

November 22, 1989: Dissertation Signature Final

Academic Senate

320 Stephens Hall

University of California, Berkeley

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Dean Joseph Cerny

Graduate Division

California Hall

Campus

Dear Dean Cerny:

At its most recent meeting, the Graduate Council considered the responsibility of faculty in signing dissertations and/or abstracts. This matter was brought to the attention of the Council following the recent meeting of the Administrative Committee where the case of a faculty member who wished to withdraw his signature from the title page and from the abstract of a student dissertation was considered as part of an appeal by the student involved. In considering this issue, it came to the attention of the Administrative Committee that policies of the Graduate Division are not explicit on this issue. The Council considered the recommendation of the Administrative Committee that faculty should be advised that their signature on a dissertation and/or abstract is binding and cannot be withdrawn once given. Furthermore, faculty should not sign dissertations and/or abstracts until the faculty member is convinced that the work by the student has been completed to the satisfaction of that faculty member. The Council unanimously endorsed this position and requested that the Graduate Division place a section in the Graduate Adviser's Handbook making the above statement of policy explicit.

As a consequence of this policy on signing dissertations and/or abstracts, the Final Report currently submitted by departments following the filing of a dissertation should be revised. It is the position of the Council that once a student is advanced to candidacy, he/she is under the guidance of a dissertation committee which is appointed on behalf of the Administrative Committee of

the Graduate Council. The Final Report, in its current form, is therefore not necessary. The department is to monitor the progress of students but the completion of the dissertation is the responsibility of the student working with his/her dissertation committee. However, a Final Report should be submitted by the department for all Plan A students who must present a defense of the dissertation as well as for those Plan B students for whom a defense is required. The Council requests that the Graduate Division modify the current Final Report form to conform to these guidelines. I will include the revised Final Report form as an information item for the Council when it is ready.

Yours truly,

Thomas Duncan

Chair, Graduate Council