

February 7, 2024

Andrea Kasko, Chair
Academic Senate

Re: Systemwide Review: Interim Report of the Academic Planning Council Workgroup on the Future of Doctoral Education at the University of California

Dear Chair Kasko,

At its meetings on January 10, 2024, and February 7, 2024, the Council on Research (COR) reviewed and discussed the Interim Report of the Academic Planning Council Workgroup on the Future of Doctoral Education at the University of California. Members offered the following comments.

1. Clarity on Academic Expectations and GSR Employment Requirements: Members agreed that while the report comprehensively addresses various issues and solutions concerning the future of doctoral education, there is a lack of guidance regarding the distinction between academic expectations and GSR employment requirements. Standard policy guidelines are necessary to ensure consistency across departments and mentor laboratories.
2. Balancing Research Advancement and Employment: The current evaluation metrics primarily focus on traditional academic frameworks, potentially overlooking the significance of impactful scholarly research. Clear guidelines are necessary to assist faculty mentors and GSRs in balancing research activities with employment responsibilities, with consideration of the effort and time required for both roles.
3. Efficiency and Funding Support: Additional funding support is imperative, yet the university lacks the necessary infrastructure to secure various funding sources effectively. Members noted a deficiency in the grant support system, hindering faculty members' ability to attract extramural funding. Improving efficiency and exploring alternative resource targets are important steps toward addressing these challenges.
4. Private Sector Engagement and Faculty Incentives: Enhancing engagement with the private sector for endowments presents challenges due to the current system's limitations. Exploring models from private universities and implementing effective grant submission systems could potentially address this issue. Additionally, incentivizing faculty engagement through quantifiable measures or course release mechanisms requires consideration, alongside ensuring equitable distribution of workload and mentorship responsibilities.
5. Implementing Actionable Items: Guidance for schools and departments on implementing actionable items is essential, such as evaluating progress and fostering effective changes in graduate education. Collaborative efforts between departments and schools are necessary to ensure the successful

implementation of strategies for professional development non-academic employment prospects, particularly in departments with less junior faculty to more mid-career or senior faculty.

6. Ongoing Issues and Recommendations: Certain ongoing issues, including the delineation of GSR roles and requirements for fellowships, require further consideration and clarification. Additionally, the potential centralization of admissions for PhD programs warrants exploration and discussion to address any associated challenges effectively.

Thank you for the opportunity to review and comment. If you have any questions for us, please do not hesitate to contact me at asampath@jsei.ucla.edu or via the Council's analyst, Elizabeth Feller, at efeller@senate.ucla.edu.

Sincerely,

Alapakkam Sampath, Chair
Council on Research

cc: Kathy 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 Research