Senate-Administrative Workgroup on the Future of Graduate Education

Introduction

Grounded in a set of core values, this report proposes ways that departments and programs can adapt to the new realities in graduate education in this critical moment and build toward the future. We also recommend policies for administrative and Academic Senate leaders to consider while preparing for that future. Finally, we present actions that individual faculty mentors might take to ensure they are optimizing collaboration and instruction with their students.

Our proposals are all meant to advance the fundamental goals of providing students the research time and freedom to make the independent contributions that will culminate in their PhDs or MFAs, while supporting progressive pedagogical experiences that prepare them to teach throughout their careers. Our proposals aim to foster inclusive climates that help create a diverse professoriate and workforce for our state and nation. The faculty, students, and staff who comprise this workgroup met over the spring, summer, and fall of 2023 to set out guiding principles and to develop concrete ideas to pursue them.

Because our proposals call on all parts of the university to work collectively toward these goals, our aim is to use this document as the start of a broader discussion. Shortly after issuing this report, the co-chairs of this workgroup recommend sharing the ideas conveyed here across a variety of venues with administrative, faculty, student, and staff leaders to generate feedback, conversation, and further deliberation. Because it is vital to have broad input on the details that will move these proposals forward, we propose the creation of an implementation workgroup that can begin working in the weeks and months after the issuance of this report; the goal is to bring together a focused group of administrators, Academic Senate members, staff, and graduate students to implement the elements of this report that are jointly accepted by the administration and Academic Senate.

This document should also serve as a centralized data resource – with information specific to departments and programs as well as for the university overall – that details key program metrics and funding levels in the recent past and near future. While much is uncertain in the long term, this will allow graduate program leaders to reflect on where they are today and to create strategies for the next few years.

Structure of Report

This report begins with a statement of the values and principles that undergird the work of each of the subgroups as well as the Senate-Administration Workgroup as a whole. In the spirit of an executive summary, we next present a summary of our key proposals, arranged according to the four subgroups into which we divided over the summer: Graduate Research, Graduate Teaching, Climate of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion, and Finances. We then take a step back and review the charge given to us by Executive Vice Chancellor (EVC) Elizabeth H. Simmons and Academic Senate Chair Nancy Postero on April 21, 2023. We outline the limitations on the scope of our work and then provide background information on the recent history of policy changes in graduate programs at UC San Diego and the new UC-wide labor contracts.

The heart of the report explains the basis for the recommendations by our four subgroups, with each laying out the key principles that they formulated, the concrete actions that can advance these principles in the short term, and ideas for continued progress over the long term. Our workgroup as a whole has discussed each of these proposals; where we did not have a strong consensus, we note the differing perspectives, *but the full group endorses the core proposals*. The report then synthesizes the common themes that cut across subgroups to reiterate the central ideas that we hope guide decision making going forward.

We conclude with a concise data reference table that includes links to the many resources that formed the basis for our discussions and additionally help provide a common knowledge base for future discussions.

Summary of Core Values and Key Recommendations

While it is true that this process of reexamining graduate education was spurred by new contracts and the need to adapt financial approaches to support them, this is not a document focused on money. Rather than starting with finances, our workgroup began by discussing principles and goals. Many of the central aspects of graduate education are not driven by questions of resources. New funding is not always required to do what is right. We begin by articulating key principles to help us think through the question: In a climate of constrained resources, what matters most to us as an institution?

Core Values. To reflect UC San Diego's core values, this Senate-Administrative Workgroup believes that our university should:

A. Provide the financial support to allow students to focus on pushing boundaries in their research and teaching by continually striving to ensure that graduate support covers all tuition and fees and meets the actual cost of attendance at our university for PhD and MFA students.

B. Provide students the time, freedom and financial security to pursue their independent research or creative works that will represent the foundation for their future careers.

C. Treat graduate teaching as a progressive apprenticeship in pedagogy that allows students to build their skills and experience throughout obtaining their degrees.

D. Seek to recruit graduate cohorts that will reflect the diversity of our state and our nation to help transform the future professoriate and professional workforce.

E. Build a climate of diversity, equity, and inclusion in programs that ensures that all students can thrive and have a sense of belonging throughout their studies.

F. Recognize and support the diverse career aspirations of graduate students by interrogating how our various programs' training models prepare students for the careers they aspire to and that will exist in the future.

G. Prioritize funding PhD and MFA education over the funding of masters students.

H. Provide departments with flexible financial arrangements that allow them to use existing resources to choose cohort sizes that fit their capacity to offer superior mentoring, training and placement outcomes, while also meeting their intellectual goals. Graduate cohorts should not be determined simply by undergraduate enrollment and the attendant need to service high departmental teaching loads by hiring graduate student instructors.

I. Allow programs to recruit the world's best intellectual talent by ensuring that policies do not disincentivize the admission and financial support of international students.

J. Create an ecosystem that supports faculty in mentoring students, including those from diverse backgrounds as well as those pursuing careers outside of academia.

Key Recommendations. In order to put these values into action, we recommend that:

Overall Recommendations

- UC San Diego maintain its commitment to predictable and durable multi-year funding for all PhD students (for five years) and MFA students (for three years) [Advances Values A, B, and D].

- Administrative, Academic Senate, and graduate student leaders continue their collaboration to work toward new graduate housing construction that would

provide each student a housing guarantee for their expected time to degree [Values A, B, and D].

- Departments and faculty follow the recommendation of the [UC-wide Workgroup](#) and [UC San Diego's Graduate Council](#) to create syllabi that clearly delineate work and research activities in research-based courses such as 299s [Values B and F].

- After this report has been discussed by members of the administration, Academic Senate, staff members, and graduate students, we recommend the creation of a Senate-Administration Implementation Group to craft more detailed recommendations on how to move forward and implement those recommendations that draw broad support from the administration and Academic Senate.

Graduate Research Recommendations

- Decisions on financial support should prioritize providing graduate students the time and freedom for their independent research or creative work which represents the major "deliverable" of their PhD and the foundation for their future careers [Values A, B and G].

- All graduate programs and degree specializations should conduct a self-assessment of their curriculum and consider optimizing their requirements in order to maximize students' time for thesis work and reduce time to degree [Values B, F, and J].

- The university should provide access to trained professionals <u>familiar with the specific stressors of graduate school</u> as part of available counseling services, thereby prioritizing and supporting student mental health [Value J].

- All programs should work toward developing mentoring guidance and implement mentor-training activities. Programs should explicitly recognize and assess mentoring of graduate students in faculty academic review files [Values F and J].

- Campus and UC leadership should push for increased graduate student support. As part of those efforts, they should emphasize to government officials and donors that the creativity and energy of graduate students underlies many of our research advances [Values A, B, and G].

- We urge consideration of models where a larger portion of the tuition & fees for graduate research positions is returned to departments when the total cost of

graduate support exceeds that allowed by extramural grants or, for disciplines where extramural funding is scarce, exceeds departmental resources [Value B].

- Departments should communicate funding models to graduate students, seek to support staff in reducing administrative errors that can harm graduate student welfare, and facilitate the streamlined and prompt reimbursement of students for research expenses such as conference travel [Values A and B].

Graduate Teaching Recommendations

- It is imperative that the Administration and Academic Senate continue working together to fully fund the TA Load Factors that were determined by a comprehensive, curriculum-based review of coursework; currently, they are funded at only ⅔ of the needed level of instructional support. Even before the new UAW contract, TA Loads were funded at only 78% percent of their target levels, but with the 15% reduction in TA positions, they now provide only 66% of what is needed to support each department's curriculum (0.85 ∗ 78%) [Value C].

- While the TA Load Factors determined by a past Senate-Administration Workgroup are fundamentally sound, we recommend that they be adjusted to address the needs of departments with outlying Load Factors and to ensure that departments teaching similar courses are funded at similar levels [Value C]

- Currently, nearly 30% of the funded graduate teaching positions at our university go to masters students, including those in professional and self-supporting programs, paying their full tuition, fees, and salaries. We recommend prioritizing PhD and MFA students, who have the expertise and experience to support undergraduate teaching, for these positions with reciprocal agreements between cognate departments to facilitate this [Value G].

- Graduate cohort sizes should not be driven exclusively by undergraduate teaching demand, but scaled based on a blend of factors including availability of jobs after graduation within respective fields, the speed with which newly minted PhD and MFA students secure them, and the availability of financial resources given current and future labor contracts [Value H].

- Teaching and pedagogy should be treated as important professional development and learning opportunities in their own right, and units should strive to connect them intellectually with graduate student research. Students should work with their departments to create progressive teaching plans that prepare them for careers after UCSD [Value C].

- Units should emphasize mentorship, highlight resources, and provide training for TAs and faculty on how to support students in distress and students with disabilities -a disproportionate burden of this care currently falls on TAs [Values C and J].

- Increasing opportunities for graduate students to teach in the summer quarter – either as TAs or as instructors of record, and through either remote or in-person modalities (as determined by departments to meet undergraduate needs) – could allow them to progress in their pedagogical careers, provide additional financial support for graduate students, and open up more course offerings for undergraduate students [Values A and C].

Climate of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Recommendations

- Programs should be encouraged to develop three-year strategic plans that describe their efforts to assure diversity in graduate recruitment and retention as well as to strengthen the climate of equity and inclusion in their program. Programs should be incentivized to meet the goals and milestones described in their strategic plans [Values D, E, and J].

- The financial hardships faced by students, in particular those from historically underserved communities, should be addressed. UC San Diego should explore the feasibility of providing a $1,200 benefit to help defray transition costs at the start of graduate school for students who were eligible for Pell Grants, or who demonstrated a similar financial need as undergraduates [Values D and E].

- Current diversity initiative funding should be combined with GEPA funds to form larger block grants for each program, rather than setting aside diversity funding. Programs would then be required to devote at least 7% of their Block Grants to the diversity initiatives that best fit their strategic needs, and to report these activities through a streamlined process [Values D, E, H, and I].

Financial Recommendations

- Financial models should be simple and transparent, providing departments with autonomy in making financial decisions. If revisions are needed, financial models should be updated with deliberation, consultation and care; financial stress is pervasive and decreasing financial resources will cause complex ripple effects [Value H].

- Because graduation tuition and fees generate such large resources from extramural sources to support graduate education all across campus, we do not at this time recommend the elimination of graduate tuition and fees. This is a topic

that is legitimately raised by faculty and staff across the university, so perhaps a deeper university-wide discussion with a more detailed explanation of the financial accounting of this issue is warranted [Value A].

- To ensure that departments can recruit graduate students from across the globe, we do not recommend the elimination of the Graduate Student Growth & Excellence Initiative (GSGEI) program without further study. We note that its elimination would likely create obstacles to the admission of nonresident students without providing any certain increase in available resources [Value I].

- Before any changes are made to Graduate Student Researchers (GSRs) tuition and fees, we recommend the administration present a formal "One Rate" proposal to the Academic Senate for broad discussion and deliberation across the university, taking into strong consideration feedback about its potential impact on different departments' graduate finances in addition to its benefits of administrative simplification [Values H and I].

- Establish a process that departments, schools, and the university should use to ensure funding to current students when there are dramatic, university-wide financial or enrollment changes; this will support the university's goal to maintain five and three-year funding to PhD and MFA students [Value A].

- Through an enhanced version of the cohort planning process that GEPA currently runs, departments should present three-year plans for the sizes of their PhD and MFA programs based on metrics such as career prospects in and outside of academia, size of the applicant pool, size of the faculty, availability of extramural funding, student success, and student satisfaction [Value H].

- The guiding philosophy of the current block grant – to provide support for three quarters plus two summers of research funding – should be maintained, with an explicit scalar applied to provide lower but certain funding for programs with strong extramural funding. This scalar should be variable and revised from time to time based on extramural funding [Values A, B, D, and H].

- An implementation workgroup should consider ways to allow departments the flexibility to admit smaller cohorts that are provided with stronger funding packages as long as departments can meet undergraduate needs [Values A, B, D, and H].

Reminder of the Charge

As stated in the April 21, 2023 charge letter, UC San Diego's graduate education model needs to be revisited and reconsidered within the evolving context for higher education in California. Notable factors include the state's mandate for the UC to continue to increase enrollments, the new collective bargaining agreements ratified by Academic

Student Employees (ASEs) and Graduate Student Researchers (GSRs) on December 23, 2022, the shifting employment markets for holders of advanced degrees, continuing inflationary pressures, and state investment in graduate education that is not commensurate with the rising costs. Given the impending cost increases for graduate stipends in the next two years without matching increases in state investment, there is much uncertainty about how programs will adapt in their future program sizes, program lengths, and recruitment strategies in order to assure that funding commitments to current graduate students are met.

Accordingly, the Senate-Administration Workgroup on the Future of Graduate Education was established to enable the Senate and Administration to work together to craft a new vision for the future of graduate education at UC San Diego. The charge of the Senate-Administration Workgroup was to consider the following and provide recommendations:

Resources, Expenses, Priorities and Allocation Models

Graduate funding resources currently come from the following: University-directed resources such as tuition and fees (GSGEI), enrollment-based TA allocations, block grant allocations, fellowships funded by gifts or endowments, and extramural research funding from grants, contracts, or industry partnerships. Members were provided data on the size of these resources. The costs of graduate student support will rise over the next two years. Members were provided data on the nature of these changes in costs.

The goal of this aspect of the charge was to address three main questions:

1. *How can the University best deploy the existing University-directed graduate funding resources across schools and programs to most effectively support the educational and research missions of the institution?*

2. *How can the University best balance competing priorities in designing an allocation method/formula to use in light of known resources and known costs?*

3. *What steps can PIs, departments, and schools take as part of addressing the new realities?*

Graduate Student Cohort Sizes and Program Planning

The goal of this aspect of the charge was to address four main questions:

1. *What academic and strategic factors will also need to be considered with regards to graduate student cohort size and program planning?*

2. *What kind of analysis should GEPA, departments, and graduate programs use to set the appropriate size of incoming cohorts, based not only on financial issues, but also on the quality of the educational experience, program rank, job placement and job availability for graduates from the program, and other relevant factors the workgroup might identify? How can individual units balance their needs to set an appropriate cohort size with the University's plans for increasing graduate student enrollments?*

3. *What are possible strategies that departments and graduate programs might pursue, such as improving time to degree, as a way of managing program size?*

4. *How can we create an environment where our graduate students thrive? Comment on the importance of mentoring graduate students and providing them with skills that are transportable to non-academic jobs.*

Approaches to Support Graduate Student Diversity

The goal of this aspect of the charge was to address two main questions:

1. *What are the best strategies to assure diversity in graduate admissions and retention?*

2. *While all of our graduate funding is intended to improve diversity and competitiveness, the model we have used to allocate the funding especially targeted toward strategic support for improving URM student representation and success has undergone a number of changes in the past few years. Based on the data about the effectiveness of the different versions of the model that have been tried, and in light of upward inflationary pressure on the costs for graduate support, what is a recommended approach for allocating these targeted funds going forward?*

Block Grant Allocations

The goal of this aspect of the charge was to address three main questions:

1. *What is the role of block grant allocations?*

2. *In our current funding model, block grant allocations to some schools are significantly linked to cohort size, while in others the link is more tenuous. If future cohorts are smaller in some departments, but per-student costs are larger, do the connections between block grant size and cohort size need reconsideration?*

3. *Are changes to the block grant allocation methodology across schools and programs recommended? If yes, please recommend an alternative approach.*

TA Allocations, Responsibilities, and Experiences

The goal of this aspect of the charge was to address four main questions:

1. *What methodology should be used for allocating funded TAships across the schools and colleges and their programs and courses?*

2. *Should the general methodology that GEPA and the schools/colleges currently use for the school/college-level allocation (which was co-constructed based on a prior Senate-Administration Workgroup's recommendations) be maintained?*

3. *Should graduate admissions be de-linked from teaching responsibilities and, if so, what are the implications and how can such an approach work?*

4. *Comment on opportunities for adjusting courses, curricula, and pedagogy to shift how TAs are deployed in ways that will be most effective at supporting both undergraduate learning and graduate training.*

    a. *How will departments and programs provide enough grading assistance to instructors?*

    b. *How can the TA experience be transformed into a site of apprenticeship and acquisition of skills?*

GSRs and Research Funding

The goal of this aspect of the charge was to address two main questions:

1. *How should PIs balance priorities related to completing research (with the help of graduate students, postdocs or staff) against those related to preparing the next generation of researchers (including graduate students and postdocs)?*

2. *Explore the downstream effects of how changes to graduate student and postdoctoral funding may impact current grants and future proposals for extramural funding, including potential impacts on UC's competitiveness in obtaining grants. What recommendations might you offer?*

Long-term Outlook

The goal of this aspect of the charge was to address two main questions:

1. *How can we prepare for long-term cost increases in graduate education?*

2. *How can we make our principles and methodologies elastic enough to encompass a long-term trend of costs growing faster than resources?*

Structure of the Senate-Administration Workgroup

The overall Senate-Administration Workgroup met four times in plenary at the commencement of our work together. We began our work discussing the overall goals and priorities of graduate education at UC San Diego. We discussed topics such as the purposes of graduate education, objectives we aspire to in order to be a national leader in graduate education, our campus-specific values, and the attributes of graduate education that we intend to uphold and advance.

Given the detailed nature of the charge, we collectively agreed upon the data and resources we would need in order to answer our charge. Over the ensuing months, we made numerous requests for data of all kinds, ranging from enrollment data to detailed financial data, data about grants and external funding, and data about diversity. It was also decided that the workgroup would organize itself into four subgroups, focusing on the following areas: (1) Finance, (2) Graduate Research, (3) Graduate Teaching, and (4) Climate of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion. Although each of these subgroups would tackle the questions of the charge that obviously fit their theme, the notable overlap of questions across the body of the charge meant that any of the four subgroups were also free to offer suggestions on any area of the charge. The full group came back together for a series of meetings to discuss and finalize the recommendations of each subgroup.

The body of this report includes the primary recommendations of each of these four subgroups along with analysis and explanations crafted by the subgroups themselves. We will detail and highlight the findings of each subgroup in order to ensure that each question of the charge is specifically answered. In the end, however, our goal is also to synthesize across these four subgroups in order to offer the campus broader recommendations that might direct what we hope will be a next phase in this important work: the naming of a Senate-Administration Implementation Group that will carry out the recommendations from this report that are formally adopted.

Limitations of our Scope

The workgroup was handed a very comprehensive charge and, as a result, had to make choices about the scope and scale of its work. The workgroup strategically focused its limited time and resources on topics within its sphere of influence. This means several important issues were not directly resolved with concrete recommendations (typically,

in those cases, a recommendation for further study was offered, along with the rationale for such).

In addition, some important broader issues were intentionally not addressed, as the workgroup felt others on campus were already looking into these issues or because any treatment of these issues in a report (even one as long as this) would not do the topic appropriate justice. Examples of such topics include:

- The division between graduate student employment-defined work and graduate student research/academic work. This is a topic that is being tackled by the Graduate Council, locally, and UC-wide.

- Housing crisis. We understand that efforts are under way to attempt to build even more graduate housing, and that the issue of affordability of such housing is a topic that is being collaboratively addressed by HDH, GPSA, GEPA, the CFO's office, and others. Though we think this issue is paramount in importance, the workgroup was ill-equipped to address its many dimensions herein.

- How generative AI will affect undergraduate and graduate education. Presently, we understand that a Senate-Admin group will be looking into these issues. Aside from some preliminary observations we made in the section above on teaching, this topic is too large for the current workgroup to tackle.

- What constitutes the cost of living for UC San Diego graduate students? The UC San Diego Financial Aid Office publishes cost of attendance data on its website. We believe that the data used in this analysis need to be revisited, more thoroughly explained, or revised. GEPA has reached out to the Financial Aid Office to begin exploring where those data come from, and intends to rectify this situation in collaboration with these Financial Aid colleagues.

Brief History of Graduate Funding, the TA Formula, and New Labor Contracts

It has long been the ambition of UC San Diego to simplify the block grant formula, to modify the TA resource allocation approach, and to move toward a five-year funding guarantee for PhD students and a three-year funding guarantee for MFA students.

The charge to simplify the block grant and to address the TA resource allocation method derived from [earlier work by a Senate-Administration Workgroup](), and the momentum to move the campus toward multi-year funding guarantees derived from our own Chancellor's often-stated priorities (which,incidentally, were taken up later byUC Office of the President).

As we will outline in this brief history, between 2019 and 2022 UC San Diego made significant progress on the above three goals, with the clearly articulated ambition for the Senate and Administration to strengthen their collaboration to assess the impact of the many newly-named initiatives and policies; the hope was to further refine and improve graduate education.

The spring and summer of 2022 met the arrival of a profound seachange in the UC's conversations about the future of graduate education, as the negotiation of a new collective bargaining contract for GSRs, and the renewal of the contract for teaching assistants (formally known as ASEs) began in earnest. Ratification of these new contracts would not come until late December of 2022, with implementation challenges of these contracts absorbing much of the university's time since then.

Given the deep challenges of contract implementation, the UC San Diego Academic Senate and Administration agreed that the time had come for the naming of a joint Senate-Administration Workgroup on Graduate Education to undertake the broad charge outlined above.

Specific UC San Diego Graduate Reforms Since 2019
In response to the previous Senate-Administration Workgroup's recommendations, issued August 6, 2019, campus leadership began exploring an ambitious implementation of reforms. Leadership announced the first major graduate funding reform initiatives in October of 2019, with the most notable policy change being that students under an active funding guarantee be funded at a minimum equivalent to a 50% Teaching Assistantship (level 1) in each quarter of the academic year. This reform was determined by the administration as a necessary precondition before being able to turn attention to the work of block grant and TA formula revisions, both specifically addressed in the Senate-Administration Workgroup's report. This reform helped correct a campus-wide practice in which many students were appointed at 25%, thus only earning half of a stipend while their tuition and fees were fully covered per the dimensions of the ASE contract.

After the October 2019 announcement, the next goal of senior administration was to move toward revising the block grant formula and the manner in which TA resources were allocated (specifically addressed in the Senate-Administration Workgroup's recommendations). The ensuing pandemic and associated impact on campus budgets necessitated a partial pause to some of those plans. As a result, the block grant formula was not revised and block grant distributions continued to follow the legacy formula for the academic years beginning in 2020 and 2021. However, even though the block grant formula was not revised, GEPA still worked closely with all deans, department chairs,

student representatives, and other department officials to follow through on the Senate-Administration Workgroup's recommendations to address the TA resource allocation method. This work on TA resource allocation was conducted during the winter and spring quarters of the 2020-2021 academic year, with full implementation occurring later that fall.

Also, in individual divisional meetings with deans and chairs, both in late fall of 2020 and winter of 2021, GEPA made clear the campus commitment to five-year funding packages for all incoming PhD students and three-year packages to all incoming MFA students beginning that fall. Codifying this commitment made UC San Diego one of the first UC campuses to fully commit to this goal which, as stated above, was a goal of our Chancellor and the broader UC system.

Later, in spring of 2021, an additional new reform was announced that set a floor for stipends, ensuring that students in the incoming cohort and beyond could expect the opportunity to earn a 12-month stipend of at least $30,000. This is what had come to be called the "$30K initiative." The campus-wide memo that announced the $30K initiative indicated, in the last paragraph, that an Implementation Task Force would be brought together to recommend to the senior administration how to implement this initiative.

As such, an Implementation Task Force was formed and charged by the EVC. This group was composed of students, senate faculty, and staff. GEPA Dean Antony and GEPA Senior Associate Dean Judy Kim were asked to co-chair this task force. This task force met a handful of times and it was quickly determined that a more holistic view of graduate funding was needed in order to make any sensible recommendations to the senior administration. Specifically, this meant an exploration of the long-delayed revision of the block grant formula, the approach to enhancing diversity, an examination of funds that came to programs in the form of GSGEI and other streams, as well as the implementation of the $30K initiative. Therefore, the Implementation Task Force was sunset and the Holistic Graduate Funding Task Force was born, bringing over many members from the previous Implementation Task Force while adding new members from across campus. Just like the Implementation Task Force it replaced, the Holistic Graduate Funding Task Force was chaired by Dean Antony and Senior Associate Dean Kim. We note that these were administration-led task forces rather than jointly-chaired Senate-Administrative workgroups.

Over the summer of 2021, the Holistic Graduate Funding Task Force convened to discuss modifications that could be made to the block grant formula, the campus approach to supporting graduate student diversity, and the implementation of the $30K

initiative. The work of this task force included a discussion of available data, and the consideration of a host of ideas that could be recommended to the senior administration. The work of this group ultimately formed the basis of preliminary recommendations made to the senior administration, which they partially adopted and announced in a December 2021 campus-wide memo. Also announced was a [publicly-facing spreadsheet](#) that transparently detailed the allocations made to every program.

Because the December 2021 campus-wide memo did not address the specific implementation of the $30K initiative, the Holistic Graduate Funding Task Force reconvened, meeting two more times over the spring 2022 quarter. On August 15, 2022 recommendations governing the implementation of the $30K initiative were forwarded to the senior administration, which were adopted shortly thereafter.

In a September 2, 2022 memo to Senate leadership, Dean Antony wrote that a more constructive approach might have followed the conventions consistent with a formal Senate-Administration Workgroup, a suggestion with which Senate leadership agreed. Given that the Holistic Graduate Funding Task Force's recommendations to the senior administration had already led to policy announcements, Senate leadership and Dean Antony agreed to work together more closely from that point forward to jointly assess the ongoing impact of the already-announced reforms, and related initiatives, with the goal of developing further recommendations to improve graduate funding approaches in the future.

The Paradigm Shift of New Contracts
The spring and summer of 2022 was nearly fully absorbed by the UC's negotiation with the UAW on a new collective bargaining agreement for GSRs, and the renewal of the contract for teaching assistants, formally known as ASEs. There was then a system-wide strike in the fall of 2022. While ratification of the new contracts in late December 2022 brought the strike to an end, the many implementation challenges associated with these contracts, and the significant outstanding questions in the aftermath of ratification (e.g., how to pay for the new contracts, ongoing disputes about what was and was not addressed in the contracts, dozens of labor grievances filed, and significant system-change issues needing to be designed to bring the university into compliance with the demands of the new contracts, etc.) have been absorbing much of the university's time since contract ratification.

Relative to other UC campuses, UC San Diego has been in a strong position to adapt to the new system because the administration, through coordination with Senate, was able to invest new resources into graduate education after the contract, including:

1. An additional recurring $13 million to fund teaching assistant positions so that the decline in positions was only to 85% of Fall 2022 in Fall 2023 and 2024. This allows departments to project that graduate teaching assistant positions will be funded at 85% of their Fall 2022 levels for the next two falls if that department has steady undergraduate enrollments, providing guidance to their planning.

2. Up to $10 million devoted to the [Research Relief Fund](#), which helps to provide additional graduate student research support to ensure that existing grants can cover new GSR salary levels.

Given the deep challenges of contract implementation, not the least of which revolve around the significantly higher costs associated with PhD/MFA education, the UC San Diego Academic Senate and Administration agreed that the time had come for the naming of a second joint Senate-Administration Workgroup on Graduate Education to undertake the ambitious charge, which was outlined above.

Graduate Research Subgroup

Members: Arshad Desai (chair), Hema Kopalle, Robert Continetti, Patty Camacho, Marie Carter-Dubois, Thad Kousser

Recommendations not Related to Funding

1. Prioritize research time, effort & interests of PhD and MFA students

Thesis work conducted by PhD students is the backbone of the research enterprise of the UC. It is essential that PhD students be provided the time and freedom to pursue their research interests. The subgroup recommends that decisions on financial support prioritize providing students the time and freedom for their independent research or creative work which represents the major "deliverable" of their PhD and the foundation for their future careers. An important related point is that the undergraduate teaching mission and the need for teaching support, which has grown due to recent increases in undergraduate enrollment, should not be used as justification for setting graduate student cohort sizes. It is important to find ways to meet the teaching needs of the university without increasing the demands on graduate students. The primary principle guiding graduate cohort planning should be to ensure that students receive robust support to pursue thesis-related research activities and are well-positioned to launch productive independent careers after acquiring their degree.

2. *Optimize degree requirements to enhance time for research and improve time to degree*

The duration of a PhD or MFA is determined by the competing demands of degree curricular requirements, non-research efforts to generate financial support (e.g. through TA positions), and independent thesis work. The subgroup recommends that all campus graduate programs and degree specializations conduct a self-assessment of their curriculum and consider optimizing their requirements to maximize students' time for thesis work. The subgroup also recommends that Graduate Council efficiently respond to requested curricular changes from graduate programs and facilitate their rapid enactment. Input from program students should be a central part of any such curricular optimization effort. [Average times to degree for each program are reported here.]

3. *Prioritize student wellness/mental health through ups & downs of research*

The uncertainty inherent to research, the frequent dead-ends in research projects, and the pressure to generate outputs are major sources of stress on students during graduate school. It is well-documented that a significant number of graduate students experience declines in their well-being and mental health during their PhD. While students have access to centralized services such as CAPS, the subgroup strongly recommends the hiring of trained professionals that are <u>familiar with the specific stressors of graduate school</u> and are able to provide targeted counseling. It is also critical that students be able to establish continuity of care with a specific professional, as that is often the key to addressing mental health challenges.

4. *Expand mentorship to support student research AND career goals*

The subgroup discussed at length the importance of promoting student career goals throughout their PhDs/MFAs. A specific recommendation is that mentorship be structured to have two streams: one focused on thesis research and progress through the degree program and the second focused on career development. Both streams should be initiated early (ideally in the first year in the program) and the career mentorship should escalate starting in the third and fourth years (for PhDs) and in the second year (for MFAs). The subgroup felt that such career goal development requires subject area/field-specific expertise and may prove difficult to centralize (e.g. through GEPA). Potential mechanisms to facilitate career mentorship could include dedicated support for student career development-related activities, analogous to the diversity incentive, at the program level (for relatively large programs) or at the School level (for shared use by smaller programs).

5. ***Emphasize mentor training and mentoring guidance***

The subgroup recommends that all programs work toward developing mentoring guidance and implement mentor-training activities to help address the major challenges faced by students pursuing thesis research. Examples of mentor training include the Faculty Mentor Training Program (FMTP) in Health Sciences and the Center for Improvement of Mentored Experiences in Research (CIMER)-based faculty mentor training in Biological Sciences. The campus as a whole may consider working towards a mentor training-required model, where faculty are only eligible to take students if they have undergone mentor training in a specified time window (e.g. past 5 years) and newly hired faculty are required to undergo mentor training prior to recruiting students. With respect to mentoring guidance, a useful model is the [Scripps Institute of Oceanography (SIO) handbook](), which can serve as an example to programs for developing their own guides.

6. ***Recognize/assess mentoring in faculty evaluations and annual student evaluations***

The subgroup looks forward to implementation of the new holistic teaching evaluations in faculty academic review files, which will explicitly recognize and assess mentoring of graduate students. The subgroup also recommends that annual student evaluations ("Spring evaluation") include confidential sections where students provide feedback on their interactions with their mentors to program leadership. Such sections already exist for specific graduate programs (e.g. Biological Sciences) and are straightforward to implement in the online system employed for annual evaluations.

7. ***Implement "soft skill" training / discussions in program curricula***

There are many skills that are central to success in thesis work and subsequent independent careers that are not adequately emphasized in training activities. Examples include authorship designation, communication styles, setting expectations/follow-up, conflict resolution, collaboration styles, etc. The subgroup recommends that programs work toward integrating such "soft skills" into their curricula. Examples where such skills are included and could serve as a guide include a pre-program Thriving@UCSD orientation in Political Science, in the "*How to be an Economist*" course in the Economics Department, and GradLaunch in Biological Sciences.

<u>Financial Recommendations</u>

1. ***Advocacy for increased financial support for graduate students***

The UC is the top public research university system in the world and graduate students are central to the research enterprise of the UC. However, support for graduate students remains poor, with attention being primarily focused on the goal of expanding undergraduate enrollment in the UC system. The subgroup strongly urges the campus and UC leadership to push for increased graduate student support as they are the drivers of the cutting-edge research and scholarship conducted in the UC, which is unquestionably central to the identity of the UC. The visible investment for housing and infrastructure on the UCSD campus demonstrates that if the message is clearly and forcefully articulated at the highest levels, there will be increased support for graduate education. Any such support would greatly aid in addressing the financial challenges faced by UC graduate students in high cost-of-living areas such as San Diego.

A related point is the importance of engaging the development office and donors in supporting graduate education. Much more emphasis needs to be placed on communicating that the creativity and energy of graduate students underlies the many research advances that emerge from the UC and that this "human capital" is under threat from continual underfunding. Potential donor opportunities could include naming graduate programs, supporting a specific number of students per year, providing support for student research-related activities, etc.

2. ***Consider GSGEI-like models that return a portion of tuition & fees to support students***

The financial demands to support the pursuit of research by students should motivate consideration of models where a portion of the tuition & fees for GSR positions is returned to departments when the total cost of graduate support exceeds that allowed by extramural grants or, for disciplines where extramural funding is scarce, exceeds departmental resources. Our campus has successfully done this for non-resident tuition through the highly successful GSGEI. Partial return of tuition & fees could be for part of the student's tenure (e.g. years 3-5 in a PhD when majority of students are engaged in independent research and TAing). The subgroup has heard that such a program has been undertaken at other UC campuses and our campus should request specific information on when and how this is being implemented.

3. ***Communicate funding models to graduate students***

The subgroup discussed the importance of departments or programs transparently communicating financial support models for graduate education to enrolled students. As these vary widely across the campus, the subgroup highly recommends a presentation at a retreat/annual meeting that informs the student body on how their support is structured.

4. ***Improve graduate coordinator training to reduce system setup errors & communicate escalation mechanism for financial remediation for missed/late payments***

Student financial support is complex and further challenged by implementation of UCPath. In conjunction with instability in staffing, this has resulted in system entry errors and led to problems with students receiving appropriate on-time compensation. The subgroup recommends implementing coordinator training/communication (e.g. a Grad Coordinator Slack) that leverages the collective experience of graduate coordinators on campus and enhances training of new coordinators. The subgroup also recommends that the pathway for escalation to address student compensation problems (which is currently in place) be communicated ~2X per year to all graduate program coordinators/staff handling student financial support.

5. ***Facilitate reimbursement of students for research-related expenses such as travel***

Travel to conferences, for field work, etc. are central to the research efforts of graduate students. Current processes for reimbursements are too slow, cumbersome, and detrimental to graduate student finances and morale. The subgroup recommends that mechanisms that reduce reimbursement processing time or eliminate the need for reimbursement (e.g. Virtual T&E cards) be routinely publicized to all graduate programs, and that such mechanisms be optimized to facilitate student research-related expenses without placing undue financial burden on them.

Graduate Teaching Subgroup

Membership: Bret Noel (chair), Giulia Corno, Victoria Ojeda, Michael Holst, Thad Kousser

1. How Should Teaching Assistant Funding be Allocated, and How Can the University Best Balance Competing Priorities in this Area?

Allocations of TA funding resources currently flow from undergraduate student enrollments, faculty sizes, faculty teaching responsibilities, and TA "Load Factors" for each department established by prior Senate-Administration Workgroup recommendations. In the short term, the number of TA positions provided to each department will decline. These allocations will fund approximately 85% as many teaching assistant positions in both the 2023-24 Academic Year and the 2024-25 Academic Year, compared to the number of positions funded in 2022-23.

Over the long term, undergraduate enrollments are projected to continue growing and therefore the university needs to seriously consider how it will ensure UC San Diego retains its excellence in educating students while costs for teaching continue to rise. An elastic model is necessary to ensure that department teaching needs and the university's educational mission are funded. The current model is generally sound and flexible in terms of its responsiveness to changes in undergraduate enrollment and faculty size; however, there are two vital changes to it that this committee recommends.

First, the TA Load Factors used to determine department-specific funding were set in 2020 and have not been subsequently reviewed or assessed for their precision and their consistency across departments. With only greater complexity coming out of the pandemic, departments and schools vary greatly in how they support undergraduate programs. Many units that offer general education and service courses for the largest enrollment majors have fundamental minimum needs for TA allocations to execute their educational missions. Other units may not educate thousands of undergraduate students and thus have smaller TA allocations, but nonetheless have demanding curricula that require intensive teaching support. Analyzing the current TA Load Factors, how they vary across departments, and what steps can be taken to normalize TA Loads across departments teaching similar courses are all important steps. Our workgroup anticipates that marginal rather than major revisions to the metrics used for TA Load Factor calibrations and an increased frequency of such calibrations will provide great benefit. We recommend that an implementation workgroup execute these changes and also look at what other UCs are doing with their TA Load Factors (or analogues).

Second, while the above process improvements for TA Load Factors will significantly improve the precision of the campus's allocation of teaching funds to meet the greatest needs in its teaching mission, these TA allocations have not yet been fully funded. This has always been a strong goal of the university, but the curriculum-based teaching support is currently funded only at 78% of the level originally envisioned.[1]

---

[1] It is important to point out that, on top of this, in response to the escalating costs in the aftermath of the December 2022 contract, there was also a 15% reduction in the number of TA FTE that are funded. Functionally, this means the TA Formula today provides only 66% (0.85 times 78%) of the TA positions

The campus **must** find ways to fully support its TA funding model, increasing overall available TA funding to each unit in a way that meets the teaching needs of their curricula. This will allow us to meet undergraduate teaching needs optimally and to support graduate students more effectively. There is also an increasing trend in under-preparedness of incoming undergraduates, with many programs struggling to deploy adequate solutions within the current TA framework. Current funding models are reactionary to historic enrollment metrics, but departments will need the ability to staff sections, hire proactively to scale appropriately, and anticipate challenges two to five years in advance. Decreased TA positions apply immense pressure on the system and are not in the best interest of undergraduate students, graduate students, or the university broadly.

We also strongly support the principle that the first priority for teaching positions is that they should be filled by PhD and MFA students, rather than by masters students. Our university invests in the pedagogical training of PhD and MFA students, they are often the most experienced teaching assistants, and the opportunity to earn salary, tuition and fees should be open to as many of these students as possible. Masters programs should be supported by those students paying tuition.

How often do teaching positions, which include tuition and fee remission as well as a salary, go to masters students? In the Spring 2023 quarter, among TAs:

- 1,052 were doctoral students
- 62 were MFAs
- 430 were masters students[2]

This means that nearly 30% of our instruction is being done by masters students and also that 30% of instructional dollars go toward paying their salaries, tuition, and fees.

We recommend the following order of operations for hiring TAs:

1. PhD or MFA students in the home department
2. PhD or MFA students in a cognate discipline
3. Masters students or non-student instructors

---

needed to carry out the curriculum envisioned in the process that created the TA Load Factors. It is imperative that the Administration and Academic Senate continue working together to address these issues over the long term.

[2] Among the largest home departments of these masters students employed as TAs were: Biology (70 50% FTE appointments), Global Policy and Strategy (40), HDSI (10), Bioengineering (24), Computer Science and Engineering (110), Electrical and Computer Engineering (46), Mechanical and Aerospace Engineering (14), Chemistry and Biochemistry (18), Rady School (22), Global Health (12), Latin American Studies (20), Wertheim School (10), and SIO (18).

How can this work in practice? Past campus task forces recommended building a marketplace for matching students with TAship opportunities across departments, colleges, and Extension. This has yet to manifest in a well-coordinated way and there remain departments both in desperate need of more students to fill TA positions and those with demand exceeding available positions. Generally, the workgroup was in favor of an implementation group further exploring workable solutions that allow for PhD and MFA students to students in cognate disciplines to teach where departments have openings. One solution could be a robust and easy to use clearing house for TA positions across the university–one that is more effectively used and deployed than the current system that was recently put into place. We recognize that there may be questions about the implementation of this order of operations among professional schools, but emphasize that these schools should prioritize their own PhD/MFA students and those in cognate disciplines.

Another approach could be department-to-department agreements to provide teaching positions in exchange for graduate students qualified to take them, modeled on the recommendations of the College Writing Program Teaching Assistant Workgroup. This approach would ensure that the hiring department has a defined role in the TA selection process. It could create clear and concrete exchanges between departments and programs needing to hire TAs and those needing to have their students hired.

It is important to note that we are not recommending a blanket ban on the hiring of masters students for teaching positions. We recognize that sometimes, masters are the best substantive fit for a particular position, and that they can help to advance a climate of diversity and inclusion in classrooms. It is also worth noting that some workgroup members felt that TA training outside of a graduate student's core academic discipline might result in negative learning outcomes. But we urge departments to rethink the practice of hiring masters students primarily, reserving it for instances in which there are no available qualified PhD or MFA students in cognate disciplines. We seek to highlight the opportunities for both sides and to encourage the creation of structures that allow exchanging teaching assistants in a way that serves the interests of PhD and MFA students across campus and meets the needs of both programs.

2. Should Graduate Admissions be De-linked from Teaching Responsibilities and, if so, What Academic and Strategic Factors Should Guide Cohort Size and Program Planning?

The workgroup voiced its concern about any potential across-the-board strategy to increase PhD and MFA enrollments during a time of financial stress. Graduate cohort sizes should not be driven exclusively by undergraduate teaching demand, but scaled based on a blend of factors including availability of jobs after graduation and the speed with which newly minted PhD and MFA students secure them. Graduate program sizes

also need to be very carefully calibrated in anticipation of future salary increases through the current labor contract and future contracts, as the university should not be admitting graduate students that it cannot support.

Graduate student progress through degree programs, particularly coming out of the pandemic, is a major concern and challenge for schools and departments. Departments, schools, and PIs can work together to ensure that clear benchmarks for progress through the degree are defined, discussed regularly with students, and implemented with transparency. These will benefit students by improving their time to degree and strengthening ties between their research and teaching activities.

De-linking graduate admissions from teaching responsibilities is only possible in units that receive significant extramural funding, and is not viable in programs that rely exclusively on campus support and TA positions to fund their graduate students. Given this, the workgroup feels that no one-size-fits-all solution exists and departmental discretion should be applied to assigning teaching responsibilities to graduate students. It is worth noting that some highly collaborative units cannot survive drastically shrinking cohort sizes, as it leads to isolation, less interdisciplinary work, and rigidity that can stymie research and creative work in some fields. There are also major diversity concerns at play with very small cohorts. Greater diversity in graduate cohorts leads to better recruitment and retention for those from marginalized backgrounds, serves as a vital strength in providing teaching assistance in our diverse undergraduate programs, and aligns with the university's mission and values.

The workgroup had disagreements on the subject of admissions by major for undergraduates, which UC San Diego does not utilize. The nexus with graduate education here is that planning undergraduate admissions in a way that matches the number of majors with the capacity of departments to deliver courses through their own faculty and graduate students can help to keep teaching demand in balance with TA capacity. Some members felt adopting this approach would allow for proportionality between undergraduate and graduate program sizes, as well as a controlled cohort size and time to degree for graduate students relative to available TA positions. It was also suggested that this approach would have benefits to undergraduate student diversity outcomes. Other members felt that admitting students by major could advantage some high school applicants who receive strategic admissions counseling and that it would prevent students' free flow across disciplines as their interests evolved at the university. Our workgroup did not reach a consensus on the question of admissions by major.

3. How Can the TA Experience Be Transformed into a Site of Apprenticeship and the Acquisition of Pedagogical Skills?

Going forward, the workgroup believes numerous goals and values should be imbued in TA training at UC San Diego. 1) Teaching and pedagogy should be treated as important professional development and learning opportunities in their own right, and units should strive to connect them intellectually with graduate student research. 2) Students should be given progressive teaching plans that prepare them for a teaching career after UC San Diego, allowing them to grow in responsibility and ability throughout their degree. 3) Teaching experience gained at UC San Diego should be a competitive factor in finding success on the job market after a PhD/MFA, with the university collecting information to ensure its efficacy. 4) Exploration and learning for PhD/MFA students should be prioritized while balancing financial realities and programmatic needs. 5) Departments should consider what changes would bring sustainability to the PhD and MFA experience and where they can cut excessive programmatic requirements to ensure the best educational experience. 6) Units should emphasize mentorship, resources, and training for TAs and faculty on how to support students in distress and students with disabilities, as a disproportionate burden of this care currently falls on TAs.

Departments should be very intentional with course assignments and bring together chairs and program directors to consider assignments and/or curricular changes that would sometimes allow for students to teach courses relevant to – or more aligned with – their research interests. Where curriculums need to remain fixed, they could consider creative approaches that engage TAs and provide growth opportunities.[3] For example, faculty teaching a course could consider inviting TAs to create a single lecture or a module for their assigned lecture course that ties in their research to the course topic. Alternatively, departments could offer a workshop series wherein PhD/MFA students, at their option, present their research over a few weeks and engage with undergraduate questions.

Balance and equity in the required duties for TAs is crucial and must be held in balance with other PhD/MFA pressures, such as supporting undergraduate students and making progress in research. Departments should consider trade-offs and challenges in having TAs teach the same course every quarter versus having them teach a new course every quarter. Furthermore, programs should regularly evaluate and equitably quantify the time it takes to adequately execute the TA duties (e.g., grading, teaching, prep, meeting with instructors, etc.), considering potential differences across courses.

With regard to alternative approaches to grading, numerous strategies could be explored by an implementation group, such as using undergraduate or graduate Readers, student self-grading, and/or alternative pedagogical methods. The diversity of approaches, needs, and perspectives across departments is too broad for one-size-fits-all

---

[3] The Teaching and Learning Commons refers to this progressive approach as "Splash, Swim, and Dive," and its Engaged Teaching Hub offers many resources and programs to support graduate students in their pedagogical development.

solutions when it comes to TA training. Therefore, the workgroup recommends implementation of flexible campus-level policies that require departments to define educational outcomes for PhD and MFA students in their professional training apprenticeships. These should be as intentionally designed as a research apprenticeship and could take the form of a required, department-specific strategic teaching plan template that is filled out for each student. By having administrative policies that serve as best-practice guidelines to departments, the university will be able to achieve the above goals for graduate education.

The university also needs to ensure it is not requiring extra effort by TAs to facilitate growth of the undergraduate population. Some units are having to upend their undergraduate curriculums and have TAs teach extremely large sections of upper-division courses to accommodate growth. One important topic that an implementation workgroup could pursue is to continue exploring ways in which federal work study might be used to increase financial resources that help defray some of the departments' costs for TAs and GSRs. A few other UC campuses make better use of the federal financial aid program–UC San Diego should explore what is possible for our campus in this regard. When graduate students serve as Associates-In, departments should carefully consider whether they are most effectively deployed in lower-division or upper-division courses. This should properly push departments to further rethink their educational models and explore innovative solutions as national and global trends shift. Departments that teach "service" courses should also regularly consult with the departments whose majors they educate to ensure desired learning outcomes are continually met in this dynamic environment.

The campus is currently striving to create a robust inventory of bonafide remote ("R") courses and to incentivize faculty to create more of these courses, building on the widespread successes during the pandemic. While there are inherent limitations to the expansion of summer session offerings, the workgroup feels increased usage of "R" courses in the summer could present multiple benefits to departments and students. Many graduate students cannot teach in summer because it inhibits essential research progress, conference travel, and personal development opportunities. However, focus on remote instruction in summer could allow for students to achieve all of the above while receiving a compelling boost to their annual wages and growing their professional experience. We applaud recent moves by the Academic Senate to streamline the process of approval of remote summer courses. Serving as instructors of record in summer courses also grants students opportunities to develop teaching modules related to their research interests. The Teaching and Learning Commons provides strong support to graduate students teaching their own courses for the first time through the Summer Graduate Teaching Scholars Program. Additional student support in summer could allow block grant funds currently used to support students during the summer to

instead be used for diversity and other initiatives or ensure the real cost of living our graduate students face is addressed.

Teaching Professors are being deployed more widely across the campus and the workgroup feels they can be impactful leaders in shaping many educational and teaching components of the PhD or MFA in departments, given their subject matter expertise. Providing appropriate compensation, teaching relief, or resources to Teaching Professors for this work is crucial. Teaching faculty expertise can also be leveraged in expanding "R" course offerings in summer session.

Climate of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Subgroup

Members: Judy Kim (chair, ex-officio), Jennifer Burney, Brenda Bloodgood, Hema Kopalle, Jim Antony

Strategies to Assure Diversity in Graduate Admissions and Retention

UC San Diego graduate programs must continue to prioritize outreach to state, national, and global talent as well as creation of an inclusive climate for all students. There are many proven strategies for building diversity in graduate admissions and retention. Some examples are provided in the Office for EDI's Best Practices document. We recognize that each program may face a different landscape or be at different stages in their own efforts. Here, we do not provide a comprehensive summary of the many possible strategies. Instead, our focus is to discuss best options on how UC San Diego could use the limited funds to best support programs and students.

Diversity funding could be used to many ends, including efforts related to climate and culture. We therefore believe that some flexibility is necessary, but also that the bulk of funding should go towards recruitment, retention, and support of graduate students, and to building diverse cohorts each year. Recognizing that this goal requires sustained and consistent effort over time, we recommend that:

1. Programs should be encouraged to develop three-year strategic plans that describe their efforts to assure diversity in graduate admissions and retention as well as to strengthen the climate of equity and inclusion in their program. Specific goals should be defined such as recruiting a cohort that aligns with the diversity of the state of California and the nation. These plans would be similar to the current three-year faculty hiring plans and could describe recruitment and retention efforts, milestones, and a brief financial plan to achieve these goals. The

three-year timeline would acknowledge the inherent temporal flexibility in recruitment success. This strategic plan could be included every three years with the annual reports currently submitted to the Office for Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion. These plans should also be shared with Schools, including Associate Deans who focus on EDI in each School.

2. Programs should be incentivized to meet the goals and milestones described in their strategic plans. These incentives could be drawn from existing university funds that are made newly available to departments that meet their goals. For example, part of the funds currently held by GEPA to advance institutional goals could be used, or redistributed diversity initiative allocation (described below) could be set aside as a bonus for programs that meet their stated goals.

3. The financial hardships faced by students, in particular those from historically underserved communities, should be addressed. New and more extensive programming to support students from low socioeconomic groups should be explored. One possibility would be to explore the feasibility of providing a $1,200 benefit to help defray transition costs at the start of graduate school for students who were eligible for Pell Grants, or who demonstrated a similar financial need as undergraduates. We encourage UC San Diego to put in place robust mechanisms to support these students.

How Should Graduate Diversity Funds be Allocated to Programs Going Forward?

We approached this topic with two principles in mind. First, a holistic approach is essential to improve student representation and success at UC San Diego. Second, effective strategies to recruit and retain diverse groups of students and create inclusive climates in the programs are best decided by the faculty, students, and staff. We recommend a new approach:

1. Distribute the current diversity initiative (DI) allocation (currently $1.17M projected for '23-'24) into block grant such that a separate DI allocation no longer exists. [This amount of $1.17M is the sum of the individual $30K allocations to 39 graduate programs according to the "Graduate Funding Info Spreadsheet, cell O67.] Thus, each program would receive an increased block grant allocation. Viewing diversity goals as program goals, the program could then view diversity as part of its comprehensive fiscal strategy. Additional funding could be made available to this overall pool through a distribution of a portion of funds held by GEPA to advance institutional goals. The increase in block grant could be $30K or more for each program. Alternatively, the increase could be an amount that is

proportional to the block grant allocated to the program. All programs would be expected to dedicate a minimum fixed percentage of their block grant allocation to diversity initiatives. We recommend that this fixed percentage be at least 7%, even up to 10%. Therefore, of the approximately $26.61M in block grant and DI allocation, $1.86M total would be devoted to diversity initiatives ($0.07*\$26.61M = \$1.86M$). This amount of $1.86M is greater than the current DI allocation of $1.17M, which is only 4.4% of the total block grant plus DI allocation.

2. Programs will be held accountable for the funds dedicated to diversity initiatives by submitting reports at the end of each year. The annual reports should be straightforward, made through an online form with a dropdown menu and areas for brief descriptions. The dropdown menu would include activities that enhance representation and success of students from diverse groups, such as participating in recruitment efforts at minority-serving conferences, sponsoring community-building events, and providing fellowships. The descriptions of these potential uses of the funding could also be built from the existing spending guidelines used in the current $30K DI model. In themselves, the descriptions in the pull-down menu may provide guidance for the potential best practices that departments might pursue. Programs would select all the activities that were supported with 7% of their block grant allocation. If programs are unable to spend 7% of their block grant allocation to diversity initiatives, an explanation and plan for future spending must be provided. These forms could be reviewed by the Graduate Council and GEPA; alternatively, a new subcommittee composed of students, staff, faculty, and postdocs could evaluate these forms. All forms should be accessible to other UC San Diego communities as appropriate, and the reviewing body would provide feedback to programs.

3. Use of funds should be flexible in terms of purpose and timing. Programs will be empowered to make local decisions that lead to the most diverse cohorts, greatest retention, and strongest sense of inclusivity for their programs. Additionally, if the target percentage of block grant allocation is not achieved in a given year, the program may describe the plan for future use such that the average over three years meets the target.

4. While we have focused on the distribution of $1.17M, we note that there is currently a GEPA hold of an additional $0.83M to "enable adjustments as we roll out this new plan and address emerging opportunities" (the new plan being the recent implementation of the $30K DI model). GEPA utilizes some of this $0.83M to support the climate intern program and other efforts in diversity and climate. GEPA has also used some of these funds to provide additional $30K DI funds to new departments that emerge (such as HDSI, the new departments in

Biological Sciences, and the new department in Astronomy and Astrophysics). If, after taking into account these activities, additional funds remain, we recommend that the pot of $1.17M be increased. This increase would not only account for new graduate programs, but it would also increase the overall funds available to all programs. Alternative uses of the funds could include incentives for meeting milestones in programs' strategic plans; for example, transition to holistic admission review could be one such milestone. The funds could also be used to provide more extensive need-based financial support; perhaps this effort could be combined with existing programs from the VCSA office.

Finance Subgroup

Members: Sorin Lerner (chair), Giulia Corno, Christopher Charles, Mercedes Munoz, Tiffany Swidersky (ex-officio), Adam DiProfio (ex-officio), Jim Antony.

Resources, Expenses, Priorities and Allocation Models

We advocate providing schools, departments and programs with simple and transparent financial models that enable flexibility in making financial decisions. Fixing amounts in different buckets hinders flexibility, autonomy and creativity. We also advocate using metrics to guide investments across competing priorities.

Tuition and Fees

The workgroup debated whether the university should waive tuition and fees for all PhD students. The campus receives $31M yearly in tuition and fees for PhD students *from outside sources*. Of this $31M, about $8M is returned back as GSGEI, leaving $23M in net external revenue provided by tuition and fees. Replacing this $23 million would be the challenge created if the university were to eliminate the charging of tuition and fees. A much broader analysis of the full set of fiscal opportunities and fiscal challenges that would be created by eliminating tuition and fees would need to be conducted before any change in policy is made.

Recommendation: Given the financial implications for the campus, the workgroup does not see a pathway at this time to eliminating tuition and fees.

The workgroup also discussed Graduate Student Researcher Tuition and Fees (GSRTF) and reviewed a proposal for simplifying GSRTF.

GSRTF is a mechanism for charging tuition and fees for GSRs that averages out resident and non-resident tuition and fees. Indeed, if tuition and fees were charged directly to a grant, faculty would see different charges for a resident PhD GSR vs a non-resident PhD GSR. To avoid having this differential treatment, the university uses *averages* of GSRTF across resident and non-resident students, which means faculty see a uniform rate. Currently, this averaging is done within certain subgroups, such as a department or a school. As a result, there are seven different GSRTF rates, each corresponding to a set of disciplines for which the tuition and fees have been averaged. When the model was created, it was justified by the fact that different disciplines had different ratios of resident and non-resident students. For example, disciplines that have predominantly resident students did not want to be averaged with disciplines that have predominantly non-resident students.

However, over time, this model has become very burdensome to administer. In addition to the seven different GSRTF rates, there are two different Instructional Assistant (IA) rates (resident vs non-resident). With split appointments and the new financial systems, it has become even more complicated to track this information. The combination of all these factors has made the current system nearly unworkable.

The workgroup was presented by the Administration with a proposal called "One Rate," which would use one rate for tuition and fees for all PhD students, across all GSRs and IAs campus-wide. This proposal has the benefit of drastically simplifying the financial model. However, it would mean that GSRTF would be averaged across the entire campus, as opposed to subgroups of the campus. This means that there will be parts of the campus that will see a new, higher rate and some that see a new, lower rate.

Recommendation: This kind of change is substantial, and would require broad Senate and Administration input and deliberation. As such, the workgroup did not feel it could either recommend or not recommend the proposal. Therefore, the workgroup recommends forwarding the One Rate proposal for broader discussion and deliberation across the university. In particular, we propose that the Administration present a proposal to the Academic Senate, and then go through a process of receiving feedback from the Senate and relevant committees. Part of the analysis should include detailed data on the tuition and fees charged to each department currently and what would be charged under the One Rate proposal. We recommend that Senate feedback be taken into consideration in revising and implementing the approach. We also recommend an implementation taskforce be created to follow the implementation of the approach.

GSGEI

The GSGEI returns 90% of non-resident supplemental tuition for PhD students in years 1-3 to the department that generated the tuition. The department then typically reimburses faculty if that student is funded by an extramural grant (the intention is that by year 3, students would have advanced to candidacy and are no longer charged supplemental nonresident tuition and fees). The total amount returned to departments – 90% of the additional tuition that the admission of non-resident students generated – was $16.5 million in 2022-23 (as reported in Columns X, Y, and Z of our Graduate Info Spreadsheet.)

The strength of GSGEI is that it enables departments to admit the best and brightest graduate students regardless of residency. Departments admit those students, departments are charged additional non-resident tuition for those students during their first three years of study, but each year departments are reimbursed 90% of the costs of that supplemental tuition.

What would be the financial implications of ending GSGEI and how would that change the university's research and educational missions? There is much uncertainty because a set of policy decisions would need to flow from the elimination of GSGEI, and these would likely change the admissions strategies of departments. In the short term, relief for the supplemental tuition of non-resident students who have already been admitted into programs would almost certainly need to be provided. If that is the case, the elimination of GSGEI would not provide any additional short-term resources that could be otherwise deployed in graduate education. In the long term, if departments responded to the elimination of GSGEI by dramatically limiting the number of non-resident students that they admit, this would dramatically limit any long-term savings to the university. [Departments would no longer receive GSGEI from the central administration, but they would no longer pay non-resident supplemental tuition to the central administration, either, canceling out the financial impact.] In either case, no new resources would be freed in the short term to invest elsewhere in graduate education, and in the longer term departments and faculty would no longer have the incentive to admit the top students on a global basis. Because of these uncertainties about the possible benefits of eliminating GSGEI – and the certain drawbacks – the workgroup does not recommend that it be eliminated without further study (which might include a detailed analysis of how peer universities deal with this issue).

Five-Year Funding Guarantee

The five-year guarantee is a UC-wide aspiration that all campuses are engaged in making a reality – UC San Diego has publicly committed to making this happen and, as of the entering cohort of 2020, made it so. There have been numerous conversations within the UC Office of the President about making this a system reality, and there is a

planning document from UCOP which provides an example of the tenor of this conversation.

Recommendation: To support the goal of the five-year guarantee for PhD students and three-year guarantee for MFAs, the workgroup recommends creating a formal process for funding to be made available when "things fall through the cracks." Departments will of course try to make all efforts to plan ahead, but in some rare cases, obstacles could emerge. For example, funding sources might dry up, or TA positions might decrease drastically because of enrollment changes or increased salaries. A kind of insurance program would help alleviate the uncertainty and burden on schools and departments. While these discussions are already happening informally, making the process formal will send a message to both students and departments that a fall-back plan exists for unforeseen circumstances. Departments would be the first to try to accommodate, followed by the school, followed by the university. The workgroup recommends using as a model the current bridge funding mechanism to address GSR cost increases.

Graduate Student Cohort Sizes and Program Planning

Cohort size planning is one of the most fundamental issues related to financial sustainability. Every department must find the right balance of PhD program size, masters program size, undergraduate program size, faculty size, and financial resources, all with the goal of making all aspects of the department excel. This balance is often brittle and difficult to achieve. One downside of finding this balance is that some programs may feel incentivized to admit PhD students to fill teaching needs. This may cause some PhD programs to grow even if other indicators, such as future job prospects or the strength and breadth of the applicant pool, might suggest admitting fewer PhD students. Additional conversations and processes may need to be devised to de-link undergraduate and graduate program size so that undergraduate teaching needs do not adversely affect the quality of PhD cohorts.

Recommendation: The workgroup recommends developing an enhanced version of the cohort planning process that GEPA currently runs annually for programs. Programs would be required to provide a three-year PhD admission/hiring plan, just as they do for faculty hiring. Metrics to include in the plan could include: career prospects in and outside of academia, the size of the applicant pool, the size of the faculty, the availability of extramural funding, student success, and student satisfaction as measured by surveys. All these metrics could be made available in a standardized dashboard. Departments would propose a target number and explain their reasoning.

Block Grant

The committee felt strongly that the role of block grant is to help fulfill the unmet needs of a graduate program; it is a lump sum of money to achieve the PhD/MFA mission of a department.

The discussion around the block grant brought up many tradeoffs that a program might face in running a PhD program. One could, for example, adopt a core principle of having the most competitive stipend, then determine how many students one could support. This may lead to greater compensation for PhD students, but smaller programs (which could also have impacts on access and diversity). Alternatively, one could aim for smaller compensation but a larger program size. All of this will be affected by many other factors, such as applicant pool size, career prospects, and availability of outside funding.

Either way, there was consensus that block grant should be designed in a way that provides programs effective flexibility to determine their ideal program size.

One could recommend a way to operationalize this in the block grant design which would allow departments, if they wanted, to design programs with high stipends but smaller cohorts, or to pursue other priorities. This change would require not tying the block grant to PhD program size or the entering cohort size. Then a department could choose the high stipend, smaller cohort model. The "not per capita" approach outlined below would allow this flexibility.

The workgroup identified three different approaches to block grant:

1. **"Per Capita, Same Across Disciplines"**: The amount allocated is per student (either based on cohort size or total program size), and this per-capita amount is the same across all disciplines. While this provides equal funding across campus and makes for a very simple formula, it does not address the reality of unequal external funding opportunities: certain disciplines lack significant sources of outside funding they can leverage, so they have a larger need for block grant support.

2. **"Per Capita, Variation Across Disciplines"**: The amount allocated is per student, but certain disciplines get more per student than others. This provides a differentiated approach that acknowledges that certain disciplines, such as parts of Arts & Humanities and Social Sciences, have fewer opportunities for external funding and so depend more heavily on block grant. This addresses the differential need of different programs for block grant, while giving programs a proportional and predictable amount of block grant funding related to program size. On the downside, boundaries are not simple to draw, and they don't always

cleanly fall at department or discipline boundaries. For example, some sub-areas of STEM fields, sometimes the more theoretical areas, have little opportunity for external funding. Students and faculty in those areas, while in a STEM department, suffer from exactly the same challenges that non-STEM departments face: continual TAing, and the resultant teaching load interfering with the focus on research. This variation could be addressed through the use of a disciplinary scalar that takes into account access to external resources (which was the philosophy behind prior versions of the block grant).

3. **"Not per capita"**: Approaches 1 and 2 above are proportional to the number of students, denying departments the flexibility to make tradeoffs between size of the program and the funding provided to each student. Another approach would be to allow programs to get a fixed amount, and then let them determine, within those bounds, what size program they want to build. This approach would allow programs to choose to pay students more while reducing program size. However, it also poses a significant challenge in terms of devising a fair, simple and transparent process for coming up with the funding amount. One possibility would be to start with a baseline cohort size and then adjust it through changes in undergraduate enrollments and extramurally-funded GSR positions.

The previous task force recommended a "(3Q+2S)*CohortSize"approach for some departments, which falls under approach 1. The approach was meant to provide 3 quarters and 2 summers of funding for each PhD/MFA student entering the program. This has been implemented for most programs in Arts & Humanities, Social Sciences, the Clinical Psychology JDP, Math, and the Rady School of Management. However, the implementation was never designed to include Psychology, SIO, the School of Biological Sciences, the School of Physical Sciences, the Jacobs School of Engineering, and the other Health Sciences PhD programs with an increase of this magnitude, because of the availability of extramural funding in these disciplines. For those programs, the block grant has been increasing each year by a fixed percentage. There is an urgent need to examine the underlying principles that should drive this approach.

The workgroup sees the delay in implementation of the previous taskforce's recommendation as a sign that some changes may be required. With the delay in the implementation, the campus is de-facto using a model that approaches 2 above, "Per Capita, Variation across Disciplines".

Recommendation: The workgroup recommends using a "3Q+2S" approach, but multiplied by a scalar that is specific to categories of departments. The scalar could be based on a variety of factors, most centrally the availability of extramural funding. This approach would fall under category 2 above, "Per Capita, Variation across Disciplines". The workgroup would recommend this approach if it can be implemented by an

appointed implementation workgroup that finds a simple, fair and transparent way of computing the scalar.

Recommendation: The workgroup sees strong benefit in allowing departments, based on a substantive discussion of their optimal cohort size, the financial flexibility to pursue the "higher stipend/smaller cohort" model. As long as departments are able to do so in a way that still addresses their teaching needs, this could be an important avenue toward providing strongly competitive financial offers that help meet students' full cost of attendance. In order to allow that, the university could:
- Use the "Per capita, Variation across Disciplines" approach to determine the budgeted block grant amount provided to each department, and
- Hold harmless a department if they planned to admit a smaller cohort, but pay each student more. In future years, their block grant funding would be determined by the 2023 baseline cohort size, with potential adjustments due to any changes in undergraduate enrollments.

Preparing for The Future

The committee recommends three priorities to improve the long-term outlook. First and foremost, more money must be raised to support world-class graduate programs in the future. A comprehensive campaign to increase support for graduate education must be pursued. This effort would include direct engagement with the UC Office of the President and the Regents such that they are advocates within state government and active partners in this campaign to increase funding for graduate education. Graduate education should also be a pillar in the next campus fundraising campaign. Second, there needs to be a more comprehensive and aggressive public relations campaign that highlights the benefits of graduate education to the state of California and the nation. This campaign would highlight that graduate education is an economic driver through research innovations, patents, teaching, and creative works. The UC Center Sacramento could be a vital venue for such a campaign. Finally, the UC Office of the President must apply sustained pressure to federal and other granting and funding agencies to expand budgets and to reexamine per-student caps on graduate support. Without an infusion of funds or flexibility, graduate education cannot be sustained in the current structure.

For graduate programs to be able to provide admitted students with support packages that meet the true cost of attending our university, it will be important to keep the UC San Diego [Graduate Student Cost of Attendance](#) information updated. The university should ensure that this and other resources reflect actual housing costs on and off campus, providing admitted students with transparent and reliable information. It is also vital to note that every individual student's personal living circumstances are different, and whether the package that is provided to each student is enough to cover all of those needs will be personal to them. Because housing costs will change in the

future, an ongoing principle that our university should remain committed to is to give admitted students reliable information about the cost of attendance.

Expanding the supply of on-campus graduate housing will be vital to allowing graduate students to meet the cost of attendance and to provide stability and predictability of costs going forward. This will be key to supporting students' basic needs so that they can focus on research, teaching, and taking the next steps in their careers.

Improving time to degree will be important to the future as a way to better serve current students as well as to open up more enrollment (and housing) slots to future students. As they move forward, graduate programs could meet many of their future challenges by ensuring that today's students are provided the support, streamlined requirements, and the clarity of expectations to earn their degrees in a timely fashion.

Programs should also seek to make their expectations transparent, including each program's milestones needed to progress to degree, a well-structured and supported mentoring relationship in which each student has the chance to develop their individual development plan, and communication between programs and their students about graduate program finances. In terms of finances, programs should do the following, as well:

- Increase efforts to get students to apply for external fellowships
- Increase efforts to create alternative revenue streams
- Increase support and rewards for faculty to win large grants
- Increase support and rewards for running training grants, including centralized support for PIs, training, data, administration

Like our peers, as a leading research university, we have made the decision to bear the full cost of graduate education, including tuition, fees, and a stipend. Looking toward the future, how can we ensure that there is sufficient funding to cover these rising costs? There is enough money collectively to construct a well-funded graduate student salary if strategic choices are made. These choices must be made explicitly and addressed in a collaborative, courageous fashion:

- Determining whether our university will continue to use 30% of the funded teaching slots to subsidize masters students, paying their full tuition, fees, and salary, or whether these resources should be devoted to PhD and MFA students;
- Helping PIs interrogate the costs and benefits of devoting the resources to hire 1,700 post-docs across the university, as opposed to using some of those funds to support graduate education; and
- Ensuring that cohort sizes are not driven primarily by undergraduate enrollments, but also by curricular reasons or employment prospects.

Graduate education is a key source of upward economic mobility, scientific discovery, and literary and artistic creativity. By embracing and trumpeting these strengths, UC San Diego and the UC system broadly could attract the resources needed to preserve them into the future.

Membership

Administration

- James Antony, Dean, Division of Graduate Education and Postdoctoral Affairs and workgroup Co-Chair
- Robert Continetti, Senior Associate Vice Chancellor, Academic Affairs
- Marie Carter-Dubois, Associate Vice Chancellor, Resource Administration
- Cristina Della Coletta, Dean, School of Arts & Humanities
- Patty Camacho, Associate Dean for Business and Fiscal Affairs, Skaggs School of Pharmacy and Pharmaceutical Sciences
- Sorin Lerner, Chair, Department of Computer Science & Engineering
- Mercedes Muñoz, Associate Vice Chancellor, Campus Budget
- Bret Noel, Executive Officer/MSO, Department of Physics

Academic Senate

- Thad Kousser, Professor, Political Science and workgroup Co-Chair
- Brenda Bloodgood, Associate Professor, Neurobiology
- Jennifer Burney, Professor, Global Policy & Strategy
- Christopher Charles, Professor, Scripps Institution of Oceanography
- Arshad Desai, Professor, Cellular & Molecular Medicine and Cell & Developmental Biology
- Michael Holst, Professor, Mathematics and Halıcıoğlu Data Science Institute
- Victoria Ojeda, Professor, Herbert Wertheim School of Public Health & Human Longevity Science

Graduate Student Representatives

- Giulia Corno, President, Graduate and Professional Student Association (2022-23) and PhD Student, Department of Political Science
- Hema Kopalle, PhD Student, School of Biological Sciences

Data Appendices – Reference Data Tables

UC San Diego Graduate Data	
Title	**Brief Description**
Graduate Funding Info Spreadsheet (as of Aug. 2023)	Contains financial information on graduate programs and departments including block grants, diversity initiative allocations, SHORE slots, and cohort info for AY21-22, 22-23, and 23-24.
Competitiveness & Diversity Funding Spreadsheet (FY22-23)	Contains financial information on graduate programs and departments including block grants, diversity initiative allocations, GSGEI funds returned, and cohort info for AY21-22, 22-23, and 23-24.
Graduate Student Growth & Excellence Initiative (GSGEI) Methodology (as of 2023)	Current methodology for distributing GSGEI funds across programs.
Instructional Support Allocation Methodologies (as of 2023)	Current model to guide the allocation of temporary full-time faculty and teaching assistants across departments and programs to address unmet undergraduate class loads.
Teaching Assistant Financial Info Spreadsheet (FY22 & FY23)	Contains financial information FTE costs per graduate programs and departments for AY21-22 and 22-23.
Teaching Assistant FTE Totals (FY22 & FY23)	Contains a headcount on TA FTEs per graduate programs and departments for AY21-22 and 22-23.
Teaching Assistant Loads	Reports the 2023 TA Loads (the number of undergraduate students per 25% TA appointment) for each department.
TA FTE By Degree Type	Reports the number of teaching assistants hired (as 100% FTEs, which typically provide for the employment of two 50% TAs) by home department and by hiring department in AY21-22 and 22-23, separating positions by degree type (PhD, MFA, and masters).

UC San Diego System Dashboards

Title	Brief Description
Department Metrics	Various aspects of a specific department, including admissions, enrollment, degrees awarded, funding information, and post-degree placement.
Admissions Data	Admissions data for each department and program at UCSD, as well as a breakdown of admissions data, highlighting the percentage of underrepresented minority (URM) students, women, and international students.
Enrollment Data	Enrollment data for each department and program at UCSD, as well as a breakdown of enrollment data, including the percentage of URM students, women, and international students.
Degrees Awarded Data	Time to degree and degree awarded trends for each department and program at UCSD, as well as data broken down by gender and URM status.
Completion Rates	6, 8, and 10-year completion rates for three-year entering cohorts, as well as data on completion rates by division, gender, and broad ethnicity.
Initial Placement	Initial career outcomes of graduates, including job titles, locations, position types, sectors, and company names.
Survey Data	Survey results of the Graduate and Professional Student Experience Survey (GPSES) and the Graduate Student Experience in the Research University (gradSERU) survey.

UCOP System Dashboards

Title	Brief Description
UCOP Doctoral Program Statistics	Provides various types of data including admissions, enrollment, funding, completion rates, and time to degree by broad disciplines for all UC campuses. It offers valuable insights into the performance and outcomes of doctoral

	programs across the UCs.
[Graduate Admissions Data](#)	Ten years of admissions data categorized by campus and broad discipline. Explore and analyze trends in graduate admissions across the UCs. It provides valuable information about the number of applicants, admitted students, and acceptance rates.
[Fall Enrollment at a Glance](#)	Provides an overview of the student body size and composition at each UC campus during the fall term.
[UC 2030 Dashboard](#)	Presents the UC system's goals for the year 2030, including the number of degrees expected to be awarded by that time and goals related to the "Growing Our Own" Initiative. Offers insights into the future trajectory and strategic aspirations of the UC.
[UC Graduate Student Experience Survey Data](#)	Administered in the spring of 2021 and focuses on capturing the student experience on UC campuses. It offers valuable insights into various aspects of graduate student life, including satisfaction levels, campus climate, and support services.