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February 26, 2008

Professor Michael Brown
Chair of the Academic Council
1111 Franklin Street, 12th Floor
Oakland, CA 94607

In Re: Review of the Role of Graduate Students in University Instruction

Dear Michael,

Thank you for the opportunity to review the proposed legislation to amend SR 750 and APM-410-4a and 4b. These proposals were thoroughly reviewed by the Graduate Council, Undergraduate Council, and the Executive Board of the UCLA Division as part of the initial review of the Report on the Role of Graduate Students in University Instruction during the 2006-07 Academic Year. As you may recall, the UCLA Division then registered its unequivocal opposition to the proposal as written. However, since then, UCEP and CCGA have significantly revised the proposal to meet the concerns raised by UCLA, which I believe are sufficient to offset the objections then raised.

Chair Shetty stated, and I reiterate, that while other divisions may indeed struggle with the problems outlined by the original proposal, UCLA does not. I am pleased, therefore, that CCGA and UCEP made the revisions necessary to allow for Divisional autonomy on the implementation and regulation of the role of graduate students in instruction. For example, UCLA has already developed and implemented clearly articulated titles and requirements for the Appointment of Apprentice Academic Personnel, to which we strictly adhere. The proposal indicates that campus equivalent titles may be used and that these will be "formally defined in the individual campuses bargaining agreements" (page 6).

This is a critical improvement from the UCLA perspective. Chief among the objections to the previous proposal was the assessment that it would greatly disrupt UCLA's policies and procedures, and the carefully negotiated understanding with UAW/SAGE. As the report now indicates, "The regulations and guidelines that comprise this proposal are designed to provide appropriate system-wide norms for the delivery of instruction by graduate students, while providing flexibility for individual campuses and departments to meet these norms in the manner most appropriate to their circumstances and cultures" (page 6).

UCLA also raised the concern that, by eliminating the distinction between upper and lower division courses, graduate students would then be allowed to instruct other graduate students. This raised a number of issues, not the least of which was the inherent conflict of interest. I am pleased that the new proposal allows that “it is within the purview of the divisional Senates to apply” a prohibition on graduate students instructing their peers (page 8).

Please do not hesitate to contact me if I can be of further assistance.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Elizabeth L. Bjork". The signature is written in black ink on a light-colored background.

Elizabeth Ligon Bjork
Chair, UCLA Academic Senate

Cc: Maria Bertero-Barcelo, Executive Director and Chief of Staff, Academic Council
Jaime R. Balboa, Ph.D., Chief Administrative Officer, UCLA Academic Senate