

**Reference Number:** S08-246

**Senate Approval Date:** Tuesday, February 12, 2008

## Academic Policies Committee Statement on the Culminating Experience Continuous Enrollment Policy

Currently, once graduate students have enrolled in their culminating experience course and completed all degree requirements except the culminating experience, they are not required by SF State to enroll in any course regardless of their use of University resources or faculty time. About twelve percent of graduate students take two or three years and seven percent take more than three years to complete their degree requirements following enrollment in their culminating experience. To establish a mechanism that will generate resources to support graduate students and their faculty advisors while the students complete their culminating experience, and to decrease the time-to-graduation rate, a culminating experience continuous enrollment policy shall be established.

### CULMINATING EXPERIENCE CONTINUOUS ENROLLMENT POLICY

#S08-246

- 1) Graduate students enroll in Culminating Experience (CE) course through regular university registration after their Culminating Experience Proposal (including Human/or Animal Subjects approval, if required) has been approved. Enrollment in the CE course should require students to submit a timetable, developed with their graduate coordinator, demonstrating that the CE will be completed within two semesters.
  
- 2) Students have the semester they enroll in the CE and the following semester to complete their degree requirements. If all requirements except the CE are completed during the semester students enroll in the CE, they do not need to enroll the following semester.
  
- 3) Students who do not complete their CE during the semester of enrollment in the CE or the following semester (the "grace" semester) must enroll in a zero-unit College of Extended Learning (CEL) CE course every subsequent semester until the CE is completed. Enrollment in the CEL CE course provides students access to SFSU libraries, discipline-associated laboratories and facilities, and CE advisors. Students will be assumed to have withdrawn from their degree program if they fail to maintain continuous enrollment status after the grace semester. (For the purpose of this policy, only the fall and spring semesters are counted as semesters.)
  
- 4) Students who do not maintain continuous enrollment in their CE course and subsequently return to complete their CE within the 7-year time limit to complete requirements for graduate degrees must be reinstated in their degree program. To be reinstated, students must retroactively enroll in the CEL CE course for all semesters after the initial CE enrollment except the grace semester and file a new Proposal for Culminating Experience. Students who are past the 7-year limit must formally reapply for admission to the program in which they were completing their CE. No guarantee of admission can be assumed. If readmitted, students shall follow the degree requirements in effect at the time of readmission and must submit a new Graduate Approved Program to the Division of Graduate Studies.
  
- 5) Continuous enrollment CEL CE course fees may be waived for very exceptional, documented circumstances. Graduate student requests for a waiver must include verifiable documentation for serious, medically-related absences, financial hardship, or other extenuating situations. Questions regarding the procedures for the waiver request should be directed to the Graduate Division. The Graduate Council will review fee-waiver requests and advise the Graduate Division on these requests.

6) The fee for the zero-unit CE course will be set annually, following consultation between the Deans of CEL and the Division of Graduate Studies. The fee cannot exceed the Open University laboratory unit fee.

7) Funds generated from Open University enrollment will be returned as follows per enrolled student:

- 80% to the department, program, or unit from which the student's degree will be awarded; and
- 20% to CEL.

8) At the end of the Spring 2014 semester the Division of Graduate Studies shall submit to the Academic Senate a report which quantifies and analyzes progression-to-graduation rates, culminating experience completion rates, and the number of students paying the fee for classified graduate students admitted in Fall 2006 and in Fall 2008. This Culminating Experience Continuous Enrollment Policy will expire in Spring 2016, unless the Academic Senate takes positive action.

\*\*\*Approved by the Academic Senate at its meeting on Tuesday, February 12, 2008\*\*\*

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