

*Approved by Graduate Council on January 24, 2002*

*Approved by Senate Committee on Admissions and Academic Standards on March 27, 2003*

*Approved by Senate Council on April 21, 2003 for inclusion on the Senate agenda with a positive recommendation*

January 22, 2002

TO: Members of the Graduate Council

FROM: D.S. Kalika, Acting Dean

RE: Compliance with SACS Criteria regarding expectations in 400G and 500-level courses

The President's *Review and Implementation Task Force* for the SACS self-study has requested that the Graduate Council review current policies regarding expectations for graduate students enrolled in 400G and 500-level courses. In Spring 2001, the Council discussed this issue informally, leading to a consensus with respect to the manner in which differentiation between undergraduate and graduate students should be achieved in 400G and 500-level courses. This recommendation was then communicated to the faculty through the Directors of Graduate Studies (see attached memo). At this juncture, it appears appropriate to formalize this recommendation.

As such, the following new rule is proposed regarding expectations in 400G and 500-level courses:

**Combined instruction of graduate and undergraduate students in 400G and 500-level courses must be structured to ensure appropriate attention to both groups, and a corresponding differentiation in expectations. This differentiation is to be accomplished by (i) the completion of additional or distinct assignments by the enrolled graduate students that are consistent with graduate-level scholarship; and/or (ii) the establishment of different grading criteria in the course for graduate versus undergraduate students, reflecting a higher standard for graduate students. The grading scale for both graduate and undergraduate students must be clearly stated in the syllabus.**

March 19, 2001

TO: Directors of Graduate Studies

FROM: Michael T. Nietzel, Dean

The Graduate School

RE: Compliance with SACS Criteria regarding expectations in 400G and 500-level courses

The SACS *Criteria* regarding graduate instruction include the following (section 4.3.4)

"An institution offering graduate work must be able to demonstrate that it maintains a substantial difference between undergraduate and graduate instruction. Graduate study must be at a level of complexity and specialization that extends the knowledge and intellectual maturity of the student. It must require graduate students to analyze, explore, question, reconsider and synthesize old and new knowledge and skills. The graduate curriculum must afford the depth of education, the specialized skills, and the sense of creative independence that will allow the graduate to practice in and contribute to a profession or field of scholarship. ***Combined instruction of graduate and undergraduate students, if permitted at all, must be structured to ensure appropriate attention to both groups.***"

I would like to draw your attention to the last statement, concerning combined instruction of undergraduate and graduate students. This issue is particularly important in 400G and 500-level courses, where undergraduate and graduate students are often enrolled together. Recent discussions in the Graduate Council have considered the intent of the SACS Criteria and possible steps the institution should take to insure compliance, while at the same time allowing the individual disciplines reasonable flexibility in the extent to which they differentiate between the undergraduate and graduate populations in a particular course.

The consensus of the Graduate Council was that the expectations of undergraduate versus graduate students in 400G and 500 level courses should be different, and that these differing expectations should be clearly stated in the course syllabus. This differentiation could be achieved in two ways: (i) Graduate students

enrolled in a 400G or 500 level course would be required to complete additional assignments consistent with graduate-level scholarship; e.g. an additional term project, literature review, research paper, analysis, etc. (ii) Graduate students enrolled in a 400G or 500 level course would be held to a higher grading standard for exams, term projects, and other assignments as appropriate. The grading scale for both undergraduate and graduate students would be clearly stated in the syllabus. While this approach would not necessarily require the graduate student to complete additional assignments, it would provide for a clear differentiation. I believe that either of these two approaches, or a combination thereof, would meet the spirit of the SACS Criteria in ensuring "appropriate attention" to undergraduate and graduate students in a combined instruction setting. Please communicate this recommendation to the graduate faculty in your program and encourage them to modify their course syllabi accordingly.