Communication from Task Force Reviewing Joint University-wide Committee on Educational Policy (UCEP) and Coordinating Council on Graduate Affairs (CCGA) Proposal on the Role of Graduate Students in University Instruction

Henry Sanchez, MD, Chair

December 1, 2006

Deborah Greenspan, DSc, BDS
Chair, UCSF Academic Senate
Office of the Academic Senate, Box 0764

RE: Suggestions for Divisional Response to the Proposal on the Role of Graduate Students in University Instruction

Dear Chair Greenspan:

The Task Force to Review and Recommend Comment to the Joint Universitywide Committee on Educational Policy (UCEP) and Coordinating Council on Graduate Affairs (CCGA) Proposal on the Role of Graduate Students in University Instruction, consisting of one member of the Committee on Educational Policy (Chair), one member of the Graduate Council, one member of the Committee on Academic Planning and Budget, and representatives of the Faculty Councils of the Schools of Dentistry, Medicine, Nursing and Pharmacy met to review the Proposal and to suggest a possible response from the San Francisco Division.

The Task Force supports the effort to clarify and strengthen the role of Graduate Students within the University of California by creating a uniform policy across campuses. This Proposal is an important step toward this goal, however, we are concerned that Graduate Students should receive adequate oversight, supervision and support while teaching at the University. To that end, we make the following recommendations for the response from the San Francisco Division:

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. The document should clearly define the faculty role in supporting Graduate Students in University Instruction, ensuring that the language is consistent throughout the document.
2. The document should include a process for faculty to record their supervision of the Graduate Student in their role as an instructor.
3. The document should delineate Graduate Student teaching responsibilities in their capacities as Graduate Teaching Assistants or Graduate Teaching Fellows.
4. The document should include a method to list both the Instructor of Record and the Graduate Teaching Assistant in the Course Catalog to prevent a misrepresentation of the actual instructor of the course to potential students.

5. The document should clearly differentiate the responsibilities for grading and entering student grades, particularly between the Graduate Teaching Assistant and Graduate Teaching Fellow categories.

6. The document should clarify that the Instructor of Record will have ultimate responsibility for the student grades.

7. The document should clearly state that Post-Doctoral Fellows may not supervise a Graduate Teaching Fellow as the Instructor of Record.

8. The document should clearly state that the Academic Senate Divisions should not be able to override the need for faculty supervision of the Graduate Teaching Assistants and Graduate Teaching Fellows.

9. The document should define how the University should act if a Graduate Student becomes a Graduate Teaching Fellow without the specified qualifications.

To better understand the proposed changes, we also recommend generating a table to compare and contrast the existing criteria for Teaching Assistants and Graduate Student Instructors with the proposed criteria for the Graduate Teaching Assistant and Graduate Teaching Fellow categories.

We recognize the importance of training Graduate Students as future academicians. To support both Graduate Students and Faculty Members in this process, it is essential to create a clear and uniform policy for Graduate Students in university instruction. We hope that the suggestions presented here will help strengthen the proposed document.

Sincerely,

Task Force Reviewing and Recommending Comment to the Joint Universitywide Committee on Educational Policy (UCEP) and Coordinating Council on Graduate Affairs (CCGA) Proposal on the Role of Graduate Students in University Instruction
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