Resolution # 1409B

Resolution to Reinstate the Graduate Assembly Workgroup for Graduate Professional Development and Directed Action to Establish a Committee for Graduate Professional Development

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WHEREAS in September of 2013, the Graduate Assembly (the “GA”) resolved to create the Graduate Assembly Workgroup to Advocate for the Advancement of Professional Development at Berkeley (the “Workgroup”); and

WHEREAS in the same month, the GA, in conjunction with the Graduate Division, charged the Task Force on Graduate Student and Postdoc Professional Development (the “Task Force”) to report on the current state of professional development at the University of California, Berkeley (the “University”) and generate a list of recommendations for “improving opportunities for graduate students and postdocs to gain skills and knowledge related to securing meaningful careers within and outside of the academy”\(^1\); and

WHEREAS in October of 2013, the GA voted to make professional development an official advocacy agenda item for the Executive Board in the 2013–2014 academic year; and

WHEREAS in the same month, the GA and the Workgroup applied for and received a Chancellor’s Advisory Committee on Student Services and Fees (“CACSSF”) grant for $80,000 to create a professional development website and hire consultancy firm Emergent Solutions to assess next steps for graduate professional development beyond the scope of the Task Force; and

WHEREAS in February of 2014, the Executive Board of the GA and members of the Workgroup met with University President Janet Napolitano and Chancellor Nicholas Dirks to outline the current state of professional development at the University; and

WHEREAS in March of 2014, the Task Force released a report (the “Task Force Report”) of its findings that: (1) professional development has six core components, including, inter alia, communication, leadership, and career development skills; (2) many graduate and postdoctoral students pursue careers outside of the academy; (3) employers and former PhD students alike stress the development of communication and leadership skills to be competitive in non-academic markets; (4) the current support system for graduate students and postdoctoral students is fragmented and inefficient; and (5) departments do not have faculty who specialize in graduate student and postdoctoral career development; and

WHEREAS the Task Force report’s recommendations for improvement included, inter alia, providing training for students in the six identified core components; unifying service provision for graduate students and postdocs under the umbrella of a Professional Development Center (the “Center”); and concluding that “[a]n Advisory Committee for Graduate Student and Postdoc Professional Development should be formed as a standing subcommittee of the Graduate Council of the Academic Senate; an equivalent committee or workgroup should be formed jointly between the Graduate Assembly and the Berkeley Postdoctoral Association”2 in order to facilitate these recommendations; and

WHEREAS in April of 2014, the Graduate Division announced the creation of “dedicated space for hosting services and events”3 for professional development purposes in Sproul Hall pursuant to the recommendations of the Task Force Report; and

WHEREAS in May of 2014, the Workgroup, in cooperation with Emergent Solutions, presented to the Graduate Division and the Chancellor the UC Berkeley Graduate and Postdoc Professional Development Strategy Final Report (the “Workgroup Report”) which identified many of the same findings and recommendations, including the establishment of “an Advisory Committee co-chaired by the Graduate Division and the Graduate Assembly” that will “[b]uild an organizing framework, metrics, web resources, and funding processes” for the Center4; and

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2 Ibid., at 3.
3 Ibid., at 15.
4 “UC Berkeley Graduate and Postdoc Professional Development Strategy.” 2014, at 7 (on file with resolution authors).
WHEREAS the above timeline demonstrates a commitment on behalf of the University, the Graduate Division, and the GA to the advancement of professional development for graduate students and postdocs; and

WHEREAS the continued input of the graduate student body has been recommended by both the Task Force Report and the Workgroup Report; and

WHEREAS a Workgroup must be established each academic year, but establishment of a GA Project or standing GA Committee can only occur via an official amendment to the GA Bylaws; therefore let it be

RESOLVED that the Workgroup be reinstated for the 2014–2015 academic year or until such time as a new GA Project, GA Committee, or Campus Committee be formed; and

RESOLVED that the Workgroup be comprised of no fewer than four (4) delegates, preferably distributed across engineering and sciences, social sciences, humanities, and professional programs; the GA President and Campus Affairs Vice President; and up to four (4) additional members from the GA or the Graduate Student Body, preferably including student members of the Task Force, with total membership not to exceed ten (10) students; and

RESOLVED that the Workgroup be granted a budget of three hundred dollars ($300) per semester for meeting materials, including food, supplies, etc., from the GA’s contingency fund, with unused funds returning to contingency at the conclusion of each semester; and

RESOLVED that the Campus Affairs Vice President (the “CAVP”) discuss, in conjunction with the appropriate representative of the Graduate Division, the Workgroup, and the Internal Vice President (the “IVP”), establishing a permanent Campus Committee for Graduate Professional Development to oversee the implementation of the recommendations of the Task Force Report and the Workgroup Report beyond the scope of this Workgroup; and finally

RESOLVED that the CAVP and the IVP present to the Workgroup a timeline for the creation of said Campus Committee or, should such a Committee be untenable, the creation of a GA Project or GA Committee to further advance the graduate student body’s interest in coordinated, campus-wide professional development.