Graduate Council

Faculty – graduate student advisee relationship

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May 2, 2024

Darnell Hunt
Executive Vice Chancellor and Provost

Re: Relationship Between Faculty and Graduate Students

Dear Executive Vice Chancellor and Provost Hunt,

At the April 25, 2024, meeting of the Executive Board, members reviewed the Graduate Council’s attached letters regarding the relationship between faculty and graduate students.

Members voted in favor of a motion to endorse the letters and remind Administration that these issues are relevant to faculty rebuilding as well as the insufficiently thought-through financing of the recent labor contracts and their impact on faculty.

Members recognized these are huge questions that are not easily answered, however the attached letters offer some are concrete suggestions worthy of consideration. Also, members and the graduate student representative suggested a focus on the mentorship relationship.

The Executive Board welcomes a response that addresses the suggestions raised in these letters, and looks forward to continued engagement on these issues.

Sincerely,

Andrea Kasko
Chair, UCLA Academic Senate

Encl.

Cc: Kathleen Bawn, Vice Chair/Chair Elect, UCLA Academic Senate
    Jessica Cattelino, Immediate Past Chair, UCLA Academic Senate
    April de Stefano, Executive Director, UCLA Academic Senate
    Emily Le, Principal Policy Analyst, UCLA Academic Senate
    Adriana Rosalez, Administrative Analyst, UCLA Academic Senate
    Emily Rose, Assistant Provost and Chief of Staff to the EVCP, UCLA
    Brooke Scelza, Chair, Graduate Council
March 22, 2024

To: Andrea Kasko, Chair, UCLA Academic Senate

From: Brooke Scelza, Chair, Graduate Council

Re: Relationship between faculty and graduate students

At its meeting on February 16, 2024, the Graduate Council’s Administrative Committee discussed the unaddressed issue raised in the Future of Graduate Programs and Graduate Student Support Joint Task Force Report regarding the relationship between faculty and their graduate student advisees and offered questions and comments for consideration.

Via independent review, the Graduate Council endorsed the Administrative Committee’s memo regarding the relationship between faculty and graduate students and transmits it to the Executive Board for consideration.

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.

Enclosure: 2024-02-28 Administrative Committee Memo re: Relationship between faculty and graduate students
To:        Chris Erickson, Vice Chair, Graduate Council  
From:     Brooke Scelza, Chair, Graduate Council’s Administrative Committee  
Date:     February 28, 2024  

Re:         Relationship between faculty and graduate students  

At its February 16, 2024 meeting, the Graduate Council’s Administrative Committee discussed the unaddressed issue raised in the *Future of Graduate Programs and Graduate Student Support Joint Task Force Report* regarding the relationship between faculty members and their graduate student advisees and the recommendation to identify hurdles and ways to retain the interpersonal aspects of the mentor/mentee and employer/employee relationships.

The Administrative Committee offers the following questions and considerations to the Executive Board and Administration:  

- How best to get information on what the issues are from both graduate students and faculty? Are there existing surveys/resources we can view (particularly post-2022)?
- The Administrative Committee notes a need for supervisory training for faculty, particularly on how to supervise and mentor ASEs and GSRs.  
  - Is there potential for collaboration between the Teaching and Learning Center, Division of Graduate Education’s Graduate & Postdoctoral Success Unit, and Employee & Labor Relations to develop faculty training on effective supervision and mentorship?  
  - How might these trainings vary across campus (e.g., North vs South, lab vs non-lab)?
- The Administrative Committee recommends the development of guidelines and best practices that address the following:  
  - Supervising and evaluating ASEs and GSRs  
    - Hiring unit process for evaluating ASEs and GSRs  
    - Timesheets are currently set up as the faculty is only approving whether a leave is taken. It currently does not track hours worked. What can faculty do if ASEs and GSRs are not fulfilling their employment obligations?  
    - What is the process for opening an employee file?  
    - Are templates available for evaluating ASEs and GSRs similar to those available for evaluating lecturers? If not, who should create these? Will they be suggested or required? If suggested, will that be by department/division/class?  
    - How will these changes to supervision and evaluation affect faculty workload, and how will faculty be compensated for additional work?
  - Job offer and hiring process for ASEs and GSRs  
    - Process for making an offer to a graduate student  
    - Can performance evaluation be taken into consideration before the department offers a position? How?
What happens if an ASE or GSR is not meeting employment obligations and is already offered another TA or GSR position (e.g., through X years of promised funding in the initial offer letter)?

Should employment obligations be set out in the initial funding offer that students get upon admission (e.g., with contingencies about satisfactory performance)?

If you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to contact us via Graduate Council Analyst, Emily Le, at ele@senate.ucla.edu.