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Assembly of the Academic Senate  
Academic Council  
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Oakland, CA 94607-5200

August 30, 2006

**SYSTEM-WIDE SENATE COMMITTEE CHAIRS**

**DIVISIONAL SENATE CHAIRS**

**RE: System-wide Review of the Joint Universitywide Committee on Educational Policy (UCEP) and Coordinating Council on Graduate Affairs (CCGA) Proposal on the Role of Graduate Student In University Instruction**

Dear System-wide Senate Committee and Divisional Senate Chairs:

On behalf of Chair Oakley, the above document is being forwarded for your review and comments. As background information, CCGA and UCEP developed a joint proposal which considers the appropriate degree and manner of the use of graduate students in instruction at UC. At its June 21, 2006 meeting, the Academic Council endorsed that this report be sent out for system-wide review.

The Academic Council would like to finalize its position with respect to the proposal early in the 06-07 academic year. In order to do so, we would very much appreciate receiving responses by the date listed below:

For **System-wide Senate Committees** please submit responses by: **December 7, 2006**

For **Divisions** please submit responses by: **January 10, 2007**

As a reminder to System-wide Senate Committee Chairs, please note two points regarding the practice the Academic Council has established for general reviews:

1. **Request for comments are sent out to all System-wide Committees. Each committee may decide whether or not to opine.** Please notify the Senate Office either directly by emailing me or through your Committee Analyst, if your committee chooses not to participate in this review.
2. **The Committee response due date is typically set a month before that of Divisions.** This two-stage review allows the Academic Council to conduct both a preliminary and a final discussion of the matter at hand. It also gives the Divisions the benefit of the committees' considerations for their own deliberations.

Cordially,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "María Bertero-Barceló".

María Bertero-Barceló, Executive Director  
Academic Senate

Encl: [1](#)  
Copy: Academic Council Chair John Oakley  
Divisional Senate Directors  
Academic Senate Committee Analysts

UNIVERSITY COMMITTEE ON EDUCATIONAL POLICY (UCEP)

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June 9, 2006

JOHN OAKLEY, CHAIR

ACADEMIC COUNCIL

**Re: The Role of Graduate Students in University Instruction**

Dear John,

At the request of both the system-wide Academic Senate and Administration, the University Committee on Educational Policy (UCEP) and the Coordinating Committee on Graduate Affairs (CCGA) have considered the appropriate degree and manner of the use of graduate students in instruction at the University of California. The following proposal has been approved by both UCEP and CCGA for review by the full Academic Senate.

**Background**

Teaching lies at the heart of the mission of the University of California. Over the years, UC has amassed an exemplary track 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 the student instructors benefit from as they provide instruction in a supervised setting.

In reviewing the use of graduate students in UC instruction, the two committees found that practices and policies differ significantly from campus to campus. Their continuing separate evolution, under a broad array of influences, may leave these policies vulnerable to departure from underlying principles that place the University's educational mission as first and foremost in their design. In addition, UCEP and CCGA are concerned that current policy is somewhat ambiguous as to how adherence to the Faculty Code of Conduct (section APM-015 of the University's Academic Personnel Manual), and the enjoyment of Academic Freedom (APM-010), pertain to graduate student instruction.

As a result, UCEP and CCGA have developed a set of recommendations that, if adopted, will regularize the use of graduate students in University instruction, and ensure that this instruction

continues to take place in a manner that provides maximal benefit to the University's instructional enterprise. It is the intent of UCEP and CCGA that these recommendations apply to all state-supported instruction, irrespective of whether the instruction takes place during the regular academic year or during summer session.

Most notable among these recommendations is the qualified prohibition of the use of matriculated graduate students as instructors of record for classes that carry regular (e.g. non-Extension) UC credit. Instead, the two committees recommend that all graduate student instruction take place within two supervised student instructor titles. The first, "Graduate Teaching Assistant" (GTA), would be similar to but somewhat broader in scope than the Teaching Assistant (TA) title in use on most campuses and the Graduate Student Instructor (GSI) title in use at UC Berkeley. The second, "Graduate Teaching Fellow" (GTF), would entail substantially broader responsibility than the GTA title, but would nonetheless take place under the supervision and mentorship of a faculty sponsor. The GTF title would bear similarity to the "Associate In" and "Teaching Fellow" titles currently in use on many campuses. For either title, both the rights of Academic Freedom and the responsibilities of the Faculty Code of Conduct would adhere to the supervising faculty member. Both UCEP and CCGA further recommend that no campus utilize GTFs for more than ten percent of the classes they offer during the year, including state-supported summer instruction.

### **Proposed Instructional Titles**

Although individual campuses define the Teaching Assistant title (and related titles) somewhat differently, the essence of the conditions for employment for Teaching Assistants is represented in Section APM-410-20 of the University's Academic Personnel Manual (APM):

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 conditions for employment for the Graduate Teaching Assistant (GTA) title, which would apply uniformly for all courses carrying UC credit:

A Graduate Teaching Assistant is not responsible for the underlying instructional content of a course, for establishing the criteria under which the course's students will be graded, for planning examinations, or for determining the term grade for students. The Graduate Teaching Assistant may only be responsible for conducting regular classes, and recitation, discussion, laboratory, or quiz sections, under the active direction and supervision of a University appointee with a faculty title as specified in APM-110-4 (14), to whom responsibility for the course's

instruction, including the performance of Graduate Teaching Assistants, has been assigned.

Relative to the existing conditions of the APM, the proposed language relieves the restriction on teaching the entire enrollment of a class, but also requires that the class and its evaluative rubrics be designed and overseen by a faculty member. We expect, however, that GTAs would teach only small-enrollment classes or sections such as those offered in language and writing programs. The proposed language would also relieve the restriction that the overseeing faculty member be a “regular” member of the faculty, allowing all faculty (as defined in APM-110-4 (14)) to supervise GTAs. We believe that the strong oversight referred to in APM-410-20 (and maintained here) implies that the privilege of Academic Freedom and the responsibility for the Code of Conduct adhere to the overseeing instructor.

UCEP and CCGA propose that divisional Senates establish minimum qualifications (such as possession of an advanced degree or advancement to candidacy, and at least one academic year’s teaching experience) for eligibility for appointment to a newly delineated “Graduate Teaching Fellow” (GTF) title that permits instruction of the entire content of a lower division, upper division, or graduate class under the supervision of a faculty member. Academic Freedom and responsibility for the Code of Conduct would adhere to the overseeing faculty member, who would be co-listed with the Teaching Fellow and who would act as the instructor of record.

In this context, faculty oversight would entail the following. The co-listed faculty member would review material developed by the Graduate Student Teaching Fellow to advertise the class to potential students. The co-listed faculty member would review the curricular content of the course to ensure that it adheres to the course description and content previously approved by the Academic Senate. The faculty member would apprise the Teaching Fellow of the Faculty Code of Conduct and be available to discuss aspects of its implementation should the Teaching Fellow request consultation, or should the need otherwise arise. The faculty member would also be available for confidential exchanges with students in the class in order to receive complaints or criticisms about the conduct of the course and would follow through on substantive matters with the Teaching Fellow. Finally, the overseeing faculty member would review criteria for assessing the final grade and/or evaluation and, in consultation with the Teaching Fellow, assign individual grades and/or enter narrative evaluations. UCEP and CCGA acknowledge that this oversight might in some cases constitute an additional demand on faculty time; policies for accounting for this workload will need to be developed by divisional administrations in consultation with the local Academic Senate.

In the view of UCEP and CCGA, the supervised nature of the GTF title would obviate the need for Senate review of the qualifications of individual Teaching Fellows beyond the pro-forma step of confirming that they meet the minimum qualifications established by the Senate, are in good standing within the Graduate Division, and have not reached the limit on number of years of teaching service specified in APM-410-17. Senate review would consist of a course-by-course review of the appropriateness of utilizing the GTF title, independent of the level of the instruction to be provided.

Specifically, UCEP and CCGA propose that all courses for which instruction is to be provided by GTFs be approved, on an ongoing basis, by the appropriate Senate committee on courses. The request for approval should explain the circumstances under which the use of the Teaching Fellow will benefit the University, and identify the faculty instructor of record. The training of graduate students for future independent instructional roles could contribute to this justification, but indiscriminate use of student instructors to relieve faculty teaching loads is inappropriate. In particular, use of the GTF title to provide instruction for the entire enrollment of large-enrollment lower or upper division classes should only take place under extenuating circumstances, and should never routinely substitute for instruction delivered by instructors bearing one of the faculty titles of APM-110-4 (14). In cases for which more than one graduate student participates in the delivery of instruction for a given course, supervision of the graduate students shall be the sole responsibility of the co-listed faculty member(s); in no circumstance should a Graduate Teaching Assistant be supervised by another graduate student.

Specifically, UCEP and CCGA propose the following as conditions for employment for the Graduate Teaching Fellow title:

A Graduate Teaching Fellow should be competent to provide the entire course of instruction to a group of students. The Graduate Teaching Fellow is subject to the general supervision of a faculty member, with an appropriate title according to APM-110-4 (14), designated in catalogs and published schedules as responsible for the content and conduct of the course. The responsibility of entering formal assessments of student performance shall reside with the overseeing faculty member. Authorization to provide instruction as a Graduate Teaching Fellow shall be subject to the approval of the appropriate Academic Senate committee (Regulations of the Academic Senate, 750).

### **Academic Senate Regulation SR750**

Conditions under which individuals may be granted “substantial responsibility for the content and conduct” of courses of instruction are delineated in SR750. Currently Sections A and B of SR750 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.

UCEP and CCGA interpret the role of the GTF, as presented above, as having substantial responsibility for the course of instruction, and thus as being subject to the restrictions of SR750. To codify the proposed requirement that the Senate review the appropriateness of the use of the GTF title on a course-by-course basis, UCEP and CCGA recommend that SR750 be amended to read as follows:

A. Only regularly appointed officers of instruction holding appropriate instructional titles may have substantial responsibility for the content and conduct of courses that are approved by the Academic Senate. If a course is given in sections by several instructors, each instructor shall hold the required instructional title.

B. Persons holding student instructional titles shall have substantial responsibility for the content and conduct of courses only by authorization of the appropriate Academic Senate Committee, typically the Graduate Council, Committee on Courses, Committee on Educational Policy, Committee on Educational Programs and Policy, or Undergraduate Council.

### **Exception to the Instructor of Record Restriction**

Generally, UCEP and CCGA recommend that no student matriculated in the UC system be given “instructor of record” status that would identify that student as having plenary responsibility for the content, conduct, and evaluative process of a course that carries UC credit. However, an exception may be granted for matriculated students that have in the past, either within UC or other institutions of higher education, held a title commensurate with one of the faculty titles of APM-110-4 (14). Such students may be appointed to faculty titles contemporaneously with their matriculation in the University. Consideration for such appointments shall take place in the same manner as for other candidates for faculty positions, and proceed in consultation with the Graduate Division to ensure that such appointment is not likely to negatively affect the student’s academic progress.

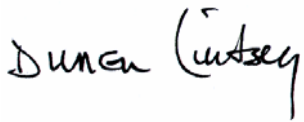
### **Instruction by Post-Doctoral Scholars**

CCGA also considered the role of postdoctoral scholars in instructional activities. 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. CCGA thus proposed no change in policy with regard to the delivery of instruction by post-doctoral 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 UC policy regarding the use of graduate students to provide instruction for UC-sponsored courses. The proposed policy changes are designed to provide system-wide coherence with respect to the training of graduate students in the delivery of University-level instruction. This is an urgent matter and one that we hope will stimulate departmental and campus discussions about the role of graduate students in University instruction, and highlight the diverse instructional roles faculty themselves play in this enterprise. We therefore urge a thoughtful and expeditious review of the changes being proposed by UCEP and CCGA as part of the University's commitment to its instructional mission.

Sincerely,



Duncan Lindsey  
Chair, CCGA



Denise Segura  
Chair, UCEP

cc: CCGA members  
UCEP members  
Executive Director Bertero-Barceló