



January 9, 2014

To: Jose Wudka  
Chair, Riverside Division Academic Senate

Fr: Kenneth Barish  
Chair, Committee on Planning and Budget

**Re: Proposed Revised Proposal for Self-Supporting Graduate Professional Degree Programs**

The Committee of Planning and Budget has reviewed UCOP's proposed revisions to the 2011 policy for Self-Supporting Graduate Professional Degree Programs (SSPs). We support the efforts to revise and clarify the policy and believe it is timely. However, we have some concerns and are not able to support the revisions at this time.

The impetus for the revisions are the recognition that more programs are considering the self-supporting model as a way to support a greater number of state-supported students in lean budget times and concerns that profit was placed ahead of students and quality (e.g., in UCLA's recent effort to convert its self-supported MBA program). The revised policy continues to make clear that SSPs help UC serve additional students then would otherwise be supported and that such programs are limited to graduate professional degree programs that cater to non-traditional populations, e.g. working adults (and usually via non-traditional delivery). The main new addition is a protocol for the initiation and approval of existing self-supporting programs that wish to convert to self-supporting status. It emphasizes that conversions should be rare and includes additional language about using only allowed funds to support SSPs after a three-year initiation period. It also enhances the language requiring SSPs to be treated identically to state-supported programs in terms of faculty approval and oversight. Details about the annual reporting requirement including financial accessibility are also added. We find the clarifications, additions, and new details to be an improvement.

While we appreciate the improvements, we have one major concern on the policy as well as local concerns. The major concern is the lack of a clear basis for identifying a proposal as a SSP distinct from other graduate degree programs. The current policy lists a set of criteria. The proposed revised policy, on the other hand, states "many" SSPs tend to have

certain characteristics. The revised policy is a step backward in this regard and provide little guidance when considering to approve a program as self-supporting. While considering SSPs as a panacea to budget ills is attractive, it raises inherent conflict-of-interest concerns in that the primary oversight is by entities that financially benefit. It is also hard to believe that SSP don't divert some resources (e.g. faculty time and talent) away from UC's primary mission and once a program is established, there are intrinsic pressures to continue (diverting other non-UC resources). For all of these reasons, a clear definition of SSPs which are used in the approval process is essential. The revised should take a step forward in this definition rather than backward. Many of the other concerns may need to be addressed by a campus specific approval and review policies.

Given that is a longstanding concern in the senate (particularly on campuses that have a number of these programs) that these programs are purely "cash cows", that they inherently take away from our resources from state supported programs, and that there are inherent conflict-of-interests in the proposal and a review process. Therefore, it may useful to summarize how the finances of SSPs differ from Professional Degree Programs (PDPs), as understood from Matt Hull: **(1) SSPs.** All the fees to go to the department or program and the program repays campus entities (however, the methodology for this has not been yet developed at UCR as none of our SSPs are fully self-supporting). There is no financial aid set-asides, although a financial aid program is allowable and SSPs must have an articulated financial accessibility goal for their students and a student financial support plan for achieving their goal. **(2) PDPs.** One-third of tuition is mandated to go back to financial aid (but is allocated to the grad division and does not necessarily go back to the program). At at least one-third of the Professional Fee Supplemental Tuition must be spent by the program for Grad Student support, the remainder goes to the program (at lease at UCR).

We recommend some local actions on our campus. While SSPs have successful been implemented by other UC schools and are proliferating, we only have a few SSPs at UCR and none are truly self-supporting. Since the number of SSPs are likely to increase at UCR and the UCOP policy may not provide sufficient guidance, the Senate should proactively carefully consider the role they should play on our campus. The Senate should also consider issues in regards to the resources needed to review these programs. We additionally recommend that a Senate-administrative task force be set-up to develop a campus implementation policy to complement the UCOP policy. The task force should, at a minimum, consist of the Graduate Dean, AVC or VC for Planning and Budget, and representation from the Senate committees on Graduate Education and Planning and Budget. An attempt to start this was made a couple years ago, but it did not get off the ground. We feel it should now be formalized and given priority.