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COORDINATING COMMITTEE ON GRADUATE AFFAIRS (CCGA)

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ACADEMIC SENATE
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April 14, 2010

Dear Harry:

In the previous academic year, CCGA discussed the policy on part-time self-supporting graduate programs (SSP) with the anticipation that new SSPs will significantly increase systemwide. The initial request originated from then Provost Rory Hume to past Senate Chair Michael Brown, who asked CCGA to discuss the policy and provide comments with recommendations to Academic Council.

At its December 2008 meeting, Academic Council charged CCGA, in lieu of a Senate/Administrative task force, to provide specific recommendations to the 1996 policy that sets guidelines for the establishment of SSPs. In a series of discussions throughout the 2008-2009 academic year, CCGA reviewed the SSP policy and focused its discussions on the report generated by Amy Zusman on issues pertaining to SSPs.

CCGA recommends to Council that a Senate/Administration Task Force be formed with a charge to rewrite the 1996 SSP policy, taking into account CCGA's talking points summarized below. This charge is particularly timely as CCGA expects that due to the current fiscal climate, proposals for either new SSPs or conversion of state supported programs into self supported programs will be on the rise across the system. The new SSP policy would then be in line with each campus projections and needs for establishing SSPs.

Definition We find that SSPs are best defined as: "Mid-level degree awarding, part or full time programs aimed at new and unmet educational needs to which there are no existing State resources".

Target Audience The 1996 policy refers to SSPs as being able to "...accommodate qualified working adults who cannot be full time students". While working adults with appropriate credentials are certainly a targeted group of SSPs, CCGA felt that targeted SSP students would be best described as "academically qualified graduates who could be in training, working or looking to enhance their careers".

Establishment CCGA members concurred with the 1996 policy that a new SSP should serve a public need, especially in professional fields that are in high demand such as in Physical Therapy and Audiology. The new policy should state that no academic SSP should be established.

Faculty We felt that SSP teaching faculty should be appointed and reviewed through regular campus processes irrespective of academic series.

Fees CCGA is favorable to the revenue-generating capacity of SSPs while fulfilling the educational and research mission of the University. However, SSPs should be structured such that their fees are

affordable and commensurate with the targeted students. CCGA noted that the fees for existing SSPs range from \$11,000 to over \$70,000 per year. The role of UCOP in approving the fee structure of SSPs is essential and ought to ensure affordability, while covering costs and generating revenues.

Financial Aid While working students in these programs can readily pay sometimes the hefty fees associated with these programs, many qualified students fail to join these programs due to the lack or reduced amount of financial aid. It was noted instances where the fee structure for differential fee state-supported programs and SSPs have converged and that UCOP policy primarily focuses on whether or not SSP fees are sufficient to cover costs, with less attention paid to financial support, access and diversity policies. CCGA recommends that there should be clear and adequate provisions for financial support built into any new policy. Thus, every SSP proposal should include in its proposal a budget with an explicit implementation plan of financial aid to needy students. Graduate Divisions may select appropriate criteria for needy students through FAFSA forms or similar application processes.

Admissions The revenue generating capacity of SSP should not be the driving force for the admission of students based only on their ability to pay the fees. Students should be admitted to the program based on their academic performance and previous professional experience, if applicable. Admission criteria will need to be stated in any new SSP proposal, regularly monitored by a program admissions committee and examined during external program reviews.

Sites of Instruction The site of instruction in a revised policy should take into account electronic instruction and residency as in the recently revised SR 694. SSPs must also adhere to the same policies and standards as state-funded programs including equivalent delivery mechanisms consistent with SR 694.

Classroom Size CCGA recommends that the number of students in SSPs be similar to that of other graduate programs to preserve and foster the student-faculty interaction that is characteristic of a graduate education.

Role of UC Extension It was noted that UC Extension could provide significant help in the administration of SSPs, especially at the outset of such programs. Another attraction of UC Extension is its diversified pool of courses that may be attractive to SSPs needing to fill specific gaps in their curriculum. A cautionary note to be taken into consideration is that the majority of courses offered by UC Extension are not reviewed and approved by campus committees such as the Committee on Courses of Instruction (COCI), which essentially determines the quality and learning outcomes of courses as well as the faculty series allowed to teach in these courses. CCGA recommends that UC Extension courses to be used in campus-based SSPs be approved by the divisional COCI and that CCGA approves systemwide courses, which may be adapted by systemwide entities.

Review and Oversight The establishment of any new SSP, whether professional or academic, ought to be approved by the Divisional and Systemwide Academic Senate according to their established procedures. Thus, the divisional Graduate Council will initiate a review followed by concurrence of the local Academic Senate and senior campus administrators. The proposal will then be sent to CCGA for its regular Senate-based review and final approval by the Provost and the President. Once established, SSPs will be overseen by the divisional Graduate Division to ensure adequate progress of students according to campus criteria and will undergo external review cycles as set by the Graduate Division.

Relationship to State Supported Programs In principle, SSPs should not compete with state-supported programs for resources and space. However, the roles of faculty in both types of programs, whether at the instructional or research level, makes this distinction difficult to implement and thus it would be best left at the discretion of the campuses to balance the overlapping roles of faculty in these programs and to equitably allocate resources to self and state supported programs.

Relationship to Ph.D. programs There was general agreement among CCGA members that SSPs should not be geared towards Ph.D. programs or used to restrict student access to state-supported Ph.D. programs. With regards to the question of SSPs as an entry point or a prerequisite to a Ph.D. program, members commented it could be one route but not the preferred route.

We request that these comments be endorsed by Academic Council and forwarded to Provost Pitts as the original request for SSPs review was from Provost Hume. We hope that the points summarized above will be taken into consideration by a Senate/Administration Task Force that will revise the 1996 policy, which is largely considered outdated.

Please do not hesitate to contact me for any questions or comments that you may have pertaining to this important issue.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Farid Chehab", is written over a faint, circular institutional seal.

Farid Chehab, Ph.D.
Chair, CCGA