



## MEMORANDUM

TO: Graduate Program Directors

FROM: Brian McGee, Provost and Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs *BM*  
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**Effective today, and in my capacity as Provost, I have directed that the Handbook be withdrawn.** It is no longer published on the website of the UCSC Graduate School.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](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