ACADEMIC SENATE CHAIR SUSAN COCHRAN

Dear Chair Cochran:

In the wake of the unionization of the graduate students, faculty have expressed a keen need for recommendations regarding the academic expectations between faculty and students with regard to 299s.

Perhaps not surprisingly, many of the campuses have forged ahead in this effort, working to clarify the student/faculty relationship, as separate from the employee/employer relationship stipulated by the UAW contract. CCGA collected these suggestions and has created the attached document to provide the campuses with some uniform, systemwide guidance in this arena. These recommendations have been reviewed and approved by both UC Legal and Academic Personnel and Programs.

CCGA asks that this guidance be shared as soon as possible with the graduate deans, graduate council chairs, and the divisional senate chairs.

Thank you for your support of this effort. Please let me know if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

Erith Jaffe-Berg
CCGA Chair

c: James Steintrager, Academic Senate Vice Chair
Monica Lin, Academic Senate Executive Director
Michael LaBriola, Academic Senate Assistant Dir
CCGA Members
Amy K. Lee, Associate Vice Provost, APP
Martha Kim, Principal Counsel, UC Legal
James DiCaprio, Academic Labor and Employee Relations Director, APP
Nick Weston-Dawkes, Academic Labor and Employee Relations Associate Dir., APP
CCGA Guidance on 299s

Definition of 299 Courses
299 courses come under the category of directed studies courses (290s). On some campuses 299s are used interchangeably with 297, but for the purposes of this document, we will use 299. 299 courses are often specifically classified as research for the thesis or dissertation. They may also be taken as a form of independent study, in connection with research in laboratories or towards a student’s thesis. The material produced as part of the 299 may also be intended for future publication or performance, often related to a student’s thesis. In a lab setting, the 299 allows a student to conduct research under the oversight and mentorship of a professor. 299 courses are typically taken for 1 up to 12/16 units (quarter/semester) per term and for S/U grades (where one unit corresponds to 3 hours of weekly research time).

Clarifying the research and mentorship component of 299 courses is ongoing on a departmental, campus and systemwide level. CCGA discussed this issue and compiled a repository of campus-level efforts, including documents generated by graduate councils on the various campuses, often in the form of guidance on syllabus development for graduate-level individual study or research courses.

Guidelines for Clarifying the Research and Mentorship Component of 299 Courses:
The following is a summation of both the discussions at CCGA and the considerations that may be productive to consider with regard to clarifying the academic expectations from the faculty member to the student and mentorship involved with 299s.

Articulating the academic coursework expectations of the instructor helps to clarify the basis for grading as well as the scope of academic coursework effort (separate and apart from any employment responsibilities) to be undertaken by the student. It also helps to specify the types of activities that can be mentored and supervised by faculty.

CCGA affirms that (i) the definition and clarification of the expectations in terms of scheduled time for graduate students taking 299 courses is at the discretion of faculty members, (ii) academic coursework (299 units) and employment are distinct activities that faculty members should map out for their graduate students at the beginning of each quarter, and (iii) the overlap between the activities that graduate students perform for 299 credit and their employment remains at the discretion of faculty members.

The following are some suggestions faculty members and programs may want to consider:

1. Faculty mentors may articulate their expectations for the graduate student taking a 299 course in the form of a syllabus, a course description or a course add form. Faculty may want to consider formalizing the process to create more clarity for the students and to prevent misunderstanding. The scope of the research as well as the basis for grading the research should be defined by the professor and agreed upon by the student. Other factors to consider include: the number of meetings to be held, the timeline for completing research projects, milestones in the process, and criteria for the evaluation. It is important to note that 1 unit = 3 hours based on the Carnegie Rule,
2. In order to set, assess and gauge expectations in research courses, faculty may use different tools, including self-assessment surveys provided by the graduate division or graduate groups, Gantt charts, and meetings with the student.

3. For 299s taken in the context of lab research, the faculty PI can clarify expectations that are part of the academic training of the graduate student.

4. Academic credit may be based on research activities conducted by a student such as: writing a paper, preparing research towards a thesis chapter, designing an experiment, preparing or compiling a research survey or questionnaire as part of an experiment, writing a play or screenplay, creating a performance, or developing an original work of art.

5. 299s are not used for teaching/TAing responsibilities.

6. Departments may wish to collect sample examples of templates/expectations/course syllabi for 299 courses to share with other faculty members to serve as a repository of examples that can be consulted. Alternatively, there could be a program-level syllabus which is published in the catalogue and includes a sentence that faculty may add lab-specific details to the syllabus.