



# **Davis Division Academic Senate**

## **Request for Consultation Responses**

### **Academic Master's Tuition Pilot - Version 2**

**May 11, 2012**

Graduate Council and Committee on Planning and Budget swiftly reviewed this issue in late February. The whitepaper enclosed was published on February 24, 2012. The Division understands a decision has been made to proceed with a pilot for one year. Response is optional.

# **Graduate Council**

**March 12, 2012 1:52 PM**

*Response continued on next page.*

Graduate Council remains opposed to the proposed approach to distribute tuition funds generated by the pilot program for Academic Master's Program Tuition (see attached response to Draft Version 1).

While raising net-new resources has been stated as one objective of the pilot, from Graduate Council perspective assessing how good the communication is between the Deans and the participating programs, given Graduate Council concerns, has now become the most important element of the pilot. We also are interested to what extent net-new resources raised in the pilot will be dedicated to "augment graduate student support funding for Ph.D. programs."

Therefore, Graduate Council wants to know:

- i) to what extent there were beneficial negotiations between the Deans and the participating graduate programs, particularly, with Graduate Groups, and
- ii) what are the plans to use new resources generated towards the benefit of PhD programs and finally determine to what extent this succeeded.

It is important to explicitly express these expected outcomes to the participating programs. In selecting participating programs:

- i) the participants should be selected to ensure that the pilot is created in a manner that the communication and PhD benefit outcomes are tested, and
- ii) Graduate Council should be consulted in the selection process.

Monday, February 20, 2012

**TO:** Kelly Ratliff, Associate Vice Chancellor, Administrative and Resource Management  
David Maddox, Consultant RPM Associates  
Chris Carter, Budget Director, Administrative and Resource Management  
Richard H Shintaku, Assistant Dean, Office of Graduate Studies

**FROM:** André Knoesen, Chair Graduate Council

**RE:** Graduate Council Response to “Incentive-Based Budget Model Pilot Project for Academic Master’s Program Tuition (Optional)” DRAFT VERSION 1, 02/17/12

Graduate Council and past Graduate Chairs<sup>1</sup> reviewed the Budget and Institutional Analysis (BIA) draft white paper. While there is agreement with the objectives of the proposed program and the underlying principles, we oppose the proposed approach to distribute tuition funds generated. The proposed approach is not consistent with the administration’s principle of budgeting transparency and is not an effective means of incentivizing faculty and rewarding the efforts required to provide and expand quality graduate programs.

The consultation process revealed a principled as well as a visceral opposition against the proposed method to distribute graduate education resources to the Deans of Colleges and Schools, and then *".....each Dean will then decide how to allocate the resources with the strong recommendation that a significant share go to the departments and/or graduate groups contributing to and offering the degree program."* A same reaction will occur among graduate programs if the proposed distribution mechanism is communicated to the campus. That seriously risks compromising the positive objectives of the pilot.

Unlike undergraduates, who are admitted into colleges, graduate students are admitted into individual graduate programs that in many cases on the Davis campus encompass multiple colleges and schools. Accordingly, in the case of graduate education an efficient, transparent mechanism for resource distribution must have the confidence of the faculty that the new revenues generated will be allocated directly to the graduate program that generated them.

An effective distribution mechanism already exists that meets the pilot criteria. The Dean of Graduate Studies distributes graduate fellowship funds (formerly "Block Grant" funds) directly to graduate programs in close consultation with the Academic Senate through Graduate Council. This process has the following attributes:

- The resources are dedicated to the improvement of the quality of graduate education through offering fellowships to attract outstanding applicants and support the ongoing work of enrolled students who contribute to the university’s research mission.
- It a transparent distribution of resources directly to graduate programs, *independent of their status as department based graduate program or graduate group*. All programs are treated openly and equitably; the rule for resource allocation does not vary by College or School.
- It distributes resources in partnership with the Academic Senate and the program faculty in the units who are directly impacted.
- It is well-established, efficient and centralized administrative process, with direct accountability to the Provost.

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<sup>1</sup> Dean Gibeling was not consulted in this matter even though he is a past Graduate Council chair and member of Graduate Council.

- It provides effective assessment of graduate education outcomes and academic quality in partnership with the Office of Graduate Studies, the Academic Senate graduate program review process and other mechanisms available to Graduate Council and also BIA.<sup>2</sup>

This resource distribution process can be adapted

- to allow graduate faculty to rapidly respond to unique opportunities in graduate education and achieve tangible rewards for their graduate program,
- to provide the capacity to distribute a “*significant amount of tuition funds to graduate programs responsible for generating them*” and
- to allow the initiation of new programs benefiting graduate education.

Complementing the above described approach, another mechanism exists to form a partnership when the campus wants to rapidly respond to strategic investments to increase competitiveness. A good example of this is the recently announced “New Fellowship Initiative in Support Ph.D. and M.F.A. Students in the Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences”. It was authorized by Provost Hexter, in partnership with Dean Gibeling and the Deans in the Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences, to allow departments and programs to offer fellowships to their top candidates for entry in Fall 2012. The Provost has recently confirmed that his expectation is that Dean Gibeling will work with Graduate Council to put in place mutually acceptable procedures to assure that appropriate standards for transparency are met for 2012 and in subsequent years.

The pilot should focus on providing the incentives to the graduate programs to generate net-new resources that can be used to augment graduate student support funding for Ph.D. programs, and there is absolutely no need to experiment with an alternate distribution mechanism for graduate education that does not have the support of the faculty.

Finally, thought should be given to the sentiment expressed in the following comment provided during our consultation process: “*It is February 18. Admissions to approximately half of the graduate programs have closed and I would guess that final admission decisions have been made for most of these programs. Programs don't get to change their minds about these decisions. Will some faculty be ticked off because they are made aware of the situation too late to consider implementing--yes, even if they would not have implemented?*”

**In summary, the proposed resource allocation method to Deans of Colleges and Schools is completely unacceptable.** Replacing this system with one that does not guarantee transparency or equitable resource allocation below the College or School level is a large step backward from the draft white paper’s objectives and the current resource allocation system. Therefore, Graduate Council recommends that funds generated by graduate programs in the Pilot Project for Academic Master’s Program Tuition be allocated directly to the programs via the Dean of Graduate Studies.

cc. Ralph Hexter, Provost & Executive Vice Chancellor  
Linda Bisson, Academic Senate Chair  
Jeff Gibeling, Dean of Graduate Studies

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<sup>2</sup> Building on this partnership will become increasingly important as self-supporting programs on the campus are expanded (see Report on Self-Supporting Degree Programs, 3/31/2012).