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July 17, 2009

Memo to School of Biological Sciences on Graduate Student Mentorship Policies

Graduate Students, Chairs, Grad Advisors, MSOs, Grad Program Directors:

The UCI policy on graduate student mentorship is appended to my memo. These policies establish standards in graduate student mentorship, and all graduate programs in the School of Bio Sci are expected to comply with these policies.

The following policies are expected to be followed in the School of Biological Sciences.

An annually updated graduate program handbook is to be made available to graduate students upon or before their arrival to campus. In the School of Biological Sciences, all gateway programs will have a handbook for the first year, and each departmental graduate program will have a handbook for new and continuing students. Students that transfer from a gateway program to a department should receive a copy of the handbook at the time of transfer.

An orientation for all new graduate students should include a review of all program requirements.

Each graduate student must have a faculty advisor at the time of first enrollment.

All doctoral students should meet annually with a faculty committee. The purpose of these meetings is to mentor and guide the student, and should occur in the first and second year of graduate school. The faculty committee may be composed of any faculty that the Department and thesis advisor feel appropriate, and does not necessarily have to consist of the same faculty members who ultimately serve on the advancement or thesis committee. After advancement to candidacy, the thesis committee must meet annually with the student to evaluate progress, and a written report of that committee meeting and student's progress should be maintained in Departmental student academic file.

For students with marginal or unsatisfactory progress, the written evaluation should include specific performance guidelines, a timeline for completion of specific goals, and a date for

review of academic progress with the thesis committee. If a student is in academic difficulty, the graduate advisor, departmental chair and associate dean should be notified in writing.

Doctoral students are expected to advance to candidacy by the end of the third year. The normative time to degree is completion before the beginning of the sixth year of graduate study. The maximum time to degree is seven years (21 academic quarters). Students may only enroll in for the 22 quarter with the approval of an exception to policy by Graduate Division.

Please let me know if there are any questions or concerns.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "R. Michael Mulligan". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized initial "R".

R. Michael Mulligan, Associate Dean for Graduate Studies

February 10, 2006

**DEANS
ASSOCIATE DEANS FOR GRADUATE STUDIES****Re: MFA and PhD Programs: Minimum Standards for Communicating Degree Requirements, Time to Degree Policy and Individual Student Progress Toward Degree**

Over the last year the Graduate Council has requested and collected information from all academic units about how they are communicating with graduate students regarding time-to-degree policy. The Council established a subcommittee to evaluate the wide range of responses received.

Given the variety of graduate programs on the campus, and the possible complications resulting from inadequately advised students, the Council is considering a set of minimum standards for communicating degree requirements, time-to-degree policy, and individual student progress toward the degree. While the following practices are largely included in documents such as the Office of Graduate Studies' *Graduate Advisor's Handbook* (page 58) and *Student Rights and Responsibilities*, they have not yet been adopted as official policy and are not implemented by all programs consistently across the campus. Our goal is to encourage all programs to implement the following practices:

1. An annually updated graduate program handbook, made available to graduate students upon or before their arrival on the campus;
2. A required orientation for all new graduate students, where program requirements are clearly outlined and provided in writing. It is expected that these requirements will be included in the student handbooks as well;
3. Formal assignment of a graduate advisor to each graduate student at the time of first enrollment;
4. A minimum of one meeting – in person whenever feasible - between each graduate student and his/her advisor each quarter in which the student is enrolled; and
5. An annual assessment of each graduate student's progress by the student's advisor. For students with less than satisfactory progress a follow-up discussion should be held by an appropriate faculty group (e.g., a standing or *ad hoc*

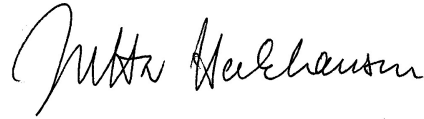
committee or a regular faculty meeting.) This faculty discussion should result in a written evaluation and recommendation to the student, to be sent to the student, his/her faculty advisor, and retained in department records. There should also be an established departmental or program process for follow-up when concerns are raised in a student evaluation.

Please share this document with your program advisors. The Graduate Council invites your comments on these minimum standards and their potential incorporation as policy.

Please provide your input to the Council via Heike Rau, Academic Senate Office (ZOT 1325) no later than February 24 so it can be considered at the March Graduate Council meeting. Once any new policies are approved, the Graduate Advisor's Handbook and Student Rights and Responsibilities documents will be updated accordingly.

Thank you for your attention to this matter. If you have any questions please contact Heike Rau at x 46728.

On behalf of the Graduate Council,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jutta Heckhausen". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "J".

Jutta Heckhausen, Chair

cc: William Parker, Dean, Graduate Studies