MEMORANDUM

TO: Graduate Program Directors

FROM: Brian McGee, Provost and Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs
       Dean of the Graduate School

DATE: February 17, 2017

SUBJECT: Advertising, Policy Management, and the Withdrawal of the Graduate
         Student Handbook

For some years, the UCSC Graduate School has published on its website a Graduate Student
Handbook (hereafter, “Handbook”). The Handbook has been a compilation of materials copied
from other resources available at the College (e.g., College of Charleston Graduate Catalog). The
Handbook has contained no original material only available in that resource.

The motivation for creating the Handbook was to provide a single, convenient reference source for
the use of graduate students. While this motivation was and is laudable, we have no evidence that
the Handbook was heavily used by our current and prospective graduate students. Further,
keeping this Handbook updated and current poses serious managerial and practical problems, as it
must be annually cross-referenced with the updates made to other, controlling policy statements of
the College and the Graduate School. Absent a well-conceived scheme for drawing the
Handbook’s content from some common database containing current policy statements from
multiple divisions of the College, the risk of error in providing duplicate materials to students is in
my view unacceptable. As we do not have such a content-management system at present, the safest
approach is to have graduate students make reference to the primary sources of such information.
Our obligations under College Policy 12.1.8 (“Advertising, Student Recruitment, and
Representation of Accredited Status”) also suggest the avoidance of any managerial scheme that
produces an unnecessary risk of providing faulty information to students.

Effective today, and in my capacity as Provost, I have directed that the Handbook be
withdrawn. It is no longer published on the website of the UCSC Graduate School. Much of the
material contained in the Handbook, however, continues to be published at or linked to the
UCSC Graduate School website.

I am aware that many graduate programs publish handbooks specific to the work of their own
students and faculty. These graduate handbooks are updated periodically and provide an essential
resource to the students and faculty of those programs. It is important that such program-specific
handbooks contain accurate information. In the event such handbooks are said to announce program-specific policies, such policies will be interpreted in light of my memorandum of August 9, 2016, on the creation of policies within the Academic Affairs Divisions, or in light of any successor memorandum or policy on policy creation that might be distributed in the division. See http://academicaffairs.cofc.edu/documents/procedures-and-practices/divisional_policies_memo.pdf.

Please let me know if you would like to discuss at a future Graduate Council meeting our obligations under College Policy 12.1.8 or our continuing efforts to inform graduate students about institutional and other policies.

cc: Deans
Department Chairs
Lynn Cherry, Associate Provost for Curriculum and Institutional Resources
Mary Bergstrom, Registrar
Alicia Caudill, Executive Vice President for Student Affairs
Susan Anderson Rivaleau, Assistant Vice President, ORGA
Christine Finnan, Chair, Committee on Graduate Education, Continuing Education and Special Programs