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July 23, 2010

HENRY POWELL, CHAIR

University of California
Academic Council
1111 Franklin Street, 12th Floor
Oakland, CA 94607

Re: Systemwide Informal Review of Commission on the Future 2nd Round Recommendations

The second round of recommendations from the Commission on the Future of UC were forwarded to standing committees and the Faculty Executive Committee in each college/professional school. Please note that many committees have concluded their formal meetings for this academic year.

Responses were received from: Committee on Affirmative Action & Diversity, Committee on International Studies and Exchanges, Library Committee, Committee on Planning & Budget, Committee on Research - Policy, Graduate Council and the Faculty Executive Committee from the College of Letters and Science. The Davis Division response falls into specific categories: Undergraduate and Graduate Education, Research, and Overarching Comments as follows:

Undergraduate Education

Dedicating a portion of the scholarship income from gifts and endowments as a fund source to increase assistance for financially needy middle-income students would be inconsistent with the spirit of gifts and endowments that are merit, rather than need-based. This could be especially counterproductive as we increasingly seek student support from private sources.

We are concerned about the recommendation to allow individual campuses to retain all of the income from non-resident tuition brought to their campus, especially given the recent exceptional increase in out of state enrollment by UC Berkeley (23% of 2010-11 freshman). There seems to be little or no incentive to cap these numbers, although there is some mention of systemwide policy about non-resident enrollment. The significant increases at UC Berkeley appears to be a dangerous precedent driven by revenue generation.

There is not a single recommendation devoted to international education. The COTF recommendations simply do not envision that internationalization should be a priority for the future of the University of California. There is no indication that it is important to provide our students with an international experience. In an era of increased globalization and when knowledge and wealth creation truly operate on an international scale, this seems to be a serious omission. When the term "international" does appear, it is only in the context of enhancing University revenue.

Graduate Education

The Davis Division appreciates the support of graduate education included in many of the second round recommendations, but has concerns related to the funding of graduate education and its role in the University.

We agree with the statement in *Size and Shape* Recommendation 7 that increases in undergraduate fees should not be applied automatically to graduate fees, as well as the statement in the rationale for the recommendation that any readjustment in the base funding formula include the number of academic doctoral students as a criterion for campus funding. It seems particularly strange that a Ph.D. student who has completed his/her course requirements and is only participating in laboratory research should pay the same (or as proposed in some places, higher) fees than an undergraduate student who is taking a full course load.

Size and Shape Recommendation 8 suggests that self-supporting terminal Master's degrees should be expanded. As in our response to the first round COTF recommendations, we caution that the potential for competition for limited resources between self-supporting Master's programs and state-supported graduate, undergraduate and professional programs should be evaluated as part of the approval process for any self-supporting program. The use of resources by self-supporting programs must be monitored on an ongoing basis. In order to protect UC quality, there must be an explicit statement that such programs are subject to the oversight of the Graduate Councils of the Academic Senate.

Access and Affordability Recommendations 7, 8, and 9 do not address graduate and professional education, in contrast to the first-round recommendations from this group. This is an unacceptable omission. Elsewhere, COTF recommendations emphasize the importance of graduate education to the State of California. Recommendations regarding access and affordability should also reflect its importance.

COTF's second round recommendations are greatly improved in terms of recognizing graduate education and its role in the University in general terms. It is important that this general recognition be accompanied by recognition of graduate education in the more specific, concrete actions detailed in the discussion of each general recommendation. There are three specific instances where an increased emphasis on graduate education would be beneficial:

1. *Research Strategy* Recommendation 1 should include some reference to the desirability of expanding collaboration with government (as well as industry, foundations, etc.) to provide internship and fellowship opportunities for graduate and undergraduate students. There are many potential opportunities here. At the federal level, NOAA, FDA, NASA, DoD, State Department, and USDA, among other agencies, have had involvement in mutually beneficial educational opportunities. State and local agencies such as CDFA and ISO have been involved as well. We strongly support this recommendation.
2. If the goal of the *Research Strategy* Recommendation 3 is to improve communication of research to the public, then it is important to emphasize that the great bulk of this research originates at the *graduate* level. Graduate education would certainly benefit from public acknowledgement of the role and contributions of graduate students and postdocs in the research university.
3. In *Research Strategy* Recommendation 5a, the role of MRUs, ORUs and other significant Centers and Institutes, and their value to UC and graduate education should be stressed.

We are concerned about the rising costs of a UC education and, more specifically, believe that the escalating cost of nonresident tuition adversely impacts our research and our community. It is already the case that, within many graduate groups and departments, residency status has become the dominant factor in faculty deciding whom to work with and support. At UC Davis at least one Graduate Group has gone so far as to stop accepting international students.

Research

We support the recommendation that a minimum graduate student enrollment be maintained and supported. Advanced research at UCD depends a sufficient number of outstanding doctoral students. Erosion of doctoral student financial support seriously affects our ability to compete for the best students and have sufficient numbers to ensure the quality, quantity and breadth of our research enterprise.

We agree with maximizing the capacity of the UC library system. The library is a key component of research and adding capacity to the library adds value to the enterprise. We also support the proposal to create reciprocity across UC campuses for approvals to conduct human or animal research. We support working towards a standard method to pay research assistants from other campuses.

The Davis Division takes issue with the Council of Vice Chancellors recommendation #5 that indirect costs be increased to “at least parity with private peer institutions” and that “campuses limit[ing] the use of university resources without fair overhead compensation” are misguided. The pool of grant money is limited. More money going to overhead often means less going to research. We believe that there must be both transparency and widespread agreement in the factors that make up a “cost of research” estimate. The argument that research universities lose money with every research grant dollar awarded is not convincing. Usually, the cost that matters is the “marginal” cost to the University of a research grant, that is, the additional cost beyond what would be spent otherwise. On the General Campuses, the University provides scholars with a salary, an office, some minimal cleaning and maintenance, and a library whether or not scholars receive grants. It is inappropriate to label these expenses “costs of federal research” and claim that the university is “subsidizing” research. Many non-experimentalists use research grants primarily for postdoctoral and graduate student salaries; summer salary and travel to conferences. The costs of these actual expenses to the University are not likely anywhere near the overhead charged to a grant. In any case, whether the present overhead percentage is too high or too low, it is most important that everyone understand that taking money out of research grants for overhead, faculty salaries, or anything else reduces the funds left for research.

In a similar vein, allowing campuses to retain all new revenue generated, including education fee increases, appears to contradict the principle of having a systemwide approach to revenues and costs, and could increase disparity across campuses. We await the results of the new budget model that is being developed by the Office of the President before commenting further.

Overarching Comments

The Davis Division fully supports the call for increased financial transparency. There are several mentions of increasing administrative efficiency and reducing burdens on faculty time but such efforts rarely seem successful. Also, some of the recommendations assume adequate physical and instructional capacity, but they don’t exist now and will not likely in the future.

The Davis Division strongly believes that conversion to semester calendar is ill-advised. The costs for making such a conversion are widely distributed and essentially not quantifiable. We simply do not believe that it is possible to put time into this conversion without taking significant time away from other scholarly endeavors, especially research. The Division sees converting as potentially negatively affect the breadth of graduate student training. The question was also raised as to why convert to semester calendar when 78% of the UC undergraduate campuses are on a quarter system. If the primary goal for this change is to reconcile UC’s schedule with that of community colleges there are other difficulties not discussed in the recommendation. For example, there is some lack of standardization within the community college system. If the goal is that the course-matching process will be easier if both systems are on semesters it is not clear that being on the same calendar is needed. A three unit course on semesters is about the same as a four unit course on quarters. At UC Davis, there has been a marked trend to offering four unit classes which by this reasoning matches a semester reasonably closely.

We are concerned that among the recommendations there are no specific proposals to cut anything; except for the implied cut in state funding of professor salaries contained in the proposal to look for private support for salaries. It is not surprising, therefore, that the Council of Vice Chancellors commented: “[T]he financial crisis demands that the initial recommendations be limited in number, of major consequence, and implemented in the near term.” We agree with this comment and do not support promulgation of a large number of binding recommendations at this time.

Recommendation 8, p. 114-5 on faculty salary is of grave concern. As stated, we find it difficult to imagine this recommendation leading to a positive outcome in any way. This recommendation will cause a fundamental change in what it means to be a Professor—a change inconsistent with the majority of recommendations that focus on better service to students and the state. The proposal that faculty seek external salary support will push otherwise dedicated scholars into seeking sources of support that may not further their research programs but provide short term financial gains. Under these conditions life in the private sector and governmental agencies would become the better place to be for the best scientists; much higher salary provided by the employer.

The notion that the proposed salary model is working in the medical schools is, at the least, not uniformly held and considered many participants as not working. Many clinical faculty relegate teaching, research and service to secondary status and concentrate upon their extra pay component. Each clinical Department Chair is given a

yearly income goal that their faculty must earn through their clinical work. The continual demand from the administration for more income has resulted in faculty whose paid clinical work completely dominates their work year. Indeed, at UC Davis, there is great concern that significant teaching and curricula development activities are being led by non-Senate faculty. Even if the proposed model were working in the medical schools, where faculty produce paid clinical income, the majority of professors on the General Campuses work in areas where significantly less money available and no analogy to clinical income exists. It seems unlikely that faculty morale in the majority of departments would be improved by watching successful engineers, clinicians, lawyers and other specialties earn multiple times their incomes while they on the other hand continue to support undergraduate education.

In conclusion, the Commission reflects the prevailing attitude on our campus---consolidate resources and authority at higher levels, at the expense of ignoring the departmental (or campus) autonomy that has served us very well.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "R. L. Powell". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, prominent "P" and "L".

Robert L. Powell III, Chair
Davis Division of the Academic Senate and
Professor and Chair, Department of
Chemical Engineering and Materials Science