

February 21, 2024

To: Andrea Kasko, Chair
UCLA Academic Senate

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

At its meetings on January 16, 2024 and February 13, 2024, the Committee on Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (CODEI) discussed the Future of Graduate Programs and Graduate Student Support Joint Task Force Reports.

On its face, the committee found this report unsatisfactory. The importance of graduate students was stated multiple times in the report, but the proposed actions reflected otherwise. There seems to be a disjuncture between the identification of the school of graduate education and not being willing to commit to finding the funds to ensure that UCLA maintains its reputation to train experts in their fields. CODEI members are concerned that cutting back on funding and reducing the amount of available opportunities would have an overwhelming effect on minority groups.

Members found that the report presented did not include any resolutions to the issues that the data identified. The report did work to identify areas of weakness and proposed some changes that could be made, but the language included alluded to a reality where none of the items proposed would make a lasting difference. Members understand that it may be difficult to arrive to a conclusion as each graduate program faces its own challenges, but that does not negate the need for a solution to an affordable experience for all graduate students.

The report dismissed the idea that graduate students should not be charged tuition since it would be a loss of external funds, but members identified that UCLA's method of charging tuition is unique to other institutions and should be reconsidered.

There were also questions presented regarding the "time to finish" standard that is applied across all programs. Members felt that this metric did not take into consideration different student groups such as international students.

The committee felt strongly that it is unrealistic to think that the quality of education will not deteriorate if undergraduate students begin to fill the roles once held by graduate students, such as the role of teaching assistants.

We appreciate the opportunity to review the report and provide comments. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me (thall@mednet.ucla.edu) or Academic Senate Policy Analyst, Lilia Valdez (lvaldez@senate.ucla.edu).

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Theodore Hall", written in a cursive style.

Theodore Hall, Chair
Committee on Diversity, Equity and Inclusion

cc: Kathy Bawn, Vice Chair/Chair-Elect, UCLA Academic Senate
Jessica Cattelino, Immediate Past Chair, UCLA Academic Senate
April de Stefano, Executive Director, UCLA Academic Senate
Lilia Valdez, Senior Policy Analyst, UCLA Academic Senate
Members of the Committee on Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion