To: Department Chairs  
    Graduate Directors  
    Graduate Advisers  

July 17, 2006

From: Graduate Council

Re: Definition of Master’s Plan I and II; Minimum Requirements for Academic Master’s Degrees

At the University of California, the definition of Master’s Plan I (thesis-based) and Plan II (comprehensive assessment-based) programs of study is provided by the Divisional Academic Senates. As of the beginning of the 2005-2006 academic year, UCSC was unique among the 10 campuses of the UC system (including Merced) in not having a formal definition of the Plan I and Plan II programs of study, with associated minimum requirements. In its meeting of April 6, 2006, the UCSC Graduate Council adopted the following definitions of and minimum requirements for academic Master’s degrees. The language below will replace that currently found in Section V.C of Appendix D of the UCSC Academic Senate Manual.

All existing and proposed academic Master’s degree programs will be expected to comply with these definitions and standards. The Graduate Council requests that all programs offer an academic Master’s degree review their requirements and ensure that they are compliant with these standards. Any questions that arise may be directed to the Chair of the Graduate Council. All resulting changes in degree requirements will require Graduate Council approval.

Sincerely,

Bruce Schumm, Chair
For the Graduate Council

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C. Students pursuing academic Master’s Degrees (M.A. and M.S.) will pursue either a thesis capstone (Plan I) or comprehensive capstone (Plan II) curriculum. Individual programs may adopt one or both plans. Candidates for either plan are subject to guidance by the program’s faculty respecting the distribution of the student’s workload among departments. Subject to the approval of the Academic Senate, programs are to develop M.A. and M.S. degree requirements appropriate to the field of study. These requirements must meet the following minimum standards.

C.1 Minimum Number of Units Required
Plan I: Must require a minimum of 35 quarter units of graduate and upper division courses, of which no more than 15 units may be upper division undergraduate courses. Of the required graduate-level courses, a minimum of 20 units must be courses other than supervised research, except by special exception of the Graduate Council. This exception shall be provided to the program as a whole, rather than case-by-case to individual candidates.

Plan II: Must require a minimum of 35 quarter units of graduate and upper division courses, of which no more than 15 units may be upper division undergraduate courses. Supervised research classes may not count towards the satisfaction of minimum unit requirements for Plan II candidates.

C.2 Minimum Capstone Requirements

Plan I: A Master’s thesis, or project or performance in lieu of a thesis, is required of each candidate. The Plan I capstone must be completed in the manner and format specified by the Graduate Council and filed with the Division of Graduate Studies by the end of instruction in the term in which the candidate expects the degree to be awarded.

Plan II: A comprehensive final examination or project in the major subject, of such nature and conducted in such manner as may be determined by the department or group concerned, is required of each candidate. The nature of the comprehensive capstone is to be approved by the Graduate Council for the program as a whole.