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University of California
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May 6, 2008

WYATT R. HUME PROVOST AND CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER

Re: “Proposal for Modified Regulations and Guidelines Governing the Participation of Graduate Students in Delivering University Instruction,” Including Proposed Modifications to the Academic Personnel Manual APM-410-4a, -4b, and -20a

Dear Rory:

At its April 23, 2008 meeting, Academic Council endorsed the enclosed memo, “Proposal for Modified Regulations and Guidelines Governing the Participation of Graduate Students in Delivering University Instruction,” which was submitted by the Coordinating Committee of Graduate Affairs (CCGA) and the University Committee on Educational Policy (UCEP). Council is also proposing modifications to the Academic Personnel Manual, APM-410-4a, -4b, and -20a. In doing so, Council applauds CCGA and UCEP for making faculty mentoring a clear part of a graduate student teaching assignment. The memo also retains the traditional Divisional Senate approval mechanism over graduate student instructors (GSIs) teaching upper-division undergraduate courses. It should be noted further, however, that this memo expressly allows Divisions from establishing even more stringent requirements for Senate review of graduate students teaching undergraduate courses (e.g., GSIs teaching lower-division courses).

Regarding the Academic Personnel Manual, APM-410-4a, -4b, and -20a, the endorsed memo proposes a few modifications. First, regarding APM-410-4a and -4b, it proposes to remove the modifier ‘regular’ for faculty to make it consistent with SR 750. By removing ‘regular,’ the proposed language allows all faculty who are qualified to act as instructors of record to supervise graduate teaching assistants. Regarding APM-410-20a, which describes the working conditions for employment for teaching assistants, Council requests that it be changed in order to align it with the ideas expressed in this memo. The language being proposed would relieve the restriction on teaching the entire enrollment of a class, while retaining the requirement that the class and its evaluative rubrics be designed, closely overseen, and largely delivered by a faculty member.

In closing, the Academic Council endorses the enclosed memo and the proposed changes to the Academic Personnel Manual. Thank you for your efforts to work with us in this important task of having the Academic Personnel Manual accurately convey our values and expectations as a University. Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Michael".

Michael T. Brown, Chair
Academic Council

Copy: Academic Council
María Bertero-Barceló, Executive Director

Encl: 2

**PROPOSAL FOR MODIFIED REGULATIONS AND GUIDELINES
GOVERNING THE PARTICIPATION OF GRADUATE STUDENTS IN
DELIVERING UNIVERSITY INSTRUCTION**

**COORDINATING COMMITTEE ON GRADUATE AFFAIRS
UNIVERSITY COMMITTEE ON EDUCATIONAL POLICY**

ENDORSED BY ACADEMIC COUNCIL ON APRIL 23, 2008

Teaching lies at the heart of the mission of the University of California. Over the years, UC has amassed an exemplary record in the development of the scholarship of its undergraduate and graduate students, as well as in their specific preparation for a large number of intellectually demanding and beneficial careers. Both UCEP and CCGA affirm that the use of graduate students in the instruction of classes at UC has been an essential component of UC's success in the delivery of a high-quality education to its students. This contribution is reflected both in terms of the benefit that graduate student instructors bring to the enrolled students as well as the professional development of the student instructors as they provide instruction in a supervised setting.

This proposal establishes guidelines and policies governing the roles played by graduate student instructors at the various levels at which they are employed. 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. Foremost among the principles reflected in the proposal is that graduate student instructors, at any level, play an apprentice-like role within the University. While the degree of mentoring and oversight associated with this role should diminish as a student becomes a more accomplished pedagogue, it should never vanish. The proposal is predicated on the notion that this principle maximizes the benefit to the University's graduate students as they gain experience as instructors, and to the University's undergraduate students who receive that instruction.

Teaching Assistants (or Equivalent Titles)

Although formally defined in individual campus bargaining agreements, the essence of the Conditions for Employment for Teaching Assistants (or equivalent titles) is represented in [Section 410-20](#) of the University's Academic Personnel Manual, which currently reads as follows:

A Teaching Assistant is not responsible for the instructional content of a course, for selection of student assignments, for planning of examinations, or for determining the term grade for students. Neither is the Teaching Assistant to be assigned responsibility for instructing the entire enrollment of a course or for providing the entire instruction for a group of students enrolled in a course. The Teaching Assistant is responsible only for the conduct of recitation, laboratory, or quiz sections under the active direction and supervision of a regular member of

the faculty to whom responsibility for the course's entire instruction, including the performance of Teaching Assistants, has been assigned.

UCEP and CCGA propose the following revised Conditions for Employment for the Teaching Assistant (or equivalent titles), which would apply uniformly for all courses carrying UC credit, and would be reflected in subsequent bargaining agreements:

Graduate Teaching Assistants assist Instructors of Record in the delivery of University instruction. Responsibility for the underlying instructional content of a course, for selecting student assignments, for establishing the criteria under which the course's students will be graded, for planning examinations, for determining the term grade for students, and for overseeing the performance of Teaching Assistants, shall lie with the Instructor of Record. Graduate Teaching Assistants may be responsible for conducting sections and occasional plenary class meetings under the active direction and supervision of the Instructor of Record.

Relative to the existing conditions of the APM, the proposed language relieves the restriction on teaching the entire enrollment of a class, while retaining the requirement that the class and its evaluative rubrics be designed, closely overseen, and largely delivered by a faculty member. The proposed language would also relieve the requirement that the overseeing faculty member be a "regular" member of the faculty, allowing all faculty qualified to act as instructors of record to supervise Graduate Teaching Assistants.

In addition to these formal stipulations, UCEP and CCGA note that pedagogical training, hand-in-hand with oversight, is an essential component of the University's commitment to provide high-quality subordinate instruction. It is the responsibility of the units that sponsor courses that enjoy Teaching Assistant support to ensure that appropriate training opportunities are provided for students adopting Teaching Assistant roles.

Teaching Positions of Greater Responsibility

It is sometimes beneficial to have graduate student instructors assume a greater degree of responsibility for the development and delivery of University courses than that permitted under the conditions of employment for Teaching Assistants. For such cases, it is appropriate for campuses to develop conditions of employment incorporating a higher degree of responsibility for the student instructor. Student instructors would become qualified to assume such positions after successful completion of one or more milestones, to be established by each campus's Senate, which would typically include excellent performance in a minimum number of terms as a Teaching Assistant, and achievement of curricular milestones in the program in which they are enrolled (e.g. obtaining a Master's degree or advancement to candidacy). Students assuming such instructional roles should be able to demonstrate expertise in the subject matter of the course and show evidence of appropriate teaching skills established during prior teaching episodes and/or participation in University activities geared towards the development of pedagogical skills.

However, it is the opinion of UCEP and CCGA that graduate students, no matter what their level of experience, have an element of “apprenticeship” associated with their role as an instructor in the University. Although the appropriate degree of oversight associated with this role can vary greatly, it should never be absent as long as the student instructor remains enrolled in the University. This oversight should play a dual role, providing guidance for student instructors as they develop their teaching skills, as well as an appropriate degree of faculty participation in the student instructor’s implementation of the curriculum. Thus, UCEP and CCGA propose that no matter what degree of responsibility is afforded to a graduate student instructor, the following be included among the oversight responsibilities of the unit sponsoring the course, regardless of whether the student is acting as the formal Instructor of Record.

Oversight is performed by an individual or group of faculty member(s) bearing one of the titles specified in [APM 110-4\(14\)](#). The overseeing faculty member(s) reviews course outlines, syllabi, and any material developed by the graduate student instructor to advertise the class to potential students. The overseeing faculty member(s) reviews the curricular content of the course to ensure that it adheres to the course description and content previously approved by the Academic Senate. The overseeing faculty member(s) apprises the graduate student instructor of the aspects of the Faculty Code of Conduct [[APM-015](#)] to which the graduate student instructor will be held accountable, and will be available to discuss their application should the student instructor request consultation, or should the need otherwise arise. The overseeing faculty member(s) reviews criteria for assessing grades and/or writing evaluations of student performance.

Different individual faculty members may take responsibility for separate aspects of the oversight of the graduate student instructor. Effort expended in supervision would be associated with mentorship of graduate students when considering faculty workload.

UCEP and CCGA recommend that the use of graduate student instructors to provide instruction for the entire enrollment of large-enrollment lower or upper division classes (such as those employing Teaching Assistants) take place only under unusual circumstances. For such classes, instruction by students should never routinely substitute for instruction delivered by instructors bearing one of the faculty titles of APM-110-4 (14). In all cases for which one or more graduate students participates in the delivery of instruction for a given course, supervision of the graduate students shall be the responsibility of a faculty member who is a co-listed instructor for the class, or who bears some other explicit designation establishing that faculty member’s supervisory role.

As for the Teaching Assistant role, training opportunities should be provided to graduate students adopting roles of greater autonomy. Again, it is the responsibility of the units that sponsor courses employing these roles to ensure that appropriate training opportunities are available to the students that assume them.

Courses Enrolling Graduate Students

Occasionally, a graduate student will assume an instructional role for an undergraduate class in which other graduate students are enrolled. Additionally, there are rare circumstances in which programs propose that a graduate student assume an instructional role for a graduate class. UCEP and CCGA are concerned about cases in which graduate student instructors, through the

adoption of instructional titles, are placed in positions of authority over their peers. UCEP and CCGA insist that no graduate student take on an instructional role (including Teaching Assistant) for which the student instructor can influence the grade or other recorded assessment of another graduate student's performance, unless faculty oversight of the assessment process is direct enough to prevent any semblance of conflict of interest.

With this qualification, UCEP and CCGA do not recommend for or against a prohibition against the use of graduate student instructors for graduate courses, although it is within the purview of the divisional Senates to apply one if it is felt appropriate. However, commensurate with [Senate Regulation SR 750](#) (see below), Senate approval must be sought for each offering of a graduate course for which a graduate student instructor is to have greater responsibility than that of Teaching Assistant. In considering such approval, the divisional Senate should take into account the specific qualifications of the proposed graduate student instructor.

State-Supported Summer Instruction

The policies and guidelines proposed here should be applied uniformly, regardless of whether the course is to be offered during the regular academic year or during state-supported summer session.

Academic Senate Regulation 750 (SR 750)

Conditions under which individuals may be granted "substantial responsibility for the content and conduct" of courses of instruction are delineated in SR 750. Sections A and B of SR 750 read as follows (note that the titles of Section B are presented more explicitly in the delineation of faculty titles of APM-110-4 (14)):

- A. Only regularly appointed officers of instruction holding appropriate instructional titles may have substantial responsibility for the content and conduct of courses which are approved by the Academic Senate.

- B. Professors, professors in residence, professors of clinical ____ (e.g., medicine) and adjunct professors of any rank, instructors, instructors in residence and adjunct instructors, and lecturers may give courses of any grade. Persons holding other instructional titles may teach lower division courses only, unless individually authorized to teach courses of higher grade by the appropriate Committee on Courses or Graduate Council. If a course is given in sections by several instructors, each instructor shall hold the required instructional title.

After taking into account substantial debate within divisional Senates and system-wide committees, UCEP and CCGA recommend that the current wording of SR 750 be retained. While this wording is clear in its requirement of Senate review for graduate students wishing to act as instructors of record for upper division courses, SR 750 does not preclude a division from requiring Senate review of lower-division graduate student instructors of record.

APM 410-4

The language of [APM-410-4a and 4b](#), defining Teaching Assistant and Teaching Fellow, should be modified to remove “regular” to be consistent with SR 750. In suggesting these changes, UCEP and CCGA do not intend to imply that campuses should necessarily adopt the use of the Teaching Fellow title for graduate student teaching roles of greater responsibility; rather, the choice of the most appropriate title is left to each campus to determine.

a. Teaching Assistant

A Teaching Assistant is a registered graduate student in full-time residence, chosen for excellent scholarship and for promise as a teacher, and serving an apprenticeship under the active tutelage and supervision of a ~~regular~~ faculty member.

b. Teaching Fellow

A Teaching Fellow is a registered graduate student in full-time residence who has advanced to candidacy for the doctorate, or otherwise has achieved appropriate professional maturity, and who has been chosen because of competence to conduct the entire instruction of a group of students in a lower division course under the general supervision of a ~~regular~~ faculty member.

Students with Prior University Teaching Experience

It is not unusual for graduate students to have prior instructional experience, commensurate with that of one of the faculty titles specified in APM-110-4 (14), prior to their matriculation in a graduate program at the University. In consultation with the appropriate administrative bodies, the Academic Senate of each division should determine whether it is permissible for such students to hold one of the temporary titles of APM-110-4 (14) for the purpose of delivering a specific course. Should the divisional Senate deem this appropriate, the following conditions shall apply. Appointment shall be for a single course, and the consideration for such appointment shall take place in the same manner as for other candidates for commensurate faculty positions, and proceed in consultation with the Graduate Division to ensure that such appointment is not likely to threaten the student’s academic progress. The appointment shall expire immediately upon the conclusion of the course for which the student was appointed to instruct.

Instruction by Postdoctoral Scholars

According to [APM-390](#), Postdoctoral Scholars are eligible to act as instructors of record for any course offered for campus credit, but are to be appointed to the appropriate teaching title during the period of instruction, with a corresponding reduction in the Postdoctoral Scholar title percentage-of-full-time. Insofar as Postdoctoral Scholars thus have formal instructional titles, they enjoy the full range of Academic Freedom as outlined in APM-010 and are responsible for comprehending and abiding by the Faculty Code of Conduct outlined in APM-015. CCGA’s reading of [APM-137](#) suggests that appointments to instructional titles can indeed be for as short

a duration as a single term. Thus, no change is proposed in existing policy relating to the delivery of instruction by Postdoctoral Scholars.

Closing Remarks

The selection, use, and oversight of graduate student instructors lie largely in the hands of the sponsoring departments and programs. No degree of Senate oversight can ensure that the practices of these bodies will adhere to Senate and administrative principle and policy. It is essential that department and program chairs, graduate advisors, and managers be diligent in adhering to both the letter and spirit of University policy regarding the use of graduate students in providing instruction for University-sponsored courses. The proposed guideline and policy changes are designed to provide system-wide coherence with respect to the training and use of graduate students in the delivery of University-level instruction, while permitting an appropriate degree of flexibility that will allow campuses to tailor their implementation of this proposal to the unique circumstances under which they operate.

UCEP and CCGA request that the Academic Senate divisions and Administrations of all campuses conduct a timely review of their current regulations and policies regarding the employment of graduate student instructors. The divisional Senates should establish, or confirm, regulations that implement the proposed policies and practices. The local Senates and Administrations should ensure, in particular, that these guidelines are adhered to, and in general, that the larger principle of oversight appropriate to the expertise and experience of the student instructor is incorporated in their academic and administrative structures. In addition, divisions, departments, and programs should ensure that training measures are in place that are appropriate to the level of independence and responsibility of the graduate student teaching opportunities they support.