

January 29, 2024

Andrea Kasko, Chair
Academic Senate

Re: UCLA Report of the Joint Task Force on the Future of Graduate Programs and Graduate Student Support

Dear Chair Kasko,

At its meeting on January 8, 2024, the Council on Planning and Budget (CPB) discussed the UCLA Report of the Joint Task Force on the Future of Graduate Programs and Graduate Student Support. Members offered the following comments.

The report states that there are increased costs but does not present options on how to fund them. This presents an opportunity to make strategic choices.

Members noted that housing was not addressed by this report, although it was one of the main points brought by students during the strike—indeed, it is probably not an exaggeration to say that housing costs are *the* fundamental issue that graduate students want to see addressed. There would be less of a need to increase salaries if housing costs were contained (though only if this happened systemwide). At the same time, the more graduate students rent university-owned apartments, the more funding could be recaptured. Members suggested that the university ought to look carefully at options for housing development connected to public transit, and that Development should consider making a concerted push to interest donors in helping to fund the development of affordable graduate housing. Many graduate students work off-campus, which should also be taken into consideration.

Members noted that if the current situation persists, there will be an added burden for faculty to raise grants and request additional funding from agencies. This, in turn, could make UCLA less appealing as an investment to funding agencies, making it less competitive.

Members suggested that Development should be encouraged to work more closely with faculty to refine strategies for communicating the critical importance of graduate support to donors.

Members suggested that reports should also focus on graduate student satisfaction and quality of life. What needs to happen at a systemwide level? Campuses and systemwide should shift to thinking about

graduate students' experiences and mental health, and to making sure graduate students are enabled to perform at the highest level they can.

If you have any questions for us, please do not hesitate to contact me at emmerich@humnet.ucla.edu or via the Council's analyst, Elizabeth Feller, at efeller@senate.ucla.edu.

Best regards,

Michael Emmerich, Chair
Council on Planning and Budget

cc: Kathleen Bawn, Vice Chair/Chair-Elect, Academic Senate
Jessica Cattelino, Immediate Past Chair, Academic Senate
April de Stefano, Executive Director, Academic Senate
Elizabeth Feller, Associate Director, Academic Senate
Members of the Council on Planning and Budget