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January 10, 2017

Jim Chalfant

Chair, Academic Council

RE: Proposed Revisions to Regents Policies on Professional Degree Supplemental Tuition (PDST)

Dear Jim:

The proposal to incorporate Regents Policy 3104 into a revision of Regents Policy 3103 was forwarded to all standing committees of the Davis Division. Responses were received from the Committee on Planning and Budget, Graduate Council, and the Faculty Executive Committees of the School of Law, the School of Medicine, and the Graduate School of Management.

Overall, committees support the streamlining and greater flexibility proposed in the consolidated policy, as well as its focus on ensuring access, inclusion, and affordability for students in graduate professional degree programs. Committees recommended a few modifications to the content and approval process of PDST multi-year plans.

Committees recommend bolstering PDST planning content to include additional information on long-term financial outlooks for students and reasonable increases in PDST costs. "There is evidence that students graduating from some Professional Programs will not be able to pay off their education debt within the duration of their expected career," writes Graduate Council. "[We recommend] that PDSTs be reviewed for long-term financial feasibility for the students." In regards to increases in PDST costs, the FEC of GSM is concerned about using CPI as a benchmark, particularly for cases in which staff salaries and benefits outpace inflation: "In recent years, the CPI average has been 1.8%, while the average UCOP mandated salary increase for staff has been 3% annually. We hope that in cases such as these that a reasonable proposal backed up by financial data and a thorough student consultation will be approved even if it exceeds projected CPI." The FEC of GSM also wonders if the requirement to compare UC's professional degree programs to private institutions' programs during planning is truly necessary.

Committees recommend simplifying and clarifying the approval process for PDST plans. In an effort to avoid "dead time" in the approval process, the FEC of GSM questions "the net benefit to adding yet another level of approval at the Regents level...If it is necessary that the Regents be the approving authority, then perhaps the PDST proposals should go directly from the program to the Regents"; the FEC of GSM also recommends establishing a timeframe for each level of approval. Similarly, seeing as the "group or person responsible for transmittal of the PDST proposal to the various people and the order of review is not clear," Graduate Council recommends clarifying the approval flow for proposals. Graduate Council also recommends that programs be required to review their PDST plans at least every five years, as the new policy does not specify a minimum time frame.

In regards to student stakeholders involved in PDST planning processes, Graduate Council thinks the policy should require more explicit inclusion of students who are leaders in their respective programs. The old process required that student leaders be consulted during PDST planning or reviews, while the proposed policy is less defined, simply requiring “consultation with students and faculty about the plan,” which gives “the impression that students could be ‘hand-picked’ and thus not necessarily be representatives of student leadership within the Professional Program.” Likewise, in the case of multi-campus PDST planning, Graduate Council recommends adding language to the policy that ensures student and faculty representatives from each respective campus are consulted.

The Davis Division appreciates the opportunity to comment. Full committee responses are enclosed, including redline edits from Graduate Council (highlighting its own recommendations).

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Rachael E. Goodhue".

Rachael E. Goodhue
Chair, Davis Division of the Academic Senate
Professor and Chair, Agricultural and Resource Economics

Enclosed: Davis Division Committee Responses

c: Edwin M. Arevalo, Executive Director, Davis Division of the Academic Senate
Hilary Baxter, Executive Director, Systemwide Academic Senate
Michael LaBriola, Principal Policy Analyst, Systemwide Academic Senate