

November 17, 2014

TO: Jose Wudka, Chair
Riverside Division

FR: Akula Venkatram, Chair
Executive Committee, Bourns College of Engineering

RE: Doctoral Student Support Recommendations

In response to concerns to the challenges facing academic doctoral education in an increasingly competitive environment, the Office of the Provost and the Academic Council convened an All-UC Doctoral Student Support Conference was held at UC Irvine in April 2014. The Doctoral Student Support Recommendations summarized in the report were developed from that conference and submitted for system-wide academic review on October 30, 2014.

Clearly, doctoral education is a primary mission and hallmark of the University of California. The reputation of the UC depends on the number of outstanding doctoral students that it graduates. Thus, steps must be taken to insure that the UC remains competitive in recruiting the best students in the world.

Four critical areas that were identified in the set of recommendations in this regard were:

1. Non-Resident Supplemental Tuition (NRST)
2. Net Stipend Competitiveness and Multi-Year Offers
3. Professional Development
4. Diversity Programs and Proposals

As noted in the report, disciplines within engineering and computer science (ECS) have a higher fraction of international students compared to other disciplines. Thus, this topic is highly relevant to BCOE doctoral programs. BCOE strongly supports all of the recommendations outlined in the report.

Because NRST funds generated by the campus stay on the campus, the most straightforward option would be for the campus to develop internal NRST policies in support of academic doctoral programs.

One concern that will need to be addressed is public perception, particularly among state legislators, if a system-wide policy is developed to eliminate NRST. Even now, there is considerable consternation that UC is educating undergraduate non-residents even though they

themselves are paying a significant supplemental tuition. The perception is that UC is educating non-residents with California tax dollars and turning away qualified resident students. While graduate students are different than undergraduates, the perception will still remain.

BCOE also strongly supports the recommendations regarding net stipend competitiveness and multi-year support. Although faculty reputation and research interest are the primary reasons that a student chooses doctoral studies at a particular institution, when competing among top research universities, the financial package does have an impact. Higher stipends with long-term commitments are necessary to remain competitive.

Overall, UC should improve its relations with industry. Not only do industries hire doctoral students for their high level functions, they also often have research needs that are compatible with doctoral research. Advocacy, employment, research, and technology transfer should be included in establishing relationships with Industry. This would be more in line with the relationships that universities have with industry in other countries such as Germany and Japan.

Diversity efforts should always be a priority as part of the overall effort to increase representativeness within the academy. UCR has provided leadership in this aspect and any efforts to increase UCR efforts through system-wide support will be gladly accepted. BCOE has begun to establish relationships with HBCU schools of engineering to develop collaborative research and student recruitment efforts.