DATE: March 22, 2010

TO: Tih-Fen Ting
Chair Campus Senate

Tena Helton
Director of Graduate Studies, English Department

FROM: James Hall
Graduate Council (Sharron LaFollette, Chair)

RE: Department of English Advanced Teaching Assistantship

Graduate Council met on Monday, March 8, 2010, to review the request from the Department of English to designate “Advanced Teaching Assistantships” for students who would teach composition classes for the English Department. This Advanced TA designation would be implemented in conjunction with the proposed Master’s Certificate in Teaching English. Graduate students who have successfully completed the Certificate in Teaching English in the first year of study and have secured an Advanced TA position would serve as the Instructor of Record for two fall semester courses and two spring semester courses during the second year of study. The Advanced TA designation would apply only to selected students who are earning the certificate while pursuing their M.A. in English.

The Graduate Council endorses the Advanced TA proposal to enable the English Department to attract highly qualified candidates to the graduate program. Graduate-level English students have noted that they need teaching experience to obtain post-secondary teaching positions in the discipline. In addition, the Graduate Council believes that the English Department has a well-developed process to ensure the Advanced TAs receive appropriate pedagogical training in the first year and to support their teaching during the second year. Advanced TAs would teach under the supervision of an English Department faculty member, who has developed the syllabi and curriculum to be taught.

The Graduate Council recognizes that the use of these Advanced TA positions will be very limited in scope, have a very specific purpose within the English MA program, and are not heralding any major change to the campus’s commitment to faculty excellence in teaching, to faculty delivering our courses, or to ensuring the educational quality of our courses. If anything, these Advanced Teaching Assistantships honor and represent well the faculty reputation for excellence in teaching and our ability to develop a well-designed educational program that contributes to the development of excellent college teachers of English.

The Graduate Council has discussed the Advanced TA designation with the Provost’s Office and the designation of Advanced TAs as Instructors of Record. These positions would enable
English to reduce the use of adjuncts to deliver general education composition courses. The Advanced Teaching Assistantships are not reallocations of existing positions and the positions would be self-funded, cost neutral.

Therefore, Graduate Council is advancing the attached resolution to endorse the designation of Advanced TAs for the English graduate program.

cc: Harry Berman, Provost & Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs
    Lynn Pardie, Associate Vice Chancellor for Graduate Education & Research