December 09, 2014

To: Joel Aberbach, Chair
   Academic Senate

From: Council on Academic Personnel


We thank you for the opportunity to opine on the above mentioned report. CAP has no comment at this time.
Dear Colleagues:

The Committee on Continuing and Community Education reviewed the recent report from the joint Senate-Administration task force on UCLA Self-Supporting Degree Programs and discussed the report at our November 13 meeting.

In that the Committee serves as the primary liaison between the Academic Senate and University Extension (UNEX), the Committee considered the report primarily through this lens. In the report, the task force recommends the creation of a support unit for Self-Supporting Degree Programs (SSDPs) and that Extension should be included in such a unit. The Committee, in endorsing the recommendation, believes that the experience and expertise of UNEX in creating sustainable non-degree programs will be a tremendous benefit and should serve as a valuable resource as part of such a support unit.

The Committee believes that the report provided an excellent picture of the range of experiences with SSDPs across campus. While the report mentions that secondary support services have to be part of the revenue equation (p.14), the Committee would have liked to see discussion and with respect to the size and proportion of these support services, which is a significant issue given that many departments are not used to running what are essentially self-contained businesses.

Furthermore, it is important to determine in advance whether the market can sustain these programs, and as such the various market, workforce, and higher education needs assessments need to be strengthened, as financial considerations generally end up becoming a major driver of behavior. The report does mention that self-supporting degrees should be responsive to higher education and workforce needs. However, these needs are not included in the list of criteria for approving the degree. Formal market assessments are critical to effectively evaluating whether there will be adequate student demand for a program – for the first year and subsequent years. If this issue is not carefully attended to, many programs may be launched that cannot acquire sufficient enrollments for success. Unfortunately, faculty who are invested in a program idea may be least able to objectively evaluate the marketplace. So, formal market assessments are essential.

On behalf of the Committee on Continuing and Community Education,

Shaily Mahendra
Chair
November 14, 2014

Dear Colleagues:

The Committee on Instruction & Technology has been asked to comment on the recent report from the joint Senate-Administration task force on UCLA Self-Supporting Degree Programs. We discussed this report at our November meeting.

The Committee commends the task force for producing a well-considered and thorough document outlining guidelines for the development, review and assessment of Self-Supporting Degree Programs (SSPs). In our discussions, members noted that the important aspect of technologically mediated instruction, be it through online classes, technology mediated classes, or any number of hybrid modalities that may be employed in these SSPs, did not receive the attention that may be necessary given the strong reliance on these modalities in existing SSPs. Indeed, we note only two mentions of “technology” and “online” in the main document. The important discussion of “online” modalities is largely relegated to appendices. We believe it may be helpful to highlight some of these challenges that are discussed in the appendices in the main body of the document.

We believe that future considerations of the SSPs should take into account the guidance document the CIT is currently developing (currently out for comment at departments) in the context of the role that technology will inevitably play in the instructional landscape of these programs.

On behalf of the Committee on Instruction & Technology,

Timothy R. Tangherlini
Chair
November 25, 2014

Professor Joel Aberbach
Chair, UCLA Academic Senate

Re: Committee on Diversity and Equal Opportunity’s Response to UCLA Self-Supporting Degree Programs

Dear Professor Aberbach,

Per your request The Committee on Diversity and Equal Opportunity discussed the report on Self-Supporting Degree Programs. Our primary concern is the potential for SSDPs to limit access only to those who can afford them. SSDPs must be equally available to all qualified students and practice diversity in enrollment, funding and other issues consistent with campus-wide best practices.

The Task Force recommends that to fall within the safe harbor for affordability, an SSDP proposal should devote at least 5% of total revenues to financial aid. Although, this figure represents twice the current average SSDP return to aid, CODEO recommends a substantial increase in the 5% return-to-aid benchmark to ensure accessibility and affordability. We see no legitimate reason why SSDPs should be held to a different standard than other units on campus. We urge the task force to seriously consider our recommendation and to explore ways of ensuring SSDPs make every effort at enrolling a diverse student body and holding them accountable if they do not.

In sum, The Committee on Diversity and Equal Opportunity recommends a substantial increase in the 5% return-to-aid benchmark. You are welcome to contact me at mklopez@humnet.ucla.edu with questions. Annie Speights, Policy Analyst, is also available to assistant you and she can be reached at (310) 825-3853 or aspeights@senate.ucla.edu.

Sincerely,

Marissa Lopez,
Chair, Committee on Diversity and Equality Opportunity

cc: Members of the Committee on Diversity and Equal Opportunity
    Linda Mohr, CAO, Academic Senate
    Serge Chenkerian, MSO/Executive Assistant, Academic Senate
    Annie Speights, Policy Analyst, Committee on Diversity and Equal Opportunity
December 4, 2014

Joel Aberbach  
Chair, Academic Senate

Re: UCLA Self-Supporting Degree Programs

Dear Professor Aberbach,

On behalf of the 2014-2015 Committee on Library and Scholarly Communication, I am writing to provide you with the membership’s feedback concerning the UCLA Self-Supporting Degree Programs. The committee has no comment on the report. We thank you for the opportunity to comment.

Sincerely,

David Sabeen  
Chair, Committee on Library and Scholarly Communication

cc:   Leo Estrada, Vice Chair, Academic Senate Office  
Jan Reiff, Immediate Past Chair, Academic Senate Office  
Linda Mohr, CAO, Academic Senate  
Elizabeth Feller, Committee Analyst, Committee on Library and Scholarly Communication  
Members of the Committee on Library and Scholarly Communication
Dear Prof. Aberbach,

The Committee on Teaching of the Academic Senate, having been asked to comment on the report on SSDPs, feels obliged to register serious concerns about whether such programs can be counted upon to serve the good of our core teaching mission as a public university without tighter regulation.

Anything that brings financial market forces to bear on educational priorities ought to be treated warily. Sometimes the profit motive actually serves the cause of good public education, but more often (as our colleagues in the UK can testify) it overrides essential values.

The official policy quoted on p. 7 of the report insists that “Such programs should not be undertaken if they strain the resources of the department that sponsors them or have an adverse effect on regular programs on campus.”

The minority report asks whether sufficient guarantees to prevent that adversity are really in place or otherwise required in the majority report. We wonder whether, in some regards, the minority report did not go far enough.

When faculty teach extra courses for extra pay in these add-on programs, whether by free choice or under pressure, the time will surely come from somewhere; and it seems likely to come out of time that might normally be spent on regular students in the pre-SSDP and non-SSDP undergraduate and graduate programs. Furthermore, schools and departments running SSDPs will be inclined to employ their best teachers in those programs, since these programs are the ones that will bring in discretionary funding by enrolling students. So a real if not quantifiable cost is imposed on the state-supported programs. There is also a quantifiable cost when departments and schools (for example, the Economics Department and the Anderson School) compete against each other – which UC has long sought to avoid -- to provide greater overload payments to desirable faculty for their respective SSDPs.

The majority report notes that “provisions in the APM limit the diversion of ladder faculty away from state-supported programs.” Relying on those Academic Personnel Manual rules (which limit overload pay to 20% over normal salary) to prevent such abuses, as that report recommends, seems appealingly simple and principled. But the record suggests that APM regulations have frequently been ignored or circumvented; and in the absence of some new auditing agency, that seems very likely to continue.
Even if the rule were enforced, it seems likely to be evaded through a shell-game of allocated ninths, “one-time payments,” and exceptions granted for “emergency” needs for courses that schools have deliberately made no effort to staff so they could be declared a last-minute emergency for the benefit of favored faculty. This seems to constitute a real threat of corruption – which becomes a concern of the Committee on Teaching when it compromises the pedagogical quality of existing courses, which seem in danger of being newly viewed as an inferior category.

For example, faculty at the Anderson School have reportedly been paid 200% of their salaries for supporting the SSDPs by teaching six rather than their normal three courses. It may be, as the report asserts, that “faculty and administrators report that the introduction of SSDPs has not detracted from the quality of state-supported programs, even where ladder faculty time has been bought out or provided on an overload basis.” But if they have economic and administrative incentives to say so, are we obliged to believe them on this point? How can we be at all confident that the three courses taught in the regular program received the same attention as they did when they were the instructor’s only courses?

The state-supported programs have also been shortchanged by a fiction that Anderson faculty normally teach five courses, so their time was bought out by the SSDPs at 20% of salary rather than the 33% of their teaching that was actually removed from the state-supported program.

The most recent 8-year review of the Department of Economics was extremely concerned about insufficient attention paid to the needs of students. Should they now be creating programs that will draw further attention away from those students?

A further concern for our committee is that, while the report endorses limits on teaching by any individual faculty member, it does not address an SSDP's overall impact on a unit, which will vary greatly by the ratio of the size of the unit to the size of its SSDP.

On a broader scale, the practice of privatizing what can turn a direct profit, while leaving all other functions in the hands of the public, seems ethically dubious enough that it should be closely questioned before welcoming that version of a “tragedy of the commons” into our university as a hierarchy of pedagogical investment.

If there are profits from SSDPs, as certainly there are from business-school programs across the country, those should be used to improve rather than compromise the quality of teaching in the school. When much of that money goes to large overload payments to already well-paid faculty, it is not clear the university is getting the best use of this potential source of cash-flow.

The report suggests a 4-year review period for SSDPs, which is certainly an improvement on the standard 8-year review period. But it is hard to close Pandora’s cash box once it is opened, and hard to imagine a 4-year review closing down a profitable program just because it might marginally have degraded the amount of extra time faculty spend on student needs in the state-supported programs. So the time to insist on adequate protections is now.

Some may conclude that the badly needed income and expanded access these added programs provide are worth the trade-off. But that is not the question facing our committee – and we add that (as in the case of online education) once we begin knowingly compromising educational quality for other goals (including prestige and profit), it will not
be easy to stop. Those who benefit will become dependent, and outside political forces that wish to compromise the independence of UCLA’s curricula will know that an important principle – although one that has understandably long since proven unsustainable in many parts of our south campus – is no longer standing to block their desire to use financial incentives to turn the university into merely one more extension of a self-serving neoliberal economic system.

Given the seemingly inevitable detrimental effect imposed on pedagogy in our state-supported programs by the extra teaching demands of an SSPD program, proposals for new programs should offer a carefully articulated compensating benefit – perhaps a significant portion of the profit – to the unit’s state-supported educational functions. Such compensations, if properly designed and enforced, might serve to make those functions whole again, while removing some of the incentives for choices based in profit rather than pedagogy.

Sincerely,

Rob Watson
Chair, Committee on Teaching

cc: Serge Chenkerian, MSO/Exec. Assistant, Academic Senate
November 20, 2014

Joel Aberbach  
Chair, Academic Senate

Re: Report of the Joint Academic Senate-Administration Task Force on UCLA Self-Supporting Degree Programs (SSDP)

Dear Professor Aberbach,

The Council on Planning and Budget (CPB) invited co-chair of the taskforce, Vice Chancellor Carole Goldberg, to present an overview of the report to the members at its meeting on November 3, 2014. The Council subsequently had a full discussion at its meeting on November 17, 2014. After discussion, the council expressed several concerns.

Many of the faculty felt that the use of the term ‘safe harbor’ is misleading. Though this may be thought of as minimum guidelines for faculty to follow, the term appears to remove the Academic Senate of its purview to review and approve these programs. CPB strongly emphasized that that should not be the case and recommended that this term be replaced with other language. Moreover, no one set of criteria is likely to be relevant for all programs. For one thing, the issues of financial aid and tuition costs are interdependent but related. Some programs, by the nature of their constituencies, will want to provide access through one mechanism more than the other.

Members recommended that the 20% limit on outside activities be emphasized and that 20% is the cap and not the norm. Members questioned to what extent do faculty operate under the 20% rule?

CPB recommends greater transparency in how the profits derived from SSDP’s are utilized. After all, they are not wholly autonomous from the campus as a whole, and their funds are used to fund campus programs, so Senate faculty have some right to be informed about how they are used. To the extent that they affect the distribution of other funds, information about how they benefit the campus should be available.

Is there campus support for an SSDP support unit to assist faculty in preparing proposals? Also, the faculty recommended that the funding for this unit be established in advance of creating the unit. To the extent that there is such support for the unit, what resources will be directed to assist the SSDPs and from whom? Should those who benefit from SSDPs pay a tax to the campus for that purpose?

Thank you for the opportunity to review this proposal. If you have any questions for us, please do not hesitate to contact me at sears@issr.ucla.edu.

Sincerely,

David O. Sears, Chair  
Council on Planning and Budget
cc: Leo Estrada, Vice Chair, Academic Senate
    Jan Reiff, Immediate Past Chair, Academic Senate
    Linda Mohr, Chief Administrative Officer, Academic Senate Office
    Elizabeth Feller, Committee Analyst, Council on Planning and Budget
    Serge Chenkerian, MSO/Executive Assistant, Academic Senate Office
    Members of the Council on Planning and Budget
November 24, 2014

Joel Aberbach, Chair
Academic Senate Los Angeles Division

Re: Report of the Joint Academic Senate-Administration Task Force on UCLA Self-Supporting Degree Programs

Dear Joel,

The Committee on Undergraduate Admissions and Relations with Schools (CUARS), at its meeting on November 14, 2014, discussed the report of the Joint Academic Senate-Administration Task Force on UCLA Self-Supporting Degree Programs (SSDPs). The committee did not have any comment on the report, finding it outside of our purview.

Thank you for the opportunity to review and comment on the report. If you have any questions for us, please do not hesitate to contact me (x53884; hernandez@history.ucla.edu) or Academic Senate Analyst Matt Robinson (x51194; mrobinson@senate.ucla.edu).

Sincerely,

Kelly Lytle-Hernandez, Chair
Committee on Undergraduate Admissions and Relations with Schools

Enclosure

cc: Serge Chenkerian, MSO, Academic Senate
    Linda Mohr, CAO, Academic Senate
    Matt Robinson, Committee Analyst, Academic Senate
UCLA School of Dentistry

December 1, 2014

TO: Professor Joel Aberbach  
Chair, UCLA Academic Senate

FROM: Earl Freymiller  
Chair, Faculty Executive Committee  
School of Dentistry

RE: Report by the Joint Academic Senate and Administration Task Force on UCLA Self-Supporting Degree Programs

The Faculty Executive Committee of the School of Dentistry met to discuss the report on self-supporting degree programs prepared by the joint task force of the Academic Senate and the administration. First, our FEC would like to commend the task force for its in-depth evaluation of the issues, including the detailed background research performed by the task force to evaluate existing programs and to sample the UCLA community’s varied opinions on this important matter. Furthermore, it was refreshing to see that the task force recommended substantive and specific guidelines that might be directly applied when evaluating such programs, either new or existing.

As a school with an existing self-supporting degree program, this report was read with special interest by the members of our FEC. We recall that there was some level of trepidation within our school when our self-supporting degree program was initially proposed by the FEC at a general faculty meeting. However, it is my belief that many of the concerns initially expressed by some faculty members are now greatly diminished if not altogether eliminated after several years of experiencing the program in progress. There was concern about the quality of the applicant pool, and whether the education would be on par with our traditional DDS program. Both concerns appear to have been unfounded, as most faculty members now agree.

Overall, members of the Dental FEC were supportive of the proposed measures to evaluate self-supporting degree programs as outlined by the task force. However, two members of our FEC agreed with the minority report’s recommendation that such programs could be improved if more than 5% of the revenues generated were returned for financial aid. Through the self-supporting degree program in the School of Dentistry, foreign-trained dentists can earn a DDS degree from UCLA. One member of our FEC, a highly respected foreign-trained dentist, pointed out that while this program is quite attractive to international dentists, he himself would not have been eligible for the program based solely on financial considerations. If just 10% were directed to financial aid, our program (with 20 students per year) could offer full scholarships to two additional outstanding international applicant dentists who otherwise would not even consider applying due to their financial situation.

The Dental FEC was in unanimous support of the other guidelines as proposed by the task force.
Hi Linda,

The DGSOM FEC met yesterday evening (12/3) and discussed the "UCLA Self-Supporting Degree Programs: A Report of the Joint Academic Senate-Administration Task Force".

The committee agreed in principle with the report but were uncomfortable with the concept of the "Safe Harbor" and would rather call them "minimal guidelines.

Thank you,

Roberta
December 1, 2014

Professor Joel Aberbach
Chair, UCLA Academic Senate

Re: Committee on Faculty Welfare’s Response to the UCLA Self – Supporting Degree Programs

Dear Professor Aberbach,

On behalf of the 2014-2015 Committee on Faculty Welfare, I am writing to provide you with the membership’s feedback concerning the UCLA Self- Supporting Degree Programs. CFW has no comment on the UCLA Self- Supporting Degree Programs. We thank you for the opportunity to comment.

Sincerely,

David Lopez
Chair, Committee on Faculty Welfare

cc: Members of the Committee on Faculty Welfare
    Linda Mohr, CAO, Academic Senate
    Serge Chenkerian, MSO/Executive Assistant, Academic Senate
    Annie Speights, Policy Analyst, Committee on Faculty Welfare
December 1, 2014

To: Joel Aberbach, Chair
   Academic Senate

From: Alex Bui, Chair
   Graduate Council

Re: UCLA SSDP Task Force Report

At its meeting on October 31, 2014, the Graduate Council reviewed and discussed the report of the joint Academic Senate-Administration task force on self-supporting degree programs (SSDP). We invited task force member Professor John Carriero to present the report, as he is a recent former member of the Graduate Council; we are also fortunate to have Professor Wendie Robbins serving as a member of the Council, who also served as a member of the task force. It bears noting that both were the only signatories on the minority report, but for reasons with which the majority of council members support.

Professor Carriero provided a brief background for the formation of the task force, which stemmed directly from the 2012 proposal from the Anderson Graduate School of Management to convert its regular Master of Business Administration to self-supporting status, which was ultimately opposed by the Graduate Council following very lengthy deliberations. This decision was appealed by a contingency of Anderson faculty, an appeal that was upheld by the Legislative Assembly, and the proposal was ultimately approved by the UC Office of the President. Given the unrest created by the ultimate reversal of Graduate Council’s decision, and the passion with which faculty spoke on the issue on both sides of the argument, the Senate and Administration formed the task force.

Council members appreciate the time and energy expended by the Academic Senate and Administration to address this issue at the divisional level given the number of proposals put before – and coming before – the Graduate Council for self-supporting graduate degree programs. As the “final” stage of divisional approval, the Graduate Council – and its Committee on Degree Programs – has grappled with the review of several SSDP proposals due largely in part to the unknown impact of the proposed programs on existing UCLA graduate programs, especially with respect to maintaining their excellence; and the evolution of UC policy, seeing two revised policies since 2009 and another revised policy about to be implemented. All of these factors, plus the push from Administration for programs to consider creating revenue-generating enterprises, have made for confusion and caution in the Council’s consideration of SSDPs.

Carriero explained that the task force adopted three core values with respect to UCLA degree programs, in general: 1) a commitment to excellence; 2) affordability and access; and 3) promotion of diversity; the latter two being at the core of the mission of any public institution. The task force agreed that any SSDP should advance at least one of these core values and be consistent with all of them. Members support all of the cited core values, but do not feel that the report goes far enough in protecting them. Moreover, the use of the term “safe harbor” should be removed from subsequent statements on policy, as it may lead some SSDP proposers to assume that meeting such a “baseline” standard is grounds for de facto approval by the Graduate Council: ultimately, such responsibility and approval is at the discretion of the Academic Senate, and the Graduate Council in particular, in order to ensure the quality of any graduate degree program offered at UCLA.

For example, the proposed 5% return-to-aid seems low and determined by the assumption that students in self-supporting degree programs are not financially needy. However, to what extent did the task force investigate this
assumption? Members feel that, in principle, every program should have, at the bare minimum, a portal for students to apply for financial support, and certainly if a program generates significant revenue. All programs, no matter their primary target audience, should be actively considering students from modest and diverse backgrounds. Towards this end, members also felt that there needs to be more transparency about how SSDP revenues are used as the indirect benefits of SSDPs to the general campus can be difficult to measure, thus making accountability difficult to assess. Members inquired if the task force discussed revenue-sharing across units and whether the campus administration would consider a “tax” on SSDPs to help support and supplement predominantly state-funded units. Inevitably, the further development of SSDPs will detract from other pedagogical programs, so the faculty (and administration) really ought to have a better sense of the benefit of these programs to the general campus. Members felt that the guidelines should specify if and how courses within a SSDP are exclusive to SSDP students, or would/could be open to state-funded students (and vice versa, with respect to state-funded program courses and their availability to SSDP students). Graduate student representatives on the Council expressed interest in taking some applied courses that may only currently be offered to SSDP students.

With respect to financial viability, members inquired about the process for discontinuing SSDPs that are not viable after three years and whether this would be an administrative action or require formal Senate involvement via the divisional Appendix V procedures. It is unclear to what extent the Graduate Council with its authority over graduate curricula should be involved in a SSDP that is simply not covering its expenses. As the campus forms a final set of policies towards SSDPs, we recommend that clear guidelines be in place for the discontinuance of such programs, considering both fiscal and academic issues.

I wish to emphasize that the Council appreciates the Senate and Administration’s attention to providing more guidance with respect to developing, reviewing and implementing SSDPs. No doubt this is a new era for the UC, to which we all must naturally adapt, but the Senate must continue its role in ensuring the quality of academic programs while maintaining its commitment to public education.

If you have any questions please do not hesitate to contact me via the Graduate Council’s committee analyst, Kyle Cunningham, at ext. 51162 or kcunningham@senate.ucla.edu.

Thank you for the opportunity to opine on this matter.

Cc: Serge Chenkerian, MSO, Academic Senate
Kyle Cunningham, Principal Committee Analyst, Graduate Council
Robin Garrell, Dean/Vice Provost, Graduate Division
Linda Mohr, CAO, Academic Senate
The original UC policy on self-supporting degree programs (SSDPs) was established in 1979 “. . . to extend the opportunity for professional education of a quality equal to that offered in State budgeted programs to those who need to continue their employment while studying.” A revision in 1996 specified that 1) programs had to be financially self-supporting, and 2) allowed for the expansion of SSDPs to allow self-supporting masters level degrees in non-professional fields with the Masters of Advance Studies degree. Further revisions in 2011 emphasized that SSDPs “have the potential to generate resources that would enhance the quality, access, and affordability of core academic programs and departments.”

This Task Force was asked to address the following questions.

1. “Mission: What should be the academic and financial mission of SSPs, and how should it relate to UCLA’s overarching commitment to public education?
2. Criteria: What criteria should be used to create new SSPs, to convert existing statesupported programs to SSPs, and to review SSPs? Keeping in mind that UC policy prohibits self-supporting doctoral programs, what academic as well as financial factors should be considered to determine if an existing master’s program is a good candidate for conversion to an SSP or if a new program is a good candidate for establishment as an SSP? What criteria should be used in the periodic review of existing SSPs?
3. Roles and responsibilities: In light of the Senate and administration’s responsibilities under shared governance, what are their respective roles in establishing and reviewing SSPs? How can the Senate and administration best work together in this enterprise? What are the academic implications of different financial arrangements?
4. Ensuring a positive contribution: What procedures or guiding principles should be established to ensure that self-supporting programs contribute positively to UCLA both financially and academically? Self-supporting programs may have unintended adverse effects such as conflicts of commitment for faculty between teaching in SSPs and core academic programs. How are the potential adverse effects of SSPs best managed? Successful SSPs may generate income in excess of full-cost reimbursement. How should SSP income in excess of cost be used?” (page 3)

“This review employed several strategies, including an examination of financial data and Senate reviews, and structured interviews with SSDP administrators (including Program Directors, Deans, Associate Deans) and FEC Chairs at participating schools. The assessment of campus views was conducted via a questionnaire survey of faculty and administrators in key governance positions, such as Deans, department chairs, Faculty Executive Committee members, Academic Senate Executive Board members, and members of the Graduate Council.” (page 4)

Interviews were conducted with persons affiliated with SSDPs in dentistry, law, education, engineering, public health, arts and architecture, and the Anderson School. The FSPH has two SSDPs, one in CHS and one in HPM. According to Appendix E, Jack Needleman and the FEC were interviewed, and Mike Prelip and Mike Collins were interviewed; the latter two represented the two programs.
Fifty-eight questionnaires apparently were returned, but no information is provided about how many were distributed. Using a 7-point bipolar ranking, a set of 12 questions were asked about benefits, and 14 questions were asked about concerns. A summary score was created where concerns were subtracted from benefits. A table in Appendix E lists these scores for each respondent by department. That table suggests that questionnaires were either differentially distributed or differentially returned across department, with 6 from arts and architecture, 5 from engineering, and 4 from nursing, but only 2 from public health. Thus, it is hard to know who the survey results represent. The range of summary scores goes from a high of +5.2 to a low of -5.1, with 26 scores above zero and 31 scores below zero.

Recommendations and Observations

The Task Force makes the following recommendations and observations.

1. As regards the suitable criteria for developing and reviewing SSDPs they borrow the legal concept of a “safe harbor” which “when certain minimum elements are evident in a proposal or in review materials, that the SSDP in question meets the basic campus expectations for a SSDP, it will be approved. Variance from the safe harbor standard does not automatically disqualify a proposal. (page 5)
2. A support unit should be formed and/or identified for SSDPs.
3. New SSDPs should be subject to a mid-cycle Internal Program Review by the Academic Senate after their first four years rather than waiting for the normal eight year review.
4. Faculty attitudes toward SSDPs are highly polarized. Faculty from from campus units that arguably are most naturally suited to launching them (professional schools) are more favorable, while those from other campus units are more skeptical.” (page 9) **The survey data do not, in my opinion, support this conclusion.**
5. Although charged with it, the Task Force did not address the question of converting existing state-supported programs to SSDPs, finding it too complicated to address.
6. “A proposal will satisfy the standard of academic quality [in admissions] if it makes clear that the means used by the SSDP to measure academic quality are reasonable, and that the overall academic quality of students and their progress to degree are comparable to those of state-supported programs.” (page 11)
7. To fall within the safe harbor for faculty composition, an SSDP proposal should indicate that its faculty departs by no more than 20% from the ratio of Senate to non-Senate faculty serving the state supported programs in that department. Thus, for example, if a department uses 80% Senate faculty to teach in its state-supported programs, that department’s SSDP proposal should provide for 64% or more Senate faculty (subtracting 20% of 80%). Page 11-12
8. Add an appendix to the CALL that makes it clear what the teaching limits are which are currently scattered across APM 025 and APM 662, e.g., overload limits and 120% salary limitation.
9. At least 5% of total revenues should be devoted to financial aid.
10. SSDPs may not utilize state funds and are expected to run in the black, eventually producing surplus funds. (page 14)
11. Surplus revenues produced by the SSDP should provide a benefit beyond the SSDP itself, primarily to the unit that developed the SSDP. (page 14)
12. As with any curricular proposal, an SSDP must first come from the faculty. (page 15)

Minority Report

John Carriero (Philosophy) and Wendie Robbins (Nursing and EHS) filed a Minority Report.
1. The recommendation that the safe harbor benchmark for return to aid (financial aid for students) be set at 5% of revenues insufficiently reflects the core values of affordability and access. The Majority Report observes that the standard for return to aid in state-supported programs is 33% of new tuition and fee revenue, it moves briskly from there to the recommendation that it be set at 5%. Note: 33% of differential fees in the professional schools have to be returned to financial aid.

2. The recommendations are inadequate in terms of oversight. First, relying on a new Appendix in the CALL is insufficient for monitoring teaching overloads and how they draw from state supported programs. Second, there is a need for greater transparency and accountability in terms of how self-supporting degree program revenues, especially their profits, are used. And, third, given changes in the market, mid-cycle reviews should be conducted beyond the first eight years, with the possibility of waiving them in exceptional cases.

My suggested observations and recommendations

1. Since there is no summary it is difficult to “fish out” the recommendations from the text of the report.
2. I am of mixed mind regarding the use of the “safe harbor” construct to evaluate the different aspects of the self-supporting degree programs. The Minority Report also raises questions about it. Recommendation 1.
3. I support the development of a central support unit for SSDPs. Recommendation 2.
4. I support the use of mid-cycle 4-year reviews for new SSDPs (Recommendation 3), but I also note the Minority Report’s recommendation that reviews in general should be more frequent than every 8 years. Recommendation 3.
5. I agree that the faculty who completed questionnaires are polarized, but I disagree with the interpretations of the data that are made. Overall the report tends to emphasize faculty attitudes about benefits rather than concerns about costs. Recommendation 4.
6. I think that admissions to SSDPs should be more closely monitored than what the Task Force recommends under their “safe harbor” concept. Recommendation 6.
7. I support the addition of a new Appendix to the CALL, but I agree with the Minority Report that this is not sufficient for monitoring overload teaching and the potential for hurting state supported programs. Recommendation 8.
8. In my opinion, the recommendation that a minimum of 5% be devoted to financial aid is way too low. One of the current pressures is to transfer state supported programs into SSDPs. That would mean our MS degrees. While the 33% of differential fees that must be allocated to financial aid may be too high a threshold, I agree with the Minority Report that 5% is way too low, and the fact that only 2.5% is currently being allocated to financial assistance is outrageous. Recommendation 9.
10. I strongly support the recommendation that benefits should be primarily to the unit that developed and runs the SSDP. This is not given enough attention by the Task Force. Recommendation 11.
11. I strongly support the Minority Report’s call for greater transparency and accountability in terms of how self-supporting degree program revenues, especially their profits, are used.
MEMO

Date     December 10, 2014
From     Rodney McMillian, Chair, Faculty Executive Committee
          School of the Arts and Architecture
To       Joel Aberbach, UCLA Academic Senate Chair
RE       Self-Supporting Professional Degree Programs: A Report of
          the Joint Academic Senate-Administration Task Force

The Faculty Executive Committee of the School of the Arts and Architecture reviewed the UCLA Self-Supporting Professional Degree Programs report at our November 21st meeting. The report addressed some of the concerns our committee raised in a January 17, 2014 memo RE: UCLA Self-Supporting Graduate Degree Programs. However, there were additional questions we had about this report that echoed our previous concerns. Additionally, issues that the SOAA discussed were based on experiences with SSDP programs that the Architecture and Urban Design Department has experienced firsthand.

The report stated that the UCLA and UCOP Administration are expected to bear the responsibility for any financial shortcomings a self-supporting degree program may experience. However, the report does not specify which funds are designated or responsible for all costs of phasing out a failed program.

In the January memo, the FEC expressed concerns that the policy did not inspire confidence that the diversity which UC aspires to will be achieved and fully supported. There were no structures in place to require a percentage of raised funds to assist financially disadvantaged students. We also noted that there was no incentive or proactive mechanism to admit students who need financial support. We feared that policy could, and would likely, exclude students based on class, race, nationality and ethnicity unless there was a committed source of state and/or private funds to offer qualified students’ full participation.
We view the proposed 5% financial aid fee as a step in the right direction though admittedly it is far below the 33% allotment as noted in the Minority Report. The FEC agrees that startup costs associated with new programs makes a higher percentage to financial aid unrealistic. The FEC is also concerned that the financial aid fee of 5% would be onerous for programs in their early stages. We propose that the financial aid fee of 5% be calculated in relation to the profitability of the program, i.e. charged as a percentage of net profit, rather than at the fixed rate of 5% of revenue. This would offer programs like the Architecture and Urban Design M.Arch II SSDP the opportunity to invest in startup costs including a separate facility and then slowly as enrollment and profitability grows, to contribute accordingly to financial aid. This approach allows programs to contribute to the affordability of all SSDP programs in proportion to their profitability while taking into account the very different markets each program responds to and the variable costs associated with each SSDP.

Currently the Department of Architecture and Urban Design at UCLA allocates approximately 5% to student aid and recruitment as requested by the University during program formation. Is this allocation the same or is it an additional allocation? Will this 5% charge back stay in department hands to be distributed to our SSDP admits or will this go to a university-controlled fund? This is unclear in the task force report.

Lastly, the FEC is concerned that the period for program review appears to be discretionary. While the initial mid-cycle review was supported by the committee, a discretionary review period was not. The FEC supports an eight year review cycle with earlier review periods reserved for exceptional cases only.
November 21, 2014

Joel Aberbach, Chair
Academic Senate Los Angeles Division

Re: Report of the Joint Academic Senate-Administration Task Force on UCLA Self-Supporting Degree Programs

Dear Joel,

The Undergraduate Council, at its meeting on November 7, 2014, discussed the report of the Joint Academic Senate-Administration Task Force on UCLA Self-Supporting Degree Programs (SSDPs). In general the council found the issue of self-supporting degree programs not germane to undergraduate education. Members did wish to stress their agreement with the report’s recommendation that mid-cycle and 8-year reviews of SSDPs assess any unintended adverse effects the programs may have, especially conflict of commitment for faculty teaching in both the SSDP and state-supported programs.

Thank you for the opportunity to review and comment on the report. If you have any questions for us, please do not hesitate to contact me (x69449; jwg@chem.ucla.edu) or Undergraduate Council Committee Analyst, Matt Robinson (x51194; mrobinson@senate.ucla.edu).

Sincerely,

Jim Gober, Chair
Undergraduate Council

cc: Serge Chenkerian, MSO, Academic Senate
    Linda Mohr, CAO, Academic Senate
    Matt Robinson, Committee Analyst, Academic Senate
February 19, 2015

MEMORANDUM

To: Prof. Joel Aberbach, Academic Senate Chair  
From: Prof. Leah Lievrouw, Chair, GSE&IS FEC

Subject: Task Force Report on Self-Supporting Degree Programs

CC: Serge Chenkerian, MSO/Executive Assistant, Academic Senate

At its meeting on November 20, 2014, the GSE&IS FEC discussed the Joint Academic Senate-Administration Task Force Report on UCLA Self-Supporting Degree Programs, for which the Senate requested FEC comment. Given GSE&IS's long experience with one of the first such programs on campus (the Ed.D. in Educational Leadership), the Report generated a vigorous discussion. Members supported the Report's emphasis on academic values and the need to insure that SSDPs do not create perverse incentives for faculty, divert resources from regular academic courses and programs, and that they genuinely serve communities and learners who would otherwise face access and affordability barriers to postgraduate study.

Nonetheless, the general sense of the FEC was that the Report's recommendations were too prescriptive, or as Associate Dean for Academic Affairs Pat McDonough put it, "prematurely over-regulated," and do not sufficiently take into account the experience of established programs like the one in GSE&IS, which serve different communities and cannot assume the same revenue streams as programs run by Engineering or the Anderson School, for example. On the issue of access, several members expressed more agreement with the Minority Report section of the Report (pp. 18-21) than with the Majority Report. Education Department Chair Louis Gomez observed that the Report highlights the fact that the "market space" for such programs is undergoing rapid change, that traditional academic institutions like UCLA face increasing competition from other institutions and private-sector firms, and that the University should be encouraging innovative approaches rather than locking in standard programmatic models.
Some members pointed out that although the proposed SSDP policies are designed with professional Master's degrees in mind, their applicability or relevance to professional doctoral degrees like the Ed.D. (which remains the sole doctoral-level SSDP on campus) is questionable. Nor does the Report suggest how the GSE&IS program, in operation for over 20 years, might be "grandfathered" in, in its existing form, rather than subject to new, possibly inappropriate, evaluative standards. Members criticized the proposed criteria for the ratio of ladder to non-ladder faculty in SSDPs as unworkable or unrealistic. Others noted that the Report did not provide enough detail about the business models of existing SSDPs to evaluate which models might be useful or robust (one called the business models "black boxed"). The Report's discussion of pricing, funding, and return-to-aid standards, some felt, was designed more to maximize revenue streams and "discretionary" funding for units and the administration, than to maximize student support and participation in SSDPs; several members suggested that the administration should make seed funding available for startup programs. McDonough remarked that the fact that the administration has never provided guidance for Schools who wish to establish endowments for the non-university revenues generated by SSDPs, while such programs also face regular pressure from the administration to raise their rates, suggests that administrators may not want to encourage units to set aside and invest such funds back into their SSDPs. Members also observed that it is probably unrealistic to expect new programs to stabilize their pricing and revenue models within the four-year time frame recommended for initial program review; based on the GSE&IS experience, it can take a number of years to analyze costs and set rates appropriately.

The FEC recommended that in preparing this response to the Senate, Lievrouw should also consult with Prof. Linda Rose, current Director of the Educational Leadership Program (which houses the Ed.D. self-supporting degree program), for her comments or feedback. Prof. Rose noted several points. First, she agreed with Associate Dean McDonough that there should be a "grandfather" procedure for the Ed.D. program's established policies and procedures. Second, she emphasized the necessity of maintaining affordability and access to ELP; its over 350 students and alumni have helped UCLA meet critical workforce needs in education locally and nationally. ELP's students and graduates have leading positions in schools, school districts, community colleges, and four-year colleges, as well as innovative technology and education ventures outside traditional institutions. Its continued leadership, Prof. Rose said, depends on keeping tuition as low as possible, since many of its current and prospective students are not employed in high-paying institutions. In line with its mission and prospective student pool, ELP returns a greater percentage of its revenue to student financial aid than any other SSDP on campus except the LL.M. program, and actively raises scholarship funds from its alumni, as well as foundations and individual donors. Third, Prof. Rose stressed that professional (temporary, adjunct) faculty are as essential to the success of the Ed.D. program in Educational Leadership as regular ladder faculty, and that the applied experience of practitioners in dealing with everyday classroom and management challenges is as important for successful graduates as the mastery of research and scholarship. Prof. Rose suggested that the proportions of ladder to non-ladder faculty specified as standards in the Report (i.e., the recommendation that the ratio of non-ladder to ladder faculty should not vary more than 20% from the ratio of regular state-funded degree programs) may not be realistic or desirable for programs that must draw on the expertise of active professionals to train top students.

We hope these comments are helpful as deliberations on SSDPs continue. Although the Senate requested feedback by early December, the busy end of the Fall quarter (including a long list of other Senate matters requiring FEC attention), the holiday break, and the additional time needed to consult with colleagues and staff directly involved in the GSE&IS SSDP, delayed this response. We hope it is still helpful.