#  January 26, 2015

Dear Graduate Program Chairs and Graduate Program Coordinators,

Graduate Studies asked graduate programs to send us examples of letters they were sending to applicants that they were recommending for admission. We presented some of these in the fall update for graduate program chairs. Since then, several chairs have asked for examples of letters that make multiyear offers to prospective applicants. We have tried to summarize some of the best practices for graduate program letters to students that your program is recommending for acceptance. I have attached three letters for your consideration. We are not recommending that you follow any specific letter or format. However, there are things that are important to include in a letter, either as an attachment or as a link to a website.

Those items are as follows.

1. The Council of Graduate Schools agreement is important because it clearly lets students know that they cannot be pressured into accepting an offer of financial support prior to April 15 of the calendar year.

Council of Graduate Schools Agreement

(<http://www.cgsnet.org/ckfinder/userfiles/files/CGSResolution_Rev2014.pdf>)

2. It is important to be clear about TA positions. We recommend something along the line of the following two paragraphs.

TA positions are covered by a collective bargaining agreement between the University of California (UC) and the United Automobile Workers (UAW) Local 2865. An electronic copy of the UC and UAW LOCAL 2865 collective bargaining agreement can be accessed at <http://ucnet.universityofcalifornia.edu/labor/bargaining-units/index.html>. The collective bargaining agreement between UC and UAW LOCAL 2865 requires that your name and departmental address be released to UAW LOCAL 2865. Additionally, state law mandates that employees pay either membership dues or an agency fee to their exclusive representative (unions). UAW LOCAL 2865's membership dues are 1.15% per month of total gross pay and its agency fee is .87% per month of total gross pay.

Academic Student Employees appointments of 25% or greater are entitled to a Student Health Insurance Premium Remission, Educational and Registration Fee Remission, and other applicable benefits as set forth in Article 14 of the collective bargaining agreement. Specific eligibility requirements and percentages of each remission are contained in the collective bargaining agreement.

3. It is important if the graduate program is offering a fellowship that students receive:

Regulations for Graduate Students Receiving Fellowships

<http://gradstudies.ucdavis.edu/sites/default/files/upload/files/current-students/gs501-fellowship-regulations.pdf>

The Regulations document also provides the website for establishing California residency (<http://registrar.ucdavis.edu/tuition/residence/index.cfm>), which is very important for US citizens coming to the campus from a state other than California. Additionally, the following site is useful for those working to become a California resident.

<http://registrar.ucdavis.edu/tuition/residence/processes/slr-basics.cfm>

Other information that you may want to include would be health insurance. The letter labeled “Example 2” provides language that you may find useful.

The letter labeled “Example 3” has a paragraph about the FAFSA that reads:

A variety of student financial aid is available for all income levels. Whether or not students think they are eligible, we encourage them to apply for financial aid each year. Applying begins with the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) or the California Dream Act Application. Both applications are free. The financial awards detailed here are not dependent upon the financial need determined from the FAFSA data. The priority deadline for graduate students to file the FAFSA is March 2, 2015.

Another site that you may consider useful for those for which you are recommending admission is:

Information & Resources for New UC Davis Students

<http://gradstudies.ucdavis.edu/current-students>

The example letters provided are examples only and are all letters that are actually used by graduate programs on this campus. We are certainly not telling graduate programs how to write letters but just providing you with information as to how some programs are communicating offers to prospective students.

Please let me know if you have any questions or comments. We will set aside time, if needed, to respond to any questions or suggestions at the next Graduate Program Chairs Meeting held in 203 Mrak Hall from 8:30 to 10:00 AM February 11, 2015 or from Noon to 1:30 PM on February 20, 2015.

Sincerely.

Chris Calvert

Associate Dean for Graduate Programs