self-supporting programs. Members expressed concerns about the lack of such a provision and, furthermore, the potential for self-supporting programs to pose a cost barrier for access by regular students. Members noted the multitude of increases in professional school fees in recent years and how such increases may erect prohibitive barriers to lower-income students, especially considering the lack of faculty input with respect to fees charged for self-supporting programs.

Council members noted the provision for UNEX-administered self-supporting programs to require no Senate or UCOP approval of program fees, which struck the Council as being potentially problematic, especially if a program’s motivations are solely financial in nature. Such a situation may encourage excess and discourage access, which defies the tenets on which the University of California was built. Members felt that the policy could be revised to emphasize program revenues’ return-to-aid (in Section II.A.2), as detailed in Section II.G.7. Council members also expressed concerns about UNEX’s role with administering these programs, which it has yet to do at the graduate level at UCLA. Given the number of unknowns about UNEX’s proposed role with these programs, the Graduate Council recommends a collaborative process with UNEX and other administrators to assess the capabilities of UNEX and a clear determination about its role versus the roles of the Graduate Council, Graduate Division and Registrar’s Office with the administration of graduate programs. Council members felt that the policy lacked specificity with respect to oversight of self-supporting programs and that it should explicitly identify the divisional Graduate Council and CCGA as the authorities for approving such programs.

The Council also discussed self-supporting programs at its peer institutions, including Columbia and Penn. The Council noted that these programs carry prestige but that the students are not regarded as highly with respect to their academic qualifications as those in “regular programs.” Graduate Council members acknowledged that such distinctions are currently made at UCLA and that expanding the policy to include MA and MS programs (heretofore considered purely academic programs) will only create more classes of students than already exist, thus compromising the UC’s reputation and the outside perception of the quality of our university’s graduate education.

Last the Council expressed concerns about UCOP’s ability to conduct periodic audits of all self-supporting programs in the UC and recommends formalizing procedures at the divisional level that require reports and detailed budgets on an annual basis to ensure greater oversight and accountability of these budding programs. Given the potential for the proliferation of these programs in the coming years, the Council strongly asserts that financial transparency must be evident in the administration of these programs and that there should be a phase-in period during which time full analyses of a program’s finances should be conducted to ensure that the program’s goals are being met. It purports that approved programs should
be closely monitored during the first years of their existence to ensure that there are no negative impacts on the program’s traditional degree programs. If such impacts are noted, the program should be discontinued immediately.

Please feel free to contact me via the Council’s analyst, Kyle Cunningham, at kcunningham@senate.ucla.edu, if you have any questions or require clarification about this response.

Best regards,

Steven Nelson, Chair
UCLA Graduate Council

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