

3125 Murphy Hall
410 Charles E. Young Drive East
Los Angeles, California 90095

January 24, 2024

To: Andrea Kasko, Chair, UCLA Academic Senate

From: Brooke Scelza, Chair, Graduate Council

Re: Future of Doctoral Programs at the University of California – APC Workgroup Interim Report

At its meeting on January 12, 2024, the Graduate Council discussed the *Future of Doctoral Programs at the University of California – APC Workgroup Interim Report*. Members offered the following observations for the Executive Board's consideration.

While the Graduate Council appreciates the report and its recommendations, some members stated that they were expecting more from the report about how the campuses can continue to have viable programs and did not see structural problems being addressed. Some members had questions regarding the data provided in the report. One member noted that the report stated that 72% of PhD students completed their degree within 10 years and had questions regarding the percentage that never finished, the completion rate in five years or less, and how these numbers compare to the national average and peer institutions.

In regards to the interim findings, members had the following observations.

2.1 Clearly define academic expectations:

- Members noted that the Graduate Council is already working on the issue to clearly define academic expectations with regard to Course 375 Teaching Apprentice Practicum.
- Some members commented that it may be hard to disentangle academics from employment.
- One member noted that recommendations one and two seem similar and both could be satisfied by creating a syllabus template. It may be helpful to have another broader actionable recommendation.

2.2. Provide stable and competitive financial support

- Some members noted that the report did not mention the impact on international students, the use of professional fees to support PhD programs, or entities responsible for finding funds to cover the shortfalls.
- Some members also queried how the campuses can work together for shared resources.

2.3 Actively manage our PhD and MFA enrollments

- Some members noted that some departments may not consider employment opportunities as a factor for admissions and enrollment.

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- Some members also noted shifting to recruitment based on non-academic job placements may lead to departments admitting and training students in fields that are traditionally outside the expertise of the department or faculty.
- Members expressed concern that the recommendation to reduce time-to-degree may negatively impact diversity, equity, and inclusion efforts and make graduate education a barrier for some populations of students. It may also affect work-life balance.

We appreciate the opportunity to express our views on this matter. If you have any questions, please contact us via Graduate Council Analyst, Emily Le, at ele@senate.ucla.edu.