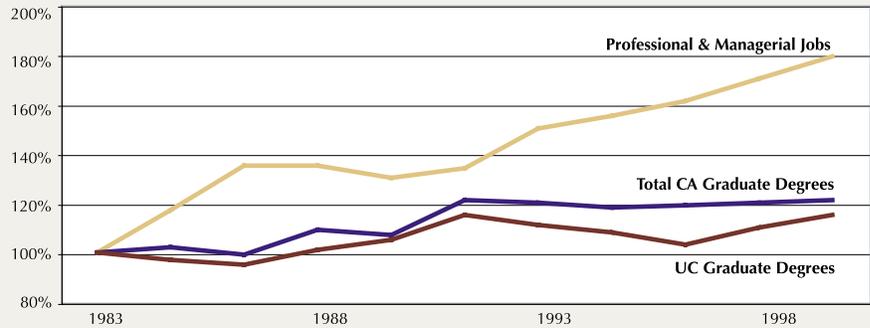


EXCELLENCE, COMPETITIVENESS, AND STUDENT SUPPORT: The Looming Crisis

UCLA's ability to compete for the best graduate students is declining steadily, and student enrollments are also decreasing. At UCLA and elsewhere, California isn't educating enough scholars with advanced degrees to serve its future needs.

Figure 1.
GROWTH TRENDS IN CALIFORNIA SKILLED WORKER POSITIONS
AND GRADUATE DEGREE RECIPIENTS, 1983-1998



Source: *Innovation and Prosperity at Risk: Investing in Graduate Education to Sustain California's Future*, Commission on the Growth and Support of Graduate Education, UCOP Division of Academic Affairs, September 2001.

www.ucop.edu/services/innovation.pdf

California's economy is dependent on discovery, but California has been underinvesting in graduate education, the key training ground for the people who create the discoveries.

Report of the Commission on the Growth and Support of Graduate Education, meeting of the UC Regents Committee on Educational Policy, September 13, 2001

Graduate education at UCLA is facing a crisis that could jeopardize its stature as a preeminent research university. The crisis has two related facets: declining competitiveness in offers of financial support for graduate students and static or shrinking enrollments.

Graduate students—the best and the brightest we can bring to our campus—are required for the university to flourish. In academic apprentice roles, graduate students are major contributors to both research and undergraduate education. Further, the quality of graduate students and their activities and contributions are an important factor in sustaining the productivity and overall excellence of our faculty. As the future professors and professionals who will extend the boundaries of knowledge, they are essential to UCLA's mission and academic reputation.

Recent reports provide compelling evidence that many of our doctoral degree programs at UCLA are becoming increasingly unsuccessful in competing for the most highly recruited applicants. Evidence about enrollments is also disturbing. In the following, we outline the troubling facts.

COMPETITIVE FINANCIAL SUPPORT

There is little doubt that UCLA has experienced a decline in our ability to compete for the best graduate students, and that this is largely a result of inadequate financial support resources.

Table 1.

RECRUITMENT OFFERS PER CAPITA NET STIPEND FOR DOCTORAL STUDENTS AT UC CAMPUSES, 2002

UC San Francisco	\$23,244
UC San Diego	\$15,627
UC Irvine	\$15,176
UC Berkeley	\$14,620
UC Santa Barbara	\$13,450
UC Riverside	\$13,378
UC Santa Cruz	\$12,123
UCLA	\$11,393
UC Davis	\$10,758

Source: *Determining the Comparability of Graduate Student Support: Evidence from the 2001 Graduate Student Support Survey*, Office of the Vice President, Student Academic Services, Student Financial Support, February 2002, adapted from page 16.

fellowship funding has been obtained from various sources specifically for this purpose, a current total of about \$4.5 million. In compliance with Proposition 209, socioeconomic and educational disadvantage are the criteria rather than ethnicity, race, or gender.

Encouraging faculty mentoring.

The Graduate Research Mentorship Program is designed to provide a year-long stipend to help students acquire sophisticated research skills by apprenticing more closely with faculty. Applicants must designate a faculty mentor as part of their proposal, and both mentors and students are required to submit quarterly reports. Briefer support with the same rationale and requirements is provided through the Graduate Summer Research Mentorship Program. Participants in the latter program are expected to have a draft of a paper ready for submission to a journal or for conference presentation at the end of the summer, thus promoting their professional preparation.

Reducing time to degree.

Dissertation year fellowships are available to students who are in their final year of graduate school and plan to start teaching and research appointments immediately after the fellowship year ends. Students must have advanced to candidacy by the time they are nominated, and they must file dissertations within twelve months of the fellowship's inception. Mid-year progress reports support the accomplishment of this goal.

Time to degree is also a factor in decisions about block grant funding; departments receive funds only for students who are making timely progress.

LEVERAGING AVAILABLE RESOURCES

Through its fund-management strategies, the Graduate Division makes optimal use of funds available for fellowships and enables significant economies in time and effort for departments that seek funding for promising students.

Awards made by faculty within departments and/or campuswide faculty selection committees ensure that funds are directed to individuals who have demonstrated outstanding potential and performance.

Most fellowship sources available for distribution by the Graduate Division come with significant restrictions. Sometimes, the restrictions are relatively broad. University Student Aid Program (USAP) funds, for example, are restricted to students with documented financial need. A variety of diversity-promoting sources target students from backgrounds of socioeconomic and educational disadvantage.

In other cases, the restrictions are quite narrow. For example, a couple of fellowships are available only to students studying Armenian subject matter or focusing on research related to biomedical issues. Others are restricted to students with disabilities or life-threatening illnesses. Eligible students may come from a variety of different campus disciplines and departments.

Instead of trying to match students they hope to fund against these types of restrictive criteria, departments need only submit merit-based nominations for students to the Graduate Division. The Graduate Division provides the requested fellowship funds and then undertakes the task of matching students to available fellowship resources, so that the appropriate accounts are debited. This type of fund-management strategy, in which restricted and unrestricted funds are leveraged to meet programmatic goals, would be difficult to sustain in a decentralized environment.

While a large variety of funds are available to support graduate students, many of them under the control of deans and departments, the fellowship resources managed

INNOVATION AND PROSPERITY AT RISK

“Today's innovations emerged from California's investment in graduate education in the '60s and '70s. (p. 3)

California's future strength depends on investing now in graduate education — California's economy depends on it, California's people will benefit. (pp 8-9)

Inside the minds of our graduate students lie the next Intel, Genetech, or Qualcomm. We must invest now and not shortchange our greatest asset. (p. 8)

Susan Hackwood
Executive Director
California Council on Science and Technology

The University of California must keep pace by increasing graduate education programs to meet industry's thirst for knowledge-based workers. Failure to do so will diminish California's competitive position in the global economy. (p. 10)

Tom Burnham
Vice President of Human Resources
Allergran, Inc.

Source: *Innovation and Prosperity at Risk: Investing in Graduate Education to Sustain California's Future*, Commission on the Growth and Support of Graduate Education, UCOP Division of Academic Affairs, September 2001.

www.ucop.edu/services/innovation.pdf

by the Graduate Division are used to support the long-term, campuswide goals of maintaining excellence in graduate education. Through its selection strategies, the Graduate Division rewards not only the best of UCLA's graduate students but also the best of its graduate programs. While the money goes to the support of individual students, awards also further institutional goals, such as student diversity and timely progress toward degree, and encourages best practices, such as faculty mentoring and early engagement in research.

In a context of scarce resources, the Graduate Division has devised methods of fund management that maximize the usefulness of every available dollar and ensure that no fellowship goes unawarded for lack of an appropriate candidate. This process liberates academic departments from the burden of matching deserving students with highly restricted fellowship criteria. The departments nominates students on the basis of academic merit—the Graduate Division matches awardees with appropriate funding sources.

INNOVATION AND PROSPERITY AT RISK: THE REGENTS' COMMISSION'S GOALS

California is one of only five states that experienced a decline in the number of graduate students over the decade 1986 to 1996. During that period, California awarded doctoral degrees to about 15 per 100,000 people, compared to Massachusetts' 32 per 100,000. At large public research universities in other states, graduate students account for a quarter or more of overall enrollment. In the UC system, only 17% of the student body is graduate students. In the thirty years from 1970 to 2000, graduate enrollments at UC increased by 7%, compared with 100% growth in undergraduate enrollments. Over the last decade, California ranks last among the fifteen largest states in percentage growth in graduate enrollments.

The Commission estimates that California will need 40,000 new faculty by 2010. Moreover, it is people with master's and doctoral degrees who will drive the scientific and technological progress that have put California in the national forefront for many years.

To remedy this shortfall in replenishing the state's most educated ranks, the Commission offers a plan, the keystone of which is increased funds for student support. Much of the Commission's strategy for increasing student support relies on increases in federal and state funding or changes in regulations. However, the Commission also "considered at length what the University can do itself, within existing resources, to accomplish the graduate growth and concomitant student support" (p. 3). Its recommendations follow, along with an assessment of how well UCLA measures up in these areas.

Make graduate education a higher internal financial priority in allocation decisions, and redeploy existing financial support dollars in ways that facilitate competitiveness.

As it stands, funding for graduate education at UCLA has not received priority commensurate with its importance, placing us in a position clearly inferior to our competitor institutions.

Because planning for excellence in graduate education has not been fully integrated into academic planning and resource allocation, in times of budget reductions graduate education is especially vulnerable to the further erosion of its essential support resources.

An example is the use of USAP funds. This funding has historically been reserved exclusively for graduate student fellowships. However, this year, UCOP has permitted

campus chancellors to redirect some or all of these funds to pay for increases in teaching assistantships—in other words, to support the instruction of undergraduates. At some campuses, chancellors are redirecting USAP funds in this manner, then restoring a comparable sum—or even more—for graduate student support. At UCLA, it is anticipated that \$2.9 million will be redirected, with no compensating contributions.

Again using UC Berkeley as a benchmark, UCLA's Graduate Division is thinly staffed to meet the needs of a large and diverse graduate student body and cadre of post-doctoral scholars. The Graduate Division at Berkeley has 55.5 FTEs to accomplish its mission. With 1,500 more students, UCLA's Graduate Division makes do with 40.5 FTEs. Today, our 13,000 graduate students, postdoctoral scholars, and departmental staff and faculty must take their inquiries and transaction requests to offices staffed by only five or six people. The absence of even a single person can have significant consequences when so few are providing services for so many. Workload in the Graduate Division is also highly impacted by staff reductions at the department level due to retrenchment. In sum, the graduate student-staff ratio in the Berkeley Division is 170:1 while at UCLA that ratio is 272:1.⁶

Ensure that graduate student housing is a priority on every campus, especially for first-year students.

Weyburn Terrace Housing at the west end of campus is nearing completion. The Graduate Division has worked with a campuswide committee in the planning of that project and the development of policies to help ensure that this new resource will be used to enhance competitiveness.

Make the University of California's campuses the ten best campus environments in the nation by:

- ensuring that admissions practices foster recruitment
- improving mentoring
- fostering students' development as scholars and teachers by consciously designing new opportunities for professional practice
- creating community spaces where graduate students can meet and study
- expanding career planning, placement, and other student services

Admissions: The Graduate Division works closely with departmental faculty and staff on a range of outreach and recruitment activities. Improvements to the Graduate Division website have enhanced this important source of information for prospective applicants.

Mentoring: The Graduate Research Mentorship program and its related summer project provide direct incentives in this area. Also, some QGE funds support departmental programs in this area.

Professional development: A number of Graduate Division fellowships provide additional incentives for students who complete conference papers or journal articles. The Graduate Division has initiated a series of workshops to help students learn how to write grant proposals, journal articles, and conference papers. Again, the QGE program supports departmental efforts in this area.

Career planning: The UCLA Career Center has recently established a program, staffed by a specialized counselor, to help graduate students apply for and attain a variety of jobs in and out of academia. This program was the subject of a *Graduate Quarterly* article in Spring 2003. In addition, the Graduate Division has sponsored workshops on obtaining academic positions.

From the highest-level administrators to the newest students in our graduate community, everyone can help graduate education at UCLA to recover from this crisis and flourish again.

PERFORMANCE INDICATORS DEVELOPED BY THE GRADUATE DIVISION FOR THE QUALITY OF GRADUATE PROGRAMS

- Academic Reputation/Perceived Quality of Graduate Programs
- Academic Quality of Entering Students
- Quality of Instruction and Training
- Degree Progress, Persistence, and Completion
- Student Financial Support
- Doctoral Research and Productivity
- Diversity and Access
- Placement



GRADUATE & POSTDOCTORAL EXTRAMURAL SUPPORT

The UCLA Graduate & Postdoctoral Extramural Support (GRAPES) database was recently updated. GRAPES contains approximately 400 private and publicly funded scholarships, internships, and awards. The database has a new search form allowing users to refine their search by field, academic level, award type, award amount, and other criteria.

GRAPES database is located at www.gdnet.ucla.edu/grpinst.htm

Develop benchmarks to monitor success in graduate education.

As part of the 1997 Systemic Initiative for Strategic Planning for Graduate Education at UCLA, the Graduate Division defined eight areas to assess the quality of graduate education (see sidebar, page 9). Since 2000, institutional data related to these measures have been included in the eight-year review of graduate programs. Departments seeking QGE grants are asked to show how their proposed activities will address one or more of these criteria.

FACING THE CRISIS: A PLAN OF ACTION

While doomsday prophecies serve little constructive purpose, it is nevertheless important to again emphasize that the present situation places more than individual academic careers at risk. Graduate students are at the core of the ongoing enterprise at major universities like UCLA. As both students and teachers, they learn from senior faculty at the same time that many are teaching and mentoring undergraduates, participating in work that is an essential mechanism of a great university's instructional mission. Through their research, graduate students carry forward the goals of celebrated scholars and enlarge the boundaries of knowledge in virtually every discipline. They help today's university thrive; they become the universities of the future. The Commission has spoken quite eloquently on the consequences of a faltering graduate education enterprise for California's economic, educational, and cultural well-being.

While we can hope that the present budget crisis is temporary, this paper has outlined structural issues that will continue to keep UCLA's graduate education at a level that is inconsistent with our history of excellence and our aspirations. As all sectors of the campus will feel the impact of a decline in graduate education, they should all share in making plans to avert that outcome. Proactive efforts to enhance graduate education should include the following:

Increase available funds.

Using UC Berkeley fellowship expenditures as a benchmark, the Graduate Division estimates that an investment of \$2 million to \$2.5 million each year between now and 2010 will be required just to the repair the damage to our competitiveness resulting from decreasing student support. To meet the Commission's goals of expanding graduate enrollment, more will be required. Graduate education must have a high priority when decisions are made about discretionary funds.

Campus development campaigns must also focus new efforts on establishing fellowship endowments and current use fundraising. A major development campaign which assigns development officers specifically to this task is essential.

Encourage faculty to obtain training grants.

The number of extramural training grants obtained by UCLA faculty has increased significantly in recent years, and many of these are interdisciplinary and thus include students from a number of departments. As one measure of increased success, the amount of matching funds required has increased four-fold, from about \$250,000 to about \$1 million, in the last six years.

The Graduate Division has been an active collaborator in this process, urging increased applications, providing support services and any needed institutional data, writing on behalf of the applicants, and committing the required matching funds. Agency evaluations indicate that UCLA proposals have received the maximum points awarded for institutional support.

A major issue arises out of this success. As more training grants are awarded to UCLA, the need for matching funds increases, and the capacity of the Graduate Division to meet this demand without additional resources on its own is being challenged.

Help students apply for extramural grants.

As campus funds for their support decrease, graduate students must be encouraged and supported in their efforts to seek extramural funding. Toward this end, the Graduate Division:

- maintains an online database of major extramural fellowships
- operates an e-mail list with timely information on opportunities
- provides faculty consultants to advise on proposals
- offers workshops on specific extramural programs

The Graduate Division also offers financial incentives to graduate students who obtain multi-year extramural fellowships. Successful applicants may choose between a supplement to the extramural stipend for every year of its duration or an additional year of funding equivalent to the stipend of a Chancellor's Fellowship.

Some departments have been highly successful in increasing student support from extramural fellowship sources. The Department of Psychology, for example, has become a model of how to harness the energy of graduate students to help close funding gaps. Graduate students receive a \$1,000 summer stipend on the condition that they prepare and submit an application for an extramural fellowship or grant. The Graduate Division links departments who have achieved these goals with others who are interested in developing similar initiatives.

CONCLUSION

The decline in support for graduate students, juxtaposed with a sharply increasing projected need for people with advanced degrees, presents a major challenge to UCLA, the UC system, and the State of California.

At the highest levels, persistent and vigorous efforts to increase the flow of funds for graduate student support are required. No resource should be overlooked in this quest. Federal and state governments will no doubt continue to be major sources of funding, but aggressive moves to solicit extramural funds from foundations and individuals are also required.

In the meantime, every sector of the campus—North and South, sciences and humanities, students and faculty—must become engaged in the effort to reverse losses and move forward into a new era when graduate education flourishes at UCLA, with an impact on the state's economic, social, and cultural progress that may lie beyond imagination.

The Graduate Division is prepared to coordinate this effort and to do everything possible to help ensure that UCLA is fully committed to the integral role that graduate education plays in maintaining the greatness of our university.⁷

The crisis is urgent. We cannot afford to delay.



Claudia Mitchell-Kernan
Vice Chancellor Graduate Studies
Dean, Graduate Division

Endnotes

- ¹ *Determining the Comparability of Graduate Student Support: Evidence from the 2001 Graduate Student Support Survey*, Office of the Vice President, Student Academic Services, Student Financial Support, February 2002, adapted from page 16.
- ² Report to Executive Vice Chancellor W R Hume, June 26, 2000 from VC Claudia Mitchell-Kernan.
- ³ University of California Office of the President, Annual Report on Student Financial Support 2000-2001, Office of the Associate Vice President Student Academic Services, Student Financial Support, February 2003.
- ⁴ UCLA Planning Office Report, December 17, 2003.
- ⁵ *Innovation and Prosperity at Risk: Investing in Graduate Education to Sustain California's Future*, Commission on the Growth and Support of Graduate Education, UCOP Division of Academic Affairs, September 2001.
- ⁶ There are minor variations in the responsibilities of the two divisions. For example, Berkeley does TA training but does not serve postdoctoral and visiting scholars as does UCLA.
- ⁷ The UCLA Graduate Council of the Academic Senate and the Graduate Student Association are preparing position papers to provide their perspectives on student support issues.

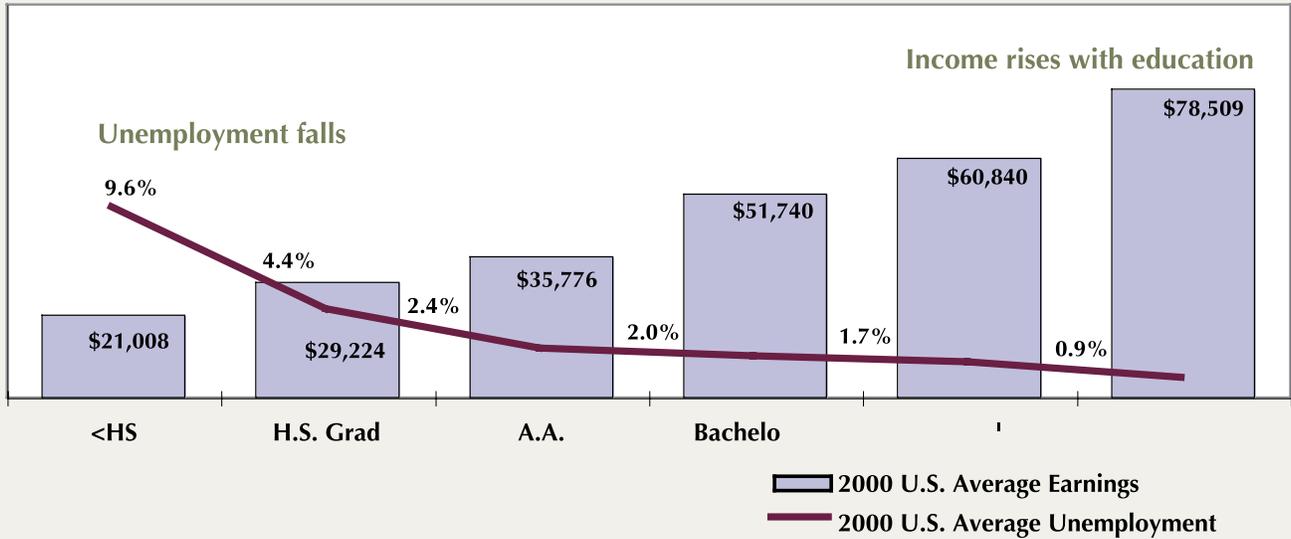


Graduate Focus is a publication of the UCLA Graduate Division.

Design by Mary Watkins,
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This report is available on the Graduate Division web site at www.gdnet.ucla.edu/asis/library/gfintro.htm.

Figure 5.
EDUCATION MAKES A DIFFERENCE



Source: *Innovation and Prosperity at Risk: Investing in Graduate Education to Sustain California's Future*, Commission on the Growth and Support of Graduate Education, UCOP Division of Academic Affairs, September 2001.
www.ucop.edu/services/innovation.pdf

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