



Davis Division Academic Senate

Request for Consultation Responses

Institute for Transportation Studies ORU Five-Year Review

November 2, 2016

An ad hoc review committee completed a five-year review of the Institute for Transportation Studies. Vice Chancellor for Research Harris Lewin has requested formal Academic Senate review of the ad hoc committee's report and accompanying documents.

Graduate Council

November 1, 2016 3:00 PM

Response continued on next page.

November 1, 2016

To: Academic Chair Goodhue

Re: Institute for Transportation Studies (ITS) 5-Year Review

Thank you for allowing Graduate Council (GC) the opportunity to comment on the Institute for Transportation Studies (ITS) 5-Year Review. Of relevance to GC is the relationship between the ITS and the Transportation Technology and Policy (TTP) Ph.D. program. The review was discussed by GC at its meeting on Oct 21st.

In the ORU (ITS) 5-Year Review report, the reviewers expressed concern for graduate student mentoring, specifically the fact that only a few of the ITS highly qualified faculty were actually empowered to advise graduate students as major professors. Apparently in response to this concern, some campus rules were changed to allow more ITS scientists to serve as Ph.D. student advisors. Dr. Sperling, director of ITS, responded to the ITS 5-Year Review report in a letter as follows:.. "campus rules were changed so that Professional Researchers could advise on dissertations and independent research. We still seek rules that will allow Ph.D. Project Scientists and non-academic Ph.D.'s to also serve in that role."

These statements are surprising, as UCOP policy, not UC Davis policy, establishes the qualifications required for Ph.D. student major professors. GC supports the currently held practice to establish policies regarding mentor/advisor qualifications at the UCOP level, and not the individual campus level, to ensure consistency across campuses.

Regular review of the TTP graduate program by GC is scheduled for 2017-18. GC will ensure that the Review Committee is made aware of this 5-year report and the issues surrounding mentorship in the TTP program. Consistent with currently policy, ITS scientists involved in the TTP graduate program could request appointments as Lecturers without Salary in appropriate departments, so that they would be qualified to advise Ph.D. students and serve on their dissertation committees.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "N. Baumgarth". The signature is stylized with a large, looped initial "N" and a long, sweeping underline.

Nicole Baumgarth, Chair
Graduate Council

Planning & Budget

November 15, 2016 5:49 PM

CPB discussed the ITS ORU review and agrees that the quality of the program is high. However, CPB is concerned about a few items.

1, The ORU has had the same director for 25 years. CPB recommends developing a succession plan for future leadership. This would be consistent with the recommendation of the review committee which suggests, "that UC Davis adopt a 2025 perspective of ITS". CPB believes that it is not adequate to state, as part of the recommendation to keep the current director, that, "the university should support the recruitment and retention of renowned research faculty and collaborating academic faculty for the long-term strategic leadership of ITS." ?

2, CPB is concerned that it appears that graduate students support may be too contingent on their being hired as teaching assistants.

3, CPB notes that the basis for some of the conclusions of the review committee may be partly based on an incorrect understanding of members of the review committee about university budgeting. On page 15, it is stated that "There is an uneasy fit between a "soft-money" research institute populated by research faculty and the university at large driven by tenured academic faculty funded through tuition. " This is simply incorrect. According to the UC Budget for Current Operations (<http://www.ucop.edu/operating-budget/files/rbudget/2016-17budgetforcurrentoperations.pdf>), \$3,229 billion out of \$7308 billion of Core Funds are used to support the salaries of faculty, about 44%. It is important to CPB that misconceptions such as that made by the review committee can lead to conclusions that do not reflect the actual context in which the university operates.

Although CPB generally agrees with the comments about the quality of the work at ITS, CPB does not categorically endorse the recommendations of the review committee. There are many resource issues, both in terms of monetary and faculty position allocations, that derive from the recommendations of the review committee. These are not put in context of the campus as a whole, which, indeed is not their role. Hence, CPB urgently stresses that such decisions should be made as part of a consultative holistic budget process.

Research

November 18, 2016 9:25 AM

COR reviewed the 5 year review of the ITS ORU. The committee finds the review to be thorough and positive and its recommendations reasonable. COR recommends that care be taken to balance graduate student committees with Senate and non-Senate faculty and not to become over-weighted with non-Senate faculty. As mentioned by Dean Dillard, a 10 year plan may be too long ranging; a 5 year plan would be more productive.