The Place of Graduate Education in the CSU

CSU Academic Council
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I. Purpose.

As chief academic officers of their universities, the CSU provosts are concerned about the continued vitality, growth, and relevance of their graduate programs. Through the vehicle of the CSU Academic Council and with the leadership of Executive Vice Chancellor Gary Reichard, they have developed this report and recommendations on the challenges and opportunities facing the CSU graduate programs in meeting the needs of California.

II. The Time Is Ripe for Fresh Consideration of Graduate Programs.

A. ***The Contemporary Significance of Graduate Programs***. Graduate programs are taking on larger significance in California and the nation. The Master's degree is increasingly becoming the entry-level degree in a growing number of professions. The CSU has long been involved in this area; this is what we do and do well. The state's need for advanced training and graduate programs that are entries to the professions has also led to a policy breakthrough, as CSU will now be offering the Ed.D. independently. This is widely seen by opponents and supporters alike to be only the first step in a broader array of professional doctoral programs. We look for thoughtful additions to the stable of independent CSU clinical and professional doctoral programs, even as Master's level programs continue to dominate the CSU's graduate offerings.

B. ***CSU Can Respond to Contemporary Issues through Its Graduate Programs***. The CSU is well-positioned to respond to our changing world and state by addressing a wide array of contemporary issues through cross-disciplinary collaborative efforts at the graduate level. The CSUPERB collaborative is one such model that has led to innovative curricular innovations in response to industry needs in the biotechnology sector. There is great potential for collaborative efforts in diverse areas, including for example strategic language education programs, homeland security, agricultural research, radio/television/film production, an array of state government careers, and others. These programs address pressing needs of the emerging workforce involving new fields of study and the growing retirements that are expected.

C. ***New Opportunities in Financing Graduate Programs***. Financial support for graduate programs is also improving. (1) Recent and projected fee increases assessed upon graduate students are part of a picture of stronger revenue streams. (2) Graduate instruction will be differentially – more richly – supported in CSU marginal cost calculations beginning with the 2006-07 academic year. We note that the enriched funding formula will apply only to new or additional graduate FTES, part of annual growth in campus FTES. As such, a substantial beneficial impact of this formula change will be phased in but only for new programs. For this source of support to be a significant factor in expanding graduate programs, it will have to be extended to cover the existing graduate enrollment base. (3) The University of California has begun to impose professional fees on selected graduate programs, in addition to ordinary fees and marginal cost support from the state. The UC precedent may be a vehicle for the CSU to develop financial support for at least some graduate programs.

D. ***Campus and Constituent Interest in Graduate Programs***. This picture of increasing need and improved fiscal support has led to increasing interest in graduate programs on many of our universities. Campuses are exploring whether and how to encourage enrollments in existing graduate programs that may have growth potential. They are also planning and implementing new graduate programs. In this process, our universities are considering program reductions, resource reallocation and the revision of existing programs.

III. The Functions of Graduate Programs, and their Fit with Faculty Lives.

Campus academic leaders face obvious questions, given all of this. Questions include:

1. ***whether to encourage growth*** in graduate programs;

2. if so, ***which programs should be particularly encouraged to grow***; and

3. ***what new programs*** should be proposed and implemented.

To properly frame answers to these questions, it is suitable to review the functions of graduate programs and how they may be experienced by faculty.

A. ***The Production of Persons with Advanced Skills***. Graduate programs produce persons with advanced skills, by virtue of which our regions, state, nation, and even our world stand to benefit economically. There are additional benefits – graduate degree-holders may be civic leaders, for example, or may bring special uplift to the arts, fine culture and general discourse of their communities. Yet such generalized benefits, which may compete for priority or significance when considering baccalaureate programs, are incidental to the *raison d'etre* for applied graduate programs. Regional, state and national needs for nurse practitioners, school administrators, business managers, public administrators, social workers, marriage and family therapists, and advanced practice / professional leaders in a host of other domains justify graduate programs in the CSU. Note also that in emphasizing master's degrees in its graduate programs the CSU is in very good

company. The Council of Graduate Studies reports that 90% of all graduate degrees awarded nationally are master's degrees.

B. ***Access to Professions by CSU Clienteles***. The typical CSU student and her family are, on average, of more limited economic means than the typical University of California or private / independent university student.

C. ***Faculty Recruitment and Retention***. Faculty find that teaching at the graduate level is very fulfilling. Providing an opportunity for such work is a powerful basis on which to enhance faculty recruitment and retention.

D. ***The Continued Vitality of Faculty***. The vitality and currency of our universities' faculty is critical to the delivery of high-quality academic programs. The deployment of current information and perspective is of value for advanced undergraduate teaching and community service. Teaching and mentoring in graduate programs depend upon faculty who are current. *Faculty often find their professional lives to be more fulfilling when their teaching and mentoring activities include work at the graduate level.*

E. ***Faculty Productivity***. Engagement with the materials of the discipline or profession by faculty is frequently enhanced by the presence of graduate students. Not only does instruction and mentoring at the graduate level stimulate faculty currency, it also motivates faculty to seek and secure grants and contracts. Beyond that, graduate students may become assistants and co-workers in the projects that grants and contracts support. The significance of this should not be overlooked. Frequently, masters-level CSU students who work in labs supported by grant funds emerge with research experiences superior to master's-level students enrolled at Research-I institutions. (Note that benefits accrue also to CSU undergraduates who similarly work on funded projects.)

F. ***Enhancement of Diverse Faculty Pools***. Our graduate programs are often breeding grounds for future diverse faculty members, many of whom come back to teach in the CSU. In some modest ways, the CSU does this intentionally, by mounting the Casanova Pre-Doctoral Scholars Program, and the Doctoral incentive Loan Program.

G. ***Value of Graduate Programs for Undergraduates***. Graduate students are a little older than undergraduates, on average; show seriousness of academic purpose; deploy learning skills with assurance; know something about the fit of advanced study with occupational success. For these and other reasons, graduate students are role models for undergraduates, and elevate the teaching and learning environment for all. This may most strongly be true for advanced undergraduates, who may sit alongside graduate students in some senior-level classes.

IV. State / System-Level Recommendations

1. **Insure that existing graduate programs have sufficient funding**. The State has recognized that graduate education is inherently more costly than undergraduate programs by providing for a differential graduate student fee and a redefinition of a full-time equivalent graduate student. However, the latter adjustment entailed a redefinition of existing enrollment levels without new funding, and will only provide enhanced funding for new increases in graduate enrollment. We need to also properly support the existing graduate enrollment base (which after all has to be recreated each year with new classes and new students).

    - To that end, Provosts and Vice Presidents for Academic Affairs recommend that the State provide for full enhanced funding (based on the 12-unit definition of full-time equivalency) for all graduate enrollment. This could be accomplished through a multi-year, phased transition for the existing graduate enrollment base.

2. **The graduate research space entitlement should be reviewed.** The CSU now gets 75% of its graduate research space entitlement, based on a long-standing agreement with the Department of Finance. We have not been able to determine what was the rationale for this under-funding of the CSU, if there ever was one. What is clear is that there is an acute need for this space in our current and future graduate programs.

    - Provosts and Vice Presidents for Academic Affairs recommend that an effort be made to secure 100% of this needed funding.

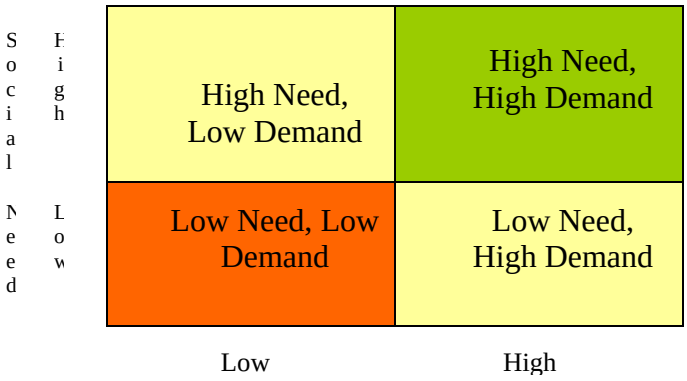
3. **Consortial or cooperative programs should be considered**. Some of this may respond to demand that is limited in a given local area, but if aggregated regionally or statewide may constitute an opportunity for service. Cooperative programs among campuses should be considered; and in an Internet era, the campuses undertaking a partnership need not necessarily be neighbors. To do this well and easily, campuses need models for cooperative programs, without which such programs may founder on resource-sharing issues. While Marginal Cost (FTES funding) follows teaching, apportionment of student fees is a thorny issue. The Chancellor's Office should develop templates and new policy directions that will facilitate consortial or cooperative programs between and among CSU campuses.

4. **Provide expanded access through online programs.** Let us take down barriers between and among our universities to allow students to take courses from multiple campuses. This would ease scheduling bottlenecks and shorten time to degree.

V. Recommendations Offered to Campuses

1. Social need and effective demand should be factored in when considering graduate programs.

2. Potential and existing programs can be evaluated along two dimensions: the social need for the graduates' skills, and the willingness and ability to pay for them by the target student population. This can be outlined graphically as shown below.



Need: consider regional or state need for the program on one dimension. This may say something important about demand, too, the ability to generate enrollment in the program. Assess whether a particular program is high-need or low-need.

Demand: on the other dimension, consider the economic attractiveness of the program, in terms of the wages and working conditions expected upon completion of the degree. Assess whether graduates of a particular program may expect high salaries, or low.

The most attractive programs to begin are high / high (green area).

The least attractive programs to begin are low / low (red area).

➢When there is a high need for a program in a market with a high ability and willingness to pay, Provosts and Vice Presidents for Academic Affairs recommend that **campuses be permitted to charge an additional "professional program fee" to supplement State funding**, as an alternative to running programs entirely on a self-support basis through Special Sessions.

3. **Where appropriate, develop high services/high-price programs.** For some programs (e.g., MBA, Masters in Nursing), student may prefer to pay a higher price if it guarantees a higher quality program and a more direct access to degree. The time to degree and access to courses in a timely manner might be more

important than the fees paid. For some students (e.g., MBA) an off-site, higher-service/higher-price degree program might be preferred to a lower cost program on campus. Cost may not be as big an issue as convenience, and time to degree. Convenient location and high service levels, in some combination, may attract students. Programs (or courses) that are offered on-line may also fit into this convenience/cost consideration.

4. **Seek professional orientations for graduate degree programs in the liberal arts and sciences**. CSULA repositioned its economics master's as a career oriented, applied economics degree. At East Bay, Anthropology was redesigned. We should be creative in identifying career outcomes, perhaps interdisciplinary, for programs that otherwise are narrowly construed as topics for academic consideration only. For example, business ethics may be a better program than a traditional master's in philosophy. Translation or some similar professional application may be a better focus than a humanities-oriented master's degree in French that is focused on period literature. Successful Masters' programs are usually not "junior doctoral programs." A notable exception: Masters programs that create a pipeline to doctoral programs for students from disadvantaged backgrounds that would not otherwise have considered such programs.

5. **Encourage Professional Science Masters (PSM) programs**. Provosts and Vice Presidents for Academic Affairs are aware of plans for new emphasis on special programs designed to provide graduates ready for high-level professional practice in science-oriented business and industry. Such programs may serve important state and regional needs, buttressing the position of California and regions within it as leaders in 21st-century employment and service. As assessments confirm their success and good fit with state and regional needs, such programs should be strengthened and encouraged.

6. **Use alternative structures as "incubators" for State-supported graduate programs**.

   Special Sessions. Can a new program develop a business plan for generating enrollments, securing a sufficient funding stream? Then, particular programs could be moved to state support if and when needed for making campus enrollment targets, if and when the size and significance of the program means that state support should be secured as a means of access.

   Interdisciplinary Studies. Some campuses initially mount graduate academic programs under an interdisciplinary rubric. Student demand,

faculty interest, and other crucial factors can be tested on a pilot basis, prior to making a formal proposal for a [named] degree program.

Research Centers. Master's programs may grow out of organized research centers, with the support of leveraged funds from external grants. Experience with this may be strongest in the sciences. Examples include CSU Los Angeles' CEA-CREST, which employs graduate and undergraduate students in integrated research teams tackling key environmental research questions, resulting in a superb educational experience.

Finally in these areas collaboration can be useful. For example, Long Beach has helped spin off programs at Humboldt, Chico, Bakersfield and East Bay.

7. **Expand enrollment of international students to help the CSU achieve its goals for internationalization of the campus experience, and to secure highly talented students.** International students have long been contributors to American higher education. Moreover, we need to assure an international dimension to the learning experience of our students, and that includes the special diversity that international students bring to the learning environment.

8. **Develop innovative program variations to respond to the increasing complexity of the work force.** Campuses should consider more interdisciplinary programs for well-chosen, targeted markets. Special attention is needed to the administrative and curricular barriers that can impede program design, faculty assignments, and student progress to the degree. Campuses should consider 5- year, integrated bachelor/master's programs, in which undergraduates are contingently admitted to the master's program and begin taking graduate courses in the last semester of undergraduate status. Campuses should consider also joint master's programs. A partial illustrative list of examples includes MSW / MPA; MPH / MPA; Museum Studies / MBA; Biology / MBA.

9. **Target science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) programs for growth.** The state, region and nation stand in special need in these areas. CSU campuses should explore innovative approaches to preparation for STEM careers, including the option of Professional Science Master's programs (PSM's).

10. **CSU campuses should offer innovative programs to equip persons with critical understanding of global culture, politics and language** in a post- 9/11 era. The state, region and nation stand in special need of persons possessing these skills. Programs in the humanities and social sciences should be considered for configuration or reconfiguration to supply this work force need.

11. **In all of this, campus student services and support should be enriched.** For understandable and well-understood reasons, most Student Affairs programs are designed with undergraduate clienteles in mind. Particularly if CSU campuses begin to newly emphasize the importance of graduate programs, and to seek their growth, new thinking about ways of supporting these students should be sought in partnership with campus Student Affairs professionals.