June 10 1999

JOHN SIMPSON  
Executive Vice Chancellor

DONALD BRENNEIS  
Chair, Graduate Council

Re: Report of the Graduate Student Issues Task Force

Dear John and Don:

The Graduate Student Issues Task Force has completed its review of current practices and policies related to graduate education. In the process, our focus and our discussions were affected by developments related to TA unionization. Soon after the Task Force began its work, elections for TA union representation were scheduled. This required us to consider carefully the appropriate scope of our discussions. Some graduate education issues that might have been part of our focus were linked to the election process. This was either because any attempt to address outstanding problems or propose a policy change would be illegal in the laboratory period leading up to the election or because the appropriate procedures for resolving the problem would of necessity be contingent on the election outcome. Given these constraints, the Task Force affirmed that its most productive role would be to focus on topics that were clearly distinct from those employment-related issues that may fall within the scope of union representation.

To identify key issues, the Task Force solicited questionnaire responses from all faculty graduate program directors, and from graduate student representatives in each program. We also received responses from chairs of departments without graduate programs and from college provosts, since these departments and colleges hire graduate students from other programs. We received 23 responses from faculty graduate program directors, department chairs and Provosts. Students in 4 programs provided us with responses. In addition, the Task Force found the Survey on Graduate Student Satisfaction, conducted by Dean Ron Henderson in Spring 1998, to be very informative and useful in identifying problems faced by graduate students. The October 1998 report of the AAU’s Committee on Graduate Education was also instructive in providing a discussion of desirable practices in graduate education, while the Millennium Committee Report articulated UCSC’s goals in the area of graduate education. We also read documents on graduate student rights and responsibilities from other universities.

Graduate education at UCSC is a critical component of the institution’s mission to foster excellence in research and scholarship at all levels. The Task Force identified five key topics that are of overriding importance for strengthening the quality of graduate education at UCSC and improving the educational experiences of our graduate students. These are:

I. Providing adequate advising;
II. Developing a sense of community to support professional development;
III. Improving financial support;
IV. Ensuring access to avenues of appeal;
V. Strengthening graduate services;

Each of these topics is discussed at length in the report. Following the discussion of these topics, the report notes some areas of academic policy that the Graduate Council may wish to consider.

Our primary recommendations are:

1. The role of annual evaluations of all graduate students should be strengthened. Currently, there is wide variation in how seriously these are treated, and in some programs, students seem unaware either of the existence of such evaluations or of the methods by which they are conducted. Neither situation is acceptable. We recommend that the Graduate Council, together with the Graduate Division ensure that each program has in place an adequate means of conducting evaluations and that students are informed of the process and receive copies of their evaluations.

2. Advising is a crucial component of graduate education, and it is the faculty’s responsibility to ensure students receive regular, informative, fair, and helpful advice at all stages of their careers as graduate students. We recommend that graduate advising be treated as an important component of teaching and service as part of normal faculty personnel reviews.

3. To encourage programs to take concrete steps to foster a sense of community among their students, faculty, and staff, the program review charge for regular six-year reviews should include a standard request that the external review committee comment on the program’s success in achieving this objective.

4. All programs should create a written description of their informal complaint resolution process and publish it in their graduate handbook and on their program’s Internet Web site.

5. Reflecting the year-round nature of graduate student status, campus services such as the health center should consider ways that such services as counseling, medical, and psychological services can be made available year-round.

6. Consistent with the campus’s plans to expand the number of graduate students, considerations need to be made for additional graduate student housing.

7. High priority should be placed on ensuring that the Graduate Division has staff to support graduate students in such services as grant writing assistance.

8. Many on campus have stressed the critical importance that graduate fellowships can play in attracting potential students. The Academic Advisory Board for Development
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(AABD) should evaluate adding named graduate fellowships to its list of campus fundraising priorities. The Graduate Division and the academic deans should work with programs to ensure multi-year offers can be made when appropriate.

9. Finally, because our report offers many suggestions for advising, designing appeals procedures, and developing a sense of community, we recommend that it be circulated to all graduate programs.

I. Advising of Graduate Students

Concerns about the mentoring and advising of graduate students\(^1\) have been frequently raised in recent national reports and publications (e.g., *Adviser, Teacher, Role Model, Friend: On Being a Mentor to Students in Science and Engineering*, October 1997; *AAU Committee on Graduate Education: Report and Recommendations*, October 1998). The recent “UCSC Graduate Student Satisfaction Survey” (conducted by the Graduate Division in Spring 1998) documents the wide variation from program to program in student satisfaction with general advising and orientation, academic mentoring, and feedback on performance. Responses to a questionnaire circulated by the Task Force indicated that UCSC graduate programs have different and varied approaches to student advising. The challenges and rewards of effective advising are heightened by the changing career prospects for advanced degree recipients, and excellence in advising is increasingly important for student achievement.

In framing our recommendations, we recognize that different graduate programs have distinct cultures and practices, along with different requirements, and that these will shape how successful advising practices can best be implemented and improved. There is a wide range of current practices among our graduate programs, with some having formal systems of assessment with clear opportunities for student input into the process and others having less formal mechanisms. We highlight the complementary roles of the graduate program, the graduate adviser, and the graduate student in assessing progress and advising, as well as address issues best handled at a campus-wide level. Multiple opinions and diverse oversight can yield a more robust view of progress. We note that there are various moments of critical importance in each student’s graduate career, including the first year in graduate school, taking qualifying exams, preparing a thesis proposal, advancing to candidacy (for Ph.D. students), completing the thesis, identifying further and satisfying career opportunities, and securing employment. We seek to define effective advising practices that achieve the following goals: to assess and foster student progress; to collect data about and to assess programmatic effectiveness; to strengthen graduate program reputation and standing on the national and international levels; to

\(^1\) A distinction is often made between mentoring and advising. For example, *Adviser, Teacher, Role Model, Friend: On Being a Mentor to Students in Science and Engineering* defines a mentor as “someone who takes a special interest in helping another person develop into a successful professional,” with mentoring encompassing a personal, as well as professional, relationship. An adviser is explicitly charged with the academic development and progress of a graduate student, and effective advising is but one part of effective mentoring. We restrict our remarks in this document to the specifics of advising by departments and faculty advisers.
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develop a sense of community within and across graduate programs; and to contribute to the professional development of graduate students.

Recommendations for Advising: Principles into Practice

- The Graduate Program

  Graduate Handbook. Each program’s Graduate Handbook should serve as the primary summary of policies and procedures related to graduate students. It can also serve as a useful resource for faculty as well as graduate students. Programs need to ensure that their handbooks are complete, up-to-date, and accessible.

  Annual Review. Graduate programs are required to give an annual review of graduate student progress, reporting progress for each student as satisfactory or unsatisfactory to the graduate dean. This review should result in written feedback to the adviser and student, documented in the student’s file. The graduate division currently circulates a suggested template for use in this process.

  Program Requirements and Rationale. Program requirements should be clearly stated and clearly communicated, with frequent and continuing communication at different times in the graduate student’s career. The rationale for the requirements should be articulated in the context of the student’s academic and professional development.

  Expectations and Assessment of Progress. Graduate programs should have a clear advising structure for all graduate students, with a set of normative expectations for student progress and with regular opportunities for monitoring this progress. The formal adviser assignment is one part of this, but departmental or committee involvement in advising is a vital component. This allows earlier identification and resolution of adviser-student conflicts and miscommunications, and provides a context for communicating general program expectations. For example, departments should consider establishing pre-thesis advising committees for each student, to meet annually with the student, either individually or collectively.

  Increase Range of Interactions with Faculty. Graduate programs should seek to increase the contact of graduate students with faculty members other than the graduate adviser throughout the graduate career. This can serve to provide a wider range of feedback to the student, and it increases communication throughout the program.

  Graduate Students as an Advising Resource. Graduate programs may find that using graduate student themselves as peer advisers and sources of information, formal and informal, promotes the sense of graduate student community. Information can be transmitted effectively from more advanced graduate students to those earlier in their graduate careers. A committee of peer advisers, elected by the graduate students in a program, could serve as an information and advising resource for both faculty and students.
**Narrative Evaluations and Course Performance.** Graduate programs should monitor graduate student progress in required and elective courses and in independent study and thesis research units, watching for early warning signs of inadequate progress or difficulty. Monitoring course reports for graduate courses for any unsatisfactory grades is a necessary but not sufficient means of providing this oversight.

**When Progress Is Inadequate.** Graduate programs should intervene directly and in a timely manner in cases where student progress is inadequate or unsatisfactory, providing specific criteria and a timeline to remedy the situation, and recommending academic warning or academic probation when warranted. This gives students a clear and unambiguous statement of deficiencies and a timeline for improvement.

**Graduate Seminar Courses.** Graduate seminar courses, sponsored by the programs, can serve to effectively communicate information about the structure of the particular discipline (e.g., research sources and methods), about teaching in that field (e.g., development of course syllabi and teaching portfolios), about professional development (e.g., research presentations, grant preparation), and about career development (e.g., funding and fellowship opportunities, career pathways).

**Resolving Problems.** Graduate programs, and the campus as a whole, need to provide students with access to procedures for dealing with conflicts and problems as they arise.

- The Graduate Adviser

  The graduate adviser plays a critical role in a graduate student’s career. The responsibility of accepting an advisory relationship for a graduate student carries significant obligations, as well as the potential for significant professional and personal rewards. There are a variety of successful approaches for the adviser role, and we highlight some features all share.

  **Regular Interactions.** The graduate adviser should have regular meetings with each advisee, and the graduate adviser should be regularly accessible. This includes designing means for effective communication when professional and field work responsibilities, or sabbaticals, might lead to extended or frequent absences from campus on the part of either the advisor or the advisee.

  **Feedback on Expectations and Performance.** The graduate adviser should regularly and explicitly provide feedback on performance and expectations to the graduate student. This is true in cases of satisfactory and exceptional performance, and especially critical in cases where performance is problematic. Students should be given sufficient warning of inadequate performance, as well as explicit goals and sufficient time to assess whether improvement can be achieved. Although frequently neglected, the narrative evaluations for independent study and thesis research can serve this role effectively by explicitly stating the expectations for a given quarter’s work and how these expectations were or were not met.
**Advice on Critical Transitions.** The graduate adviser should serve as a source of academic and professional advice on all stages of the graduate career, with special attention to the major hurdles in a graduate career (such as qualifying exams, thesis proposals, completing a thesis, and obtaining a placement).

**Responsibility to Graduate Students.** The adviser needs to be aware of the power differential between a graduate student and an adviser. The graduate adviser should have the best interests of the graduate student foremost, with high ethical standards in the treatment of students and their intellectual work. This includes the need for timely and constructive feedback, for appropriate recognition of a student’s intellectual contributions, and for effective and supportive career advising.

- **The Graduate Student**

  **Active Role in Seeking Advice and Feedback.** Graduate students need to be active participants in seeking advice and in getting feedback on their progress, ideally from more than one source. The graduate student is responsible for keeping the adviser informed of progress, obstacles, and plans. For example, students can submit a brief written annual or quarterly progress report to the adviser.

  **Student Interaction with Progress Assessments.** Graduate students should be afforded the opportunity to provide input during regular assessments of their progress, and they should receive regular written feedback about their progress.

- **The Campus**

  **Written Guidelines.** It would be useful to have the various parties involved draft a Statement of Graduate Student Rights and Responsibilities: other campuses (UC Davis to cite one example) have crafted such written guidelines. Similarly, a set of advising guidelines for graduate programs would help bring the best practices from individual programs to the wider campus community.

  **Counseling Services.** Graduate school is a time of enormous professional and personal challenge and growth. Improved year-round access to counseling and psychological services for graduate students would provide a useful complement to the advising activities in the programs for those issues that move beyond the academic arena.

  **Fair and Impartial Sources of Advice.** It would be enormously useful for graduate students to know how to access fair and impartial sources of advice in resolving difficult issues. This can be achieved on an informal basis now, but the campus should consider more formal mechanisms to provide this, perhaps along the lines of the former faculty mentoring program. Early attention to small problems can often head off major problems in the future.
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*Campus-Wide Career and Professional Information.* There are many efforts, like advising forums on career options for individuals with graduate degrees, that can be too large and expensive for individual graduate programs to mount on their own. Campus-wide forums on graduate school issues and career pathways could be sponsored by the Graduate Division, for example.

**II. The Development of a Community of Professionals**

Graduate students have an important status in the university -- they are new members of the community of professionals to which the faculty already belong. Thus, their connection to their department and to university life is more intricate than that of most undergraduate students. Their unique status requires special consideration of the processes through which they are integrated into the academic community and participate as professionals in their discipline. Academic departments have a responsibility beyond simply training graduate students in the content and methods of their discipline; departments also have a responsibility to involve graduate students in the very processes that give rise to the intellectual life and vitality of the discipline.

Here we focus on three important aspects of this process, (1) developing a sense of community, such that graduate students are contributing members of their department and discipline; (2) professionalization, whereby they learn the professional practices of their community; and (3) improving career prospects as a result of their professionalization within the community.

Members of a community are defined by the roles they play and the activities in which they engage. To the extent that new community members engage in the same activities as the established members, the new members are recognized by others and also begin to recognize themselves as legitimate participants. To the extent that people feel a part of the community, they become invested in its welfare. Thus, graduate training should involve students in the activities of the department and profession, to an extent that is appropriate to the students’ own skills and goals.

The graduate students’ experiences in these matters vary widely on our campus. In some departments the students feel as if they are treated almost as intellectual equals to the faculty, whereas in other departments students see the faculty as remote and unresponsive. Some departments involve students in a wide variety of activities, such as planning curricula, giving colloquia, holding regular meetings with the department chair, and organizing various social activities, whereas other departments involve the graduate students in few if any aspects of the intellectual, administrative, or social life of the department. In some cases professional development is left to the student himself or herself, whereas in other cases departments coordinate career advising, interviewing workshops, and formal coursework in grant-writing, teaching, and other professional activities.
When graduate students are engaged in the professional life of their discipline they appear to enjoy a better sense of community and higher morale. In no case did students complain that they were too involved in such activities or expected to do too much. To the contrary, students expressed dissatisfaction when they were not involved or their input was disregarded.

Components of Professional Development

Professional life is complex and requires a wide range of skills. Although most graduate programs tend to emphasize the kinds of skills needed for an academic career, it is important to keep in mind that many students will pursue careers in business, community, government agencies, and industry. Although many skills acquired in graduate school do generalize to multiple settings, we also need to devote explicit efforts to preparing students for career opportunities outside academe. Here we identify several key components of graduate student development, and then later suggest a variety of activities that can promote this development.

Professional skills
• Methods and content of scholarship in the chosen field
• Dissemination of knowledge, including the various types of presentations, performances, writing, and speaking appropriate to the field
• Pedagogical training, including methods and philosophy of teaching in the discipline
• Grant-writing
• Participation in the vision and development of the profession

Social competencies
• Networking
• Social skills and self-presentation
• Ethics

Career development
• Career planning
• Skills assessment
• Preparation for job search and interviewing

Activities That Promote Professional Development

The graduate students’ collaboration in coursework, research, teaching, service, and social activities, as well as the provision of good quality peer and faculty advising and mentoring, should combine to integrate students into the community of scholars and provide broad-based professional development.
Across the campus, academic departments engage their graduate students in a wide variety of such activities, although the inclusion of any particular activity in a given department varies considerably. The following lists are intended to give an idea of the variety of ways in which graduate students can become integrated into departmental life and participate in professional life. It is not intended to suggest that all of these could or should be implemented in each department.

**Intellectual life of the department.** Academic life centers around creative intellectual pursuits. Graduate students learn the established bodies of knowledge, as well as participate in developing and discovering new knowledge. Students can both plan and participate in many of the activities that give rise to the intellectual vitality of the community of scholars. Examples include:

- Participation in graduate curriculum development, including recommending seminar topics and offering input on the timing of course offerings. (In some departments, students mentioned that they had considerable difficulty fulfilling course requirements because courses were offered on an irregular or unpredictable basis. In some cases this may delay advancing to candidacy.)
- Scheduling colloquia and recommending colloquium speakers
- Giving colloquia on a regular basis (e.g., once a year, or in regular graduate seminar series)
- Giving joint faculty-student colloquia, where both present together
- Planning of workshop and symposia
- Planning and participation in mini-conferences with neighboring colleges and universities, or on special themes within the department
- Participation in research clusters on the campus
- Reviewing and critiquing the manuscripts, performances, and presentations of other professionals in the field
- Providing feedback to other faculty and student practice conference talks, posters, etc.
- Hiring of new faculty (Involvement varies but may include attending talks, attending receptions, and evaluating the candidates.)

**Service and administration.** Shared governance in the university depends on faculty who are actively involved in decision-making and leadership in their departments and the campus community. Graduate students who participate in these processes become invested in the well-being of their community, as well as learn important skills in leadership, negotiation, perspective-taking, and navigating bureaucratic quagmires. Furthermore, students’ input is important to the faculty in helping them develop fair and meaningful policies and procedures. A variety of avenues exist through which graduate students can participate, including:

- Representation at department faculty meetings;
- Representation on department graduate committees;
- Holding regular meetings with department chair and staff to discuss concerns and business matters;
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- Participation in the development of policies governing the graduate program;
- Input into decisions about how resources are distributed among graduate students, such as travel funds, research awards, office space, computing facilities, etc.;
- Recruitment of new graduate students; (Many students play a role in hosting prospective graduate students during a visiting weekend. Some students also read selected portions of applicant files.)
- Orientation and mentoring of new students;
- Peer mentoring.

Social life. Social activities provide a setting in which graduate students and faculty can interact in a more relaxed environment and on more equal footing. This provides an opportunity to establish closer ties and to share ideas in a context that involves less formal and less institutionalized roles and interactions. It also enables students to develop relationships with faculty other than their own advisors, contributing to better balance and perspective in their work. Such activities are thus highly effective for building a sense of belonging and high morale for both students and faculty. Formal and informal social events can include:

- Organizing social-academic activities for faculty and students, such as film nights, happy-hour discussions, etc.
- Beginning- and end-of-the-year parties and picnics
- Informal weekly events, such as teas, round-table discussions, or happy hours
- Parties at faculty homes
- Get-togethers with small groups, such as lab groups or research groups
- Attending dinners and receptions with colloquium speakers and visitors
- Lab dinners with faculty, post-docs, grads, and undergrads in a lab or study group
- Holiday parties
- Occasional outings or “field trips”
- Parties to celebrate new Ph.D. recipients
- Shared lounge areas

Professional development. A graduate student’s long-term goal is to carve out an independent and rewarding career path, not simply to earn the advanced degree as an end in itself. Therefore, in addition to providing intellectual training, graduate programs must also be mindful of the long-term professional development of their students. Career planning can take place through various avenues, including:

- Course offerings in professional development, grant-writing, teaching in the discipline, going on the job market, etc.;
- Involvement of Campus Career Services; (Students across the campus have expressed dissatisfaction with the fact that Career Services provides virtually no assistance for graduate students.)
- Career workshops sponsored by the Graduate Division in conjunction with Career Services;
- Providing guidance in career selection and planning, including information about
finding and selecting internships, post-doctoral positions, and career options outside of academia;
• Alerting students to sources of job information, including publications, conference interviewing, networking, etc.;
• Preparing job applications, including curriculum vitae, resumes, and cover letters;
• Training in interviewing skills, including all phases of the site visit;
• Providing realistic outlooks and good information on job prospects and requirements within and outside academia;
• Posting and disseminating job announcements, through bulletin boards, e-mail, and web sites, through both the departments and Graduate Division;
• Sponsoring job fairs and recruitment activities on campus;
• Conducting job orientation workshops for advanced students;
• Conducting mock interviews, practice talks and performances, and critiques;
• Providing feedback on practice job talks, conference talks, performances, and presentations;
• Tracking placements and career paths of degree recipients;
• Involving students in grant writing with faculty and on their own
• Disseminating information about grant opportunities;
• Reading grants, research proposals, conferences submissions, etc., written by faculty and other graduate students.

These various activities are intended to suggest ways in which departments can provide for broad professional development of our graduate students, and help them participate as new and enthusiastic members in their chosen community of professionals. Naturally, the type and extent of graduate student involvement in the intellectual and administrative activities of the department are at the discretion of the individual department. Each department must ensure its own long-term welfare, and because graduate students represent only one of many constituencies represented and served, their interests must be balanced with those of the undergraduates, faculty, staff, and other members of the larger community.

It is essential to be forthright with graduate students about the role they play in any particular function. In some cases their input may be weighted heavily in a decision, but in other cases it may play a less decisive role. For example, in one instance graduate students reported that they had expended considerable effort in the process of hiring new faculty members, only to feel that their opinions were ultimately ignored; this had a negative impact on the morale of many students. Departments need to be sincere and set realistic expectations about the terms of students’ involvement in various decisions. It is important to explain why their role may be limited in some situations, and to justify an appropriate level of involvement.

Likewise, it is important not to overburden graduate students with administrative tasks to the detriment of their progress toward their degree. Graduate students themselves can play the major role in deciding which departmental functions they would like to be
involved in, and make strategic decisions as to how to allocate their time and resources in this regard.

Finally, some aspects of healthy community life are less tangible than the kinds of activities outlined above, but still lay an important foundation for good morale and the vital collaboration of our graduate students in our community of scholars. These include (1) ensuring good open lines of communication between faculty and students, (2) providing rational and defensible explanation of policies, requirements, and decisions, (3) providing assurance that students can express their opinions without fear of retribution, and (4) providing safe settings in which students can present and critique their work.

III. Financial Support

As a result of insufficient or uncertain funding, our graduate programs face two general problems, one a restricted ability to recruit new students, the other a difficulty in supporting dissertation level research by advanced students. It is clear that the problem of financing recruitment affects every department in the same way while the problem of finding support for graduate student research affects departments in the Humanities and the Social Sciences somewhat differently than it does departments in the Natural Sciences and Engineering.

Recruitment of New Students

All departments agree that the existing block grant allocations are inadequate to the purpose of recruiting the best-qualified new graduate students. One general complaint is that the current high level of out-of-state tuition means that, in many instances, the recruitment budget of individual departments is consumed by tuition fellowships before any thought can be given to creating Regents’ Fellowships for incoming students. An even more serious problem is the recruitment of non-resident, foreign students whose financial drain on block allocations is serious and continuous throughout their careers, at least until advancement to candidacy. This makes departments much less willing and able to recruit out-of-state and foreign students. If the situation persists it will be increasingly difficult for UCSC to continue to develop as an internationally recognized research institution; it will likely become a provincial university able, at best, to recruit the bulk of its graduate students from the State of California.

There are other important issues related to graduate recruitment and block allocations. One is the fact that the rise in tuition, fees, and stipend included in the normal Regents’ Fellowship has not been matched by any increase in allocation to departments so that, even if the block allocation has remained the same, each department is able to create fewer fellowships from that allocation. If this trend is not reversed, departments will find it increasingly difficult to engage in effective recruitment. Presently, many departments are reluctant to, or view themselves as unable to, make competitive multi-year offers with confidence, whether they rely on the block allocation or on competitive and uncertain external sources for funding advanced students. Our multi-year offers run for two, three, or four years, depending on available resources, and usually consist of a mixture of
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Fellowships, TAships, and GSRships. They are simply not competitive with the four and five-year fellowship offers that the best universities make to the top candidates for admission. Often, too, those offers are in the form of named fellowships which carry, beyond the monetary amounts involved, the intangible of prestige.

Support for Graduate Student Research

All departments face difficulties in funding graduate student research but the specific forms these difficulties take are largely dependent on established patterns of faculty research and funding in the disciplines. Broadly speaking there are two patterns of research and funding. The first encompasses the Natural Sciences, Engineering and some Social Science disciplines, while the second encompasses Humanities, Arts and some Social Science disciplines. In the first pattern (hereafter called the NS pattern for the sake of brevity) faculty research is largely funded by outside sources. Part of that funding includes money for GSRships that provide financial support for graduate student research. In the NS pattern the block allocation is often used solely for the recruitment of new students with the expectation that continuing students would be supported with TAships and GSRships. While the faculty have done a good job overall in obtaining outside funding in a highly competitive situation, there are a number of difficulties that need to be stressed. One is that grants must pay tuition for any out-of-state or foreign student hired as a GSR (above a minimum percentage time). This makes supporting such a student an expensive proposition. Another difficulty is the increasing uncertainty about obtaining funding and uncertainties about the timing of funding. In situations where the faculty member loses funding or does not receive it in a timely fashion, advanced graduate students have little to fall back on to support their own research. The block allocation monies are usually already committed to recruit new students, TAships are limited in availability, and there are few outside bodies that offer direct funding for graduate student research.

In the second pattern (hereafter called the HUM pattern for the sake of brevity) research is very much an individual enterprise. A faculty member engages in research during either sabbaticals funded by the home institution or leaves of absence funded by the few outside agencies which will underwrite the individual researcher's work by replacing his or her salary. Such agencies rarely provide funds to support a GSR. Occasionally, a faculty member can raise money to pay for a quarter's work by a GSR, but such work is invariably focused on a particular part of the faculty member's research and has, at best, a tangential or accidental connection with the graduate student's own research. Since in the HUM pattern there is virtually no funding available for GSRships, graduate student research, which in some fields requires travel to do field work or visit libraries and archives, has to be supported from other sources. There are few sources of direct outside funding for graduate student research so that, in the end, most students fall back on their departments for financial support either in the form of TAships or grants from the block allocation. In the HUM pattern the departments normally reserve some part of their block allocation to support the research of advanced graduate students. Over their careers, most students are supported by four to six years of TAship, plus an occasional quarter of fellowship drawn from the block allocation. One consequence of this situation is that it is difficult for graduate students in the HUM pattern to keep their
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research projects going over sustained periods, and the result is a characteristically lengthy time to degree completion.

At the heart of the problem of financing graduate student research campus-wide is the limited availability of fellowship funds. Before going on to suggest some ways to alleviate this problem it is necessary to address another of its manifestations, namely contestation over the block allocations. Departments in the NS pattern resent the fact that the more successful they are in obtaining outside funding the smaller their block allocation becomes. They believe that they are punished for being successful. A more positive way to look at this situation is as a small progressive tax on the "haves" to help the "have nots" in the HUM pattern who do not have available to them outside funding agencies which might help support graduate student research. In the end, such a "tax" helps support the intellectual vitality and international visibility of the campus as an important center of learning.

There are some possible solutions to the problem of funding for graduate student research. One is increased administrative support in the Graduate Division office for a range of tasks including help for faculty with applications for graduate student training grants, identifying possible external funding sources for graduate student research, and grant writing help for graduate students. Another solution is a concerted development campaign by University Advancement, in cooperation with the departments and the Academic Deans including the Dean of the Graduate Division, to raise funds to create named graduate fellowships. In this way the funds to support graduate education at UCSC will come close to approaching those of other UC campuses, as well as those of other major national institutions of higher education.

IV. Access to Avenues of Appeal

Graduate students have the right to expect that their programs, and the campus at large, will offer access to fair and impartial avenues through which a student may seek to address problems. The responses to the Task Force’s surveys of graduate departments and graduate students revealed that a variety of more or less informal processes has been devised to help resolve problems graduate students encounter during their stay at UCSC. However, few of the department graduate handbooks that we have examined mention this fact. Thus, many students may not be aware of the options that are available to them when faced with a problem.

Some departments do describe the appeals process in their graduate handbooks. The procedures for some departments take into account the desire of some aggrieved graduate students to air complaints in a confidential manner to avoid potential unpleasant consequences. Experience suggests that in many (perhaps most) such cases, there is only a limited possibility for full resolution of a problem when the complainant is not willing to be identified. Even so, partial solutions can sometimes be a big improvement.

The processes that departments have developed address a broad range of potential concerns, and they tend to focus on problems arising in the context of graduate program
requirements and academic employment. An appendix to this report provides a summary of the departmental processes and surveys other relevant grievance and appeal procedures, informal and formal, available to graduate students at UCSC.

In view of the wide variety of processes already existing, and in view of drawbacks historically associated with proposals for a centralized graduate student appeals/grievance procedure (see Appendix), it is difficult to make specific recommendations that would suit all graduate departments. Nonetheless, we recommend that departments review their current informal grievance procedures and consider ways to improve them in the interests of improving the quality of graduate student life. Specifically, departments should consider the following suggestions:

- Create a written description of your department’s informal complaint resolution process.
- Publish it in your department graduate student handbook and in your department Internet Web site.
- Make provisions for confidential airing of grievances and for generic responses such as a “homily” on the topic by the department chair at a department meeting.
- Advise graduate students where they can find information about informal and formal grievance and appeal procedures. Most of the important ones applicable to all UCSC students are listed in The Rule Book. The Graduate Student Handbook describes those that apply specifically to graduate students.
- Encourage suggestions and constructive criticism from graduate students about your department and its program. University of California Policy expressly favors development of administrative procedures that impact students in consultation with students. Giving graduate students a voice wherever practicable is good for student morale and helps a program stay in touch with its students’ needs.
- Treat graduate students with civility and respect, as junior colleagues. This will help foster a climate of trust and will likely forestall grievances and appeals.
- Arrange training for graduate students and graduate advisers in conflict resolution and mediation techniques.

V. Services to Graduate Students

Graduate education is a key mission of the University of California, and the Millennium Committee has urged that all faculty have the opportunity to work with graduate students. Yet graduate students often feel their importance to the educational mission goes unnoticed. This is particularly true when graduate students have occasion to use campus services. Many units responsible for serving all students focus on the
undergraduate student population. As a consequence, many graduate students feel that their special needs are not addressed.

It is important to keep in mind that many graduate students on this campus are from out of state or even out of the country. Coming to Santa Cruz, often from very far away, entailed huge expense and commitment and often involved undergoing major disruptions in their personal lives. In return, much more sensitivity towards graduate students is needed from campus services such as the housing office, the office of financial aid, and student health services. Certainly the campus can't be asked to solve all the problems of graduate students, but the creation of a more positive relationship between the administrative service units and graduate students is both necessary and plausible. It is important to overcome the perception on the part of many graduate students that the campus is not designed to address their needs.

The following highlights some areas in which current graduate student needs are not being adequately met:

- In some programs, the curriculum is limited. Funding and faculty time and energy go towards teaching undergraduate classes, which keep department enrollment numbers high but hinder the availability of graduate seminars. While taking seminars in other departments is an option, there is no substitute for seminars within a graduate student's own discipline. Even though the campus no longer receives funding under a formula that gives greater weight to graduate enrollments, the needs of the graduate curriculum should be adequately weighted in making decisions about the allocation of faculty positions to departments.

- Child care facilities on campus provide excellent service, but they have long waiting lists.

- The health center is geared towards the needs of undergraduates. Graduate students need more privacy, and as older students, their health care needs are often long-term as opposed to the "critical care" approach of a walk-in health clinic.

- Students from a variety of departments have expressed concern with the lack of job placement facilities. While individual departments clearly have an important role to play here, the Career Services office also needs to be aware of graduate students' needs. Additionally, Career Services could provide services for graduate students' domestic partners, who often relocate to the Santa Cruz area when their partners are admitted to the University.

- The search for housing in Santa Cruz is an expensive, dehumanizing and often humiliating process; arriving in September without prior arrangements often means being homeless for several months. Unless graduate students are able to commute from the Bay Area, the only feasible option to local housing is the campus grad housing complex. However, older students are not always willing (or able) to live in cramped, expensive quarters with three other people. For students with children,
family student housing has a long waiting list, often necessitating deferred enrollment and loss of financial aid offers. If the University wishes to continue to attract top-notch graduate students, the housing situation needs to be rectified. Other state universities offer low-cost, single-unit housing for graduate students; perhaps these could serve as a model for UCSC.

- Both CATS and graduate student computer labs need improvement. A standard response from CATS when graduate students seek assistance or information is, "you just need to upgrade." This is not always a possibility for people living on strict graduate student budgets; CATS needs to recognize that many graduate students are working with older software and/or hardware. Further, computers in graduate labs are often inadequate for the research needs of graduate students; the ones in undergraduate labs are often of higher quality, but undergraduate labs don't offer the privacy, quiet and accessibility graduate students need.

- Library resources are inadequate for graduate students in many fields. Many journals are unavailable and re-shelving is painfully slow. Interlibrary Loan is slow as well, and the staff has expressed an inability to acquire theses and dissertations from outside the UC System, which for many graduate students are imperative for keeping up with current research. The dual MELVYL/UCSC search engines need to be combined in some manner for greater efficiency.

- As many graduate students live in Santa Cruz year-round, campus facilities need to be available during breaks.

VI. Graduate Academic Policies

Numerous departmental, campus, and university-wide policies apply to graduate students. Most programs produce a handbook (increasingly taking the form of a web-based document) that summarizes relevant programmatic requirements and procedures. The chief source of information for students is the Graduate Student Handbook. However, the Handbook contains some statements for which the underlying regulations have not been located. These statements deal with academic progress and qualifying exams. The Task Force recommends that the Graduate Council adopt formal policies consistent with the statements in the Handbook and that these be included in Appendix B of the Handbook.

To ensure consistency between the Handbook and the campus’s formal policies, the following need to be addressed:

Page 1 of the Handbook contains 10 points dealing with academic progress and indicates that the Graduate Council has approved these items. However, the governing regulations were not listed in Appendix B.
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Page 11 of the Handbook deals with the qualifying examination. The source for the regulations summarized by the following quotations from the Handbook has not been located:

“The examination results should be written as soon as possible after the exam, within the week would be preferable, but at least within the month.”
“If you fail the examination, you will be so informed, and a second (and final) examination will be arranged, unless the department successfully petitions the Graduate Council to waive your right to re-examination.”
“Only under extraordinary circumstances will a committee’s membership be altered between a failed examination and the second attempt.”

According to the Graduate Student Handbook, “an annual review of all students is mandatory” (p. 1). Each department is allowed to establish its own procedures for conducting these annual reviews, but the procedure is to be summarized in writing and on file at the Graduate Division, as well as distributed to all students.

The source of this policy appears to be a Federal financial aid regulation. As noted earlier in our report, the manner in which the annual review is implemented seems to vary widely among departments. Responses from graduate students to the questionnaire from the Graduate Student Issues Task Force suggested that students in some programs were unaware that an annual review was conducted or of the procedures followed. The Task Force recommends that the Graduate Council adopt a formal regulation requiring annual academic reviews of all graduate students. The administration should adopt procedures to ensure the policies adopted by the GC are implemented. This might include requiring compliance verification from the Graduate Dean as part of the regular six-year review of programs.

Graduate education is a critical part of the UCSC mission. We hope that the suggestions contained in our report prove useful as the campus strives to achieve and maintain excellence in all its graduate programs.

Sincerely,

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Graduate Student Issues Task Force

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Appendix: Graduate Student Grievance and Appeal Procedures

As part of the work of the Task Force, a subcommittee consisting of Sheila Gotttehrer and Tom Webster, examine the policies pertaining to graduate student appeals. Their recommendations have been discussed in the text of our report; we include here their more detailed background and review of current procedures.

Informal Procedures for Problem Resolution

Survey respondents described a range of informal processes for helping to resolve problems graduate students encounter within the academic community (see table). Some of these processes were described in terms of issues likely to arise in the context of academic employment. In accordance with the desire of the Task Force to avoid commenting on issues that may eventually be negotiated in the context of collective bargaining, this report will not discuss this area of potential graduate student concerns other than to note that “The 1998-99 Graduate Student Handbook” issued by the Division of Graduate Studies recommends (pp. 4, 23) that grievances arising out of academic employment be pursued according to the “formal” grievance procedure in Academic Personnel Manual (APM) section 140.2 The handbook summarizes this process (p. 23; also reproduced in the division’s “TA Handbook,” p. 75) as follows:

(1) discuss the matter with the relevant faculty member;

(2) appeal to the Department Chair if necessary;

(3) appeal to the Dean of Graduate Studies if the problem persists.

This three-step process is mirrored by informal processes that exist in some academic departments, according to survey responses. The process described here is “informal” (despite the term “formal” used in the handbook) because there are no procedural guidelines apart from the steps themselves: that is, there are no deadlines for stating a grievance or complaint, no requirements for the form such a grievance or complaint must take, no timelines for appeals, and no provisions for notice, hearings, or written decisions. Such procedural requirements constitute “due process” and are standard components of formal grievance and appeal procedures. The procedure as set out in detail at APM 140 includes a number of formal procedural requirements and standards.

According to the survey responses, informal complaint processes currently in use call for graduate students to begin by contacting “the relevant faculty member,” their faculty advisor, the graduate advisor, the “major professor,” the area head, or the department chair. Which of these people to contact depends both on the nature of the

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2 On p. 4, under the headings “Appeals” and “Academic Employment,” the handbook states, “Grievance procedures for student academic appointees are described in Section 410 [sic] of the University's Academic Personnel Manual (APM), Non-Senate Academic Appointees/ Grievances.” The cited section number (“410”) appears to be a typographical error for “140.” Those who have reason to consult APM 140 should also consult CAPPM 008.140.
problem and on the department’s organizational structure. One department directs students to contact first a steering committee composed of graduate students.

Some departments have a committee or committees composed of graduate students and/or faculty that will hear graduate student grievances and propose resolutions. Survey responses indicate that such committees may function at each of the three steps described above, including before or after the chair has attempted to resolve a problem. Some departments have more than one committee: for example, two departments have both a graduate student committee and a graduate committee composed of faculty. In each case the faculty committee functions at the step following the student committee.

Survey respondents did not describe these complaint resolution processes in sufficient detail to make meaningful comparisons among them, but they appear to reflect a widespread preference for informal procedures. This is in line with former Executive Vice Chancellor R. Michael Tanner’s March 26, 1993, directive to Board Chairs to “develop informal conflict resolution procedures” for graduate student academic employees. Attached to this memorandum was “a draft ‘model’ conflict resolution procedure that can be used as a guide, or adopted as is.” Though intended specifically as an informal method of resolving problems arising in the context of graduate student academic employment that might lead to formal proceedings under APM 140, such a procedure also has obvious application to concerns or grievances arising from areas of graduate student life not directly related to academic employment.

It should be noted, however, that one graduate student survey respondent commented, “For the most part students fear retribution and don’t make complaints.” Former Dean of Graduate Studies and Research Geoffrey K. Pullum made the point more fully in 1992:

An undergraduate student who has a falling out with some faculty or staff member will generally find that it is nonetheless possible for her to proceed without trouble toward her degree. But a similar situation is likely to make a graduate student’s life virtually unlivable. A graduate student whose complex fabric of intellectual, administrative, financial, educational, and social relations with faculty and staff is damaged by some incident is in a gravely imperiled situation. Staying the arduous course to the completion of a doctorate would be virtually impossible without harmonious relations with, and constant assistance from, several different faculty and staff. It is not just a matter of writing papers and passing exams; it involves playing a role in a network of relationships that make up the academic community within a board.\(^3\)

\(^3\) October 15, 1992, letter to Executive Vice Chancellor R. Michael Tanner.
In the same letter, Dean Pullum proposed remedying this inherent weakness in graduate student complaint processes by “setting up a Graduate Student Appeals Committee composed of two to three graduate students to be appointed by the GSA and an equal number of faculty to be appointed by [the EVC].” The committee as proposed by the Graduate Student Association to Dean Pullum would have been authorized to deal with a broad range of graduate student issues, including issues arising out of academic employment that were not grievable under APM 140. Dean Pullum recommended that such a committee should be created as an advisory committee reporting to the Chancellor or to the EVC.

However, this proposal did not go far. EVC Tanner commented in a letter to graduate students a few weeks later, “Graduate students can sometimes encounter problems unique to their position as a student, researcher and teacher.” This “intertwining of academic progress and employment as TAs and GSRs” posed special difficulties for designing a grievance mechanism that could address graduate student concerns effectively in the shadow of requirements imposed by APM 140. Moreover, records in the files of Academic Human Resources refer to the “obvious difficulties” with such a plan: whether, for example, “a committee composed of random faculty and students would have . . . authority to alter a board’s policies or procedures [or] to discipline an errant faculty member.”

AHR Director Barbara Brogan pointed out, further, that APM 140 had been “in review” for some time and was “about to be issued with considerable revisions to the process.” She recommended waiting for that process to be completed “before creating something separate.” At the same time, Labor Relations Director Susan Angstadt pointed out that the TA Handbook already contained an informal complaint process that “could simply be modified to include a committee recommendation.” The difficulty of creating an official forum capable of separating academic employment issues from other graduate student issues apparently proved insurmountable, as the joint proposal by the GSA and Dean Pullum for a Chancellor’s advisory committee to handle graduate student appeals and grievances was not adopted.

The Graduate Student Handbook advises students, “For additional information [about pursuing complaints arising out of academic employment], consult the Academic Personnel Manual or Student Employment Services Manual or the Teaching Assistant Manual” (p. 23).

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4 November 6, 1992, letter to “UCSC Graduate Students.”
5 May 26, 1992, e-mail from Jim Newman of the Graduate Studies Division.
6 May 26, 1992, e-mail.
7 June 1, 1992, e-mail.
8 APM 140, as already noted, is a formal process, and the TA Handbook reproduces the summary process in the Graduate Student Handbook quoted above. However, the UCSC “Career Center Policies and Procedures Manual” contains a wholly separate, informal “Complaint Process” (Winter 1999, pp. 62-3) that should not be confused with the formal APM grievance procedure for graduate student academic employees. Rather, it provides that student non-academic employees (including undergraduates) may contact the Career Center about “all complaints related to the Career Center policies and procedures” with regard to both on- and off-campus employers (who may also use this informal process).
Other informal procedures exist to handle graduate student complaints about campus housing, billing errors (Graduate Student Handbook, p. 5), and disclosure of private personal information (Handbook, p. 36), among other possibilities.

**Formal Grievances and Appeals**

Under University of California Policy 72.00 students have the right to petition the Academic Senate “on matters within the jurisdiction of the senate”; the university administration “for any change in these Policies, or in implementing campus regulations”; and the Board of Regents “to seek an appearance before the board to speak in open committee or board session on matters on the Regents' agenda” (paragraphs i, l, and m).

UC Policy 72.00h, governing “grade-related and other academic grievances” (114.00) provides:

> ... students shall have the right to ... have all academic decisions affecting their academic standing, including the assignment of grades, based upon academic considerations only, administered fairly and equitably under policies established by the Academic Senate. In professional curricula, such decisions may include consideration of performance according to accepted professional standards. Equitable grievance procedures, established pursuant to Section 114.00 of these Policies, shall be developed in consultation with student representatives and implemented.

In compliance with this policy, UCSC has formal procedures for graduate students to grieve narrative evaluations and grade notations (Graduate Division Regulations of the Santa Cruz Division of the Academic Senate, A16.3; see Appendix B of the Graduate Student Handbook). An expanded version of this procedure is given on pp. 4-5 of the Handbook. This campus also has formal procedures for appealing faculty judgments regarding alleged academic misconduct by a student and sanctions imposed on the student under the UCSC Academic Dishonesty Policy (“The Rule Book 1998-1999,” Appendix G, pp. 58-62). The latter policy has extensive due process safeguards to ensure fair and equitable treatment of students accused of academic dishonesty (see especially “Guidelines,” p. 59).

Both of these formal procedures provide for informal resolution of the problem by mutual agreement between instructor and student as a first step.

In addition to its summary procedure for handling grievances related to “Academic Employment” (p. 4, as noted above), the Graduate Student Handbook also provides information about formal procedures for handling student grievances and appeals regarding “Academic Judgments” (p. 4) and “Student Conduct and Discipline” (p. 5). The first of these procedures permits graduate students to “appeal a determination that they are not making satisfactory academic progress by petitioning their department in
writing,” with further appeals to the Graduate Dean and the Graduate Council. According to the Handbook, “the same procedure applies in cases of academic probation or disqualification.”

The conduct and discipline process falls outside the jurisdiction of the Academic Senate:

Issues of student conduct and discipline are the province of the Chancellor and the Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs rather than the Graduate Dean or the Graduate Council. The Chancellor may impose discipline for violation of University policies or campus regulations. (See Section 102 of The Rule Book for a listing of the most common types of misconduct, and Section 103 for a discussion of procedures for the handling of student conduct cases.)

This formal process provides for timelines, written appeal, and review of Judicial Board hearings and findings for substantive and procedural fairness.

Student Grievance Procedures

University of California Policy 111.00 on “Student Grievance Procedures” directs chancellors to “develop . . . procedures to resolve grievances claiming to have been the subject of any of the following types of university action.” The list of grievable actions (111.10-111.50) includes “violation of [federally guaranteed] privacy rights,” “discriminatory practices based upon gender,” “discriminatory practices based upon disability,” “discriminatory practices based upon race, color, or national origin,” and “other types of actions that may be grieved, such as discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation, age, or marital status, as specified in campus regulations.”

UC Policy 112.00 directs that such campus procedures shall be developed with student consultation, and shall, at a minimum, meet the requirements of applicable federal anti-discrimination and privacy laws. Once adopted, they shall serve as the sole remedy within the university for nonacademic student grievances brought pursuant to any such law.

UC Policy 113.00 stipulates, however, “As provided in state law, civil law remedies, including injunctions, restraining or other court orders, and monetary damages also may be available to complainants.”

UCSC regulation 115.14 (“Rule Book 1998-1999,” pp. 39-43) specifies how the UC Student Grievance Procedures will be implemented at this campus and lists specific “resource persons” who can “provide assistance and advice regarding specific types of grievances” (see also Rule Book Appendices C, F, and H). The Office of Student Affairs
is the office of record for all grievances filed under these procedures, and the Director of Student Judicial Affairs advises students regarding formal grievance procedures on campus (115.13).  

Graduate students also have recourse to formal procedures for grieving alleged faculty misconduct under the University Policy on Faculty Conduct and Administration of Discipline (CAPPM 002.015).

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9 Note: the UCSC Ombudsman’s Office is a resource for students, staff, and faculty for confidential advice and problem resolution, but contacting the Ombudsman does not put the university on record regarding any grievance a complainant may choose to discuss with the Ombudsman.