Memorandum

TO: UIS Campus Senate  
FROM: Barbara Hayler, Chair, Graduate Council  
SUBJECT: Change in Graduate Assistant Policy  
DATE: May 9, 2002

During Spring Semester 2002 an issue relating to current Graduate Assistantship policy came to the attention of the UIS Graduate Council. Existing Graduate Assistantship policy, as compiled in the *UIS Graduate Assistantship Program Policy Manual*, last revised in August 2000, included a statement of policy relating to course load and tuition waivers. It read as follows:

You are considered a full-time student and must enroll and remain enrolled throughout a regular semester for a minimum of 8 to a maximum of 12 hours. Audit and credit/no credit work do not qualify to meet the minimum load. (*UIS Graduate Assistantship Program Policy Manual*, p.7)

The INO graduate degree program, which has a graduate assistantship, encourages its graduate students to enroll in at least some of their courses on a credit/no credit (CR/NC) basis. In order to receive a grade of CR in a graduate course, the student must have earned a grade of “B” or higher. But a graduate assistant who took a course on a CR/NC basis could find that this reduced their graded course hours below the minimum required of a G.A. On at least one occasion, a graduate assistant had to file special paperwork and seek a waiver of this policy in order to remain eligible for the graduate assistantship.

After discussing this situation, the Graduate Council agreed that the question of whether or not a graduate assistant could enroll for courses on a credit/no credit basis should be a matter of departmental policy rather than campus policy. In consultation with Harry Berman, Associate
Vice Chancellor for Graduate Education and Research, the Graduate Council approved the following alternative language:

You are considered a full-time student and must enroll and remain enrolled throughout a regular semester for a minimum of 8 to a maximum of 12 credit hours. Courses taken on an audit basis do not count toward meeting the minimum load and are not eligible for tuition waiver.

The graduate assistant’s academic program determines whether courses taken on a credit/no credit basis may be counted toward the degree and, therefore, counted toward meeting the minimum course load. Courses taken on a credit/no credit basis which are counted toward the degree will also be eligible for tuition waiver.

The Graduate Council believes this is a relatively minor, though important, change in policy. We are reporting this change to the UIS Campus Senate because we are a committee of the Senate, and the Senate has the authority to review all actions of the Graduate Council. However, we recommend that the Senate accept this as an informational item without taking official steps to formally approve or adopt the change in policy. In the past the Senate has allowed Graduate Assistantship policies to be developed and reviewed through the cooperative efforts of the Provost’s Office and the Graduate Council, and then reported to the Senate for Final review. If the Senate is dissatisfied with the policy change(s) that have been adopted, it has directed the Graduate Council to reconsider the issue and report back. This approach retains a maximum of flexibility in our procedures, while giving the Senate general oversight authority. If the Senate instead formally adopts and approves each aspect of the general policy, no changes can be made without again obtaining the formal approval of the Senate. While the Graduate Council recognizes that the Senate has the authority to do this, we believe that the current less formal methods, combined with full reporting to the Senate, best serve the interests of shared governance without overburdening the Senate itself with detailed oversight and drafting responsibilities.

cc: Harry Berman, Associate Vice Chancellor, Academic Planning and Graduate Education and Research
UIS Graduate Council