DRAFT Doctoral Subcouncil Meeting Minutes
April 12, 2005
212 RSC, 1:00 p.m.

Members present:  S. Kovar (Dean), P. Kahol (Associate Dean), A. Acker, B. Bahr, A. Chaparro, I. Gibson (for Jean Patterson), K. Hoffmann, R. Hull, D. McDonald, L. Paarman, J. Scherz (for B. Hodson), W. Stevenson, and G. Weheba

I. Approval of Minutes from November 23, 2004
   - Minutes were approved as distributed

II. Dissertation Chairing Nominations
   The following faculty members were awarded dissertation chairing status:
   - Dr. Janet Twomey   Industrial & Manufacturing Eng.
   - Dr. Elizabeth Behrman   Physics
   - Dr. Ian Gibson   Educational Leadership
   - Dr. Sudharman Jayaweera   Electrical & Computer Engineering
   - Dr. Thalia Jeffres   Applied Mathematics
   - Dr. Christian Wolf   Applied Mathematics
   - Dr. Rosalind Scudder   Communication Disorders and Sciences

   A CSD representative stated that there may be a review of dissertation chairing status criteria in the department. Dean Kovar stated review of the criteria may happen at any time.

   A motion was approved to direct Dean Kovar to work with the Engineering graduate faculty to bring their criteria for dissertation chairing status more in line with the other doctoral programs on campus.

III. Change and Use of the “Dissertation Proposal/Design Approval Form”
   - Dean Kovar made the recommended changes from the November 23, 2004 meeting. The Doctoral Subcouncil recommended further changes for this form including moving the table on the form up and the signature section to the bottom. Dean Kovar will also switch the columns in the table as recommended at the November 23, 2004 meeting.
   - Most of the members of the Doctoral Subcouncil stated that their departments used a version of this form.
   - This revised form will be distributed to graduate faculty with a recommendation that this form be used (instead of departmental-constructed forms).

IV. Revisions to Doctoral Plan of Study Form
   - Dean Kovar made the recommended changes from the November 23, 2004 meeting. The Doctoral Subcouncil recommended further changes: adding one more column to the table, adding a student signature line and changing the signature lines at the bottom of the Plan of Study Form.
• Dean Kovar will ask Melissa if there is or could be a memo sent out when a chair or committee member is changed. The Doctoral Subcouncil indicated that the member of the committee who is dropped off is often times not informed of this and a memo would help this situation.
• Dean Kovar clarified for the committee if the dissertation chair is changed the entire committee is dissolved and a new committee formed with the new chair.
• This revised form will be distributed to graduate faculty for immediate use.

V. Thesis/Dissertation Defense Committee
• Dean Kovar reviewed the Evaluation of the Oral Defense form with the committee. The committee proposed that each member of the dissertation defense committee complete this form instead of just the outside member. Discussion also centered on the two types of questions on the form (evaluating student performance as well as evaluating the oral exam process). The reverse side of the form clarifies the role of the outside member on the committee; thus the form would serve two purposes: clarify for outside members their role on the committee and provide some feedback as to the quality of the oral exam process. The committee discussed obtaining information from the students about the process by adding a question to the Graduate School Exit Survey. Dean Kovar indicated that this discussion would continue at the fall 2005 Doctoral Subcouncil meeting and asked members to talk to other faculty members to see if they would be willing to do this.
• Should we set the percent of the committee that must pass the student (in the oral defense) in order to say the student has “passed”? Must the chair pass the student? The following addition to Graduate School regulations was approved: The candidate passes the oral defense if no more than one negative vote is cast in the committee and that negative vote may not come from the committee chair.
• Should we institute a regulation indicating that thesis/dissertation committee membership may not change once the proposal has been approved by the committee: The following addition to the Graduate Catalog was approved (in section “Committee Structure”, page 20): Once the committee has approved the thesis or dissertation proposal (via the proposal form submitted to the Graduate School), changes do not normally occur in the committee structure. If committee membership needs to be altered after proposal approval, the committee chair requests such a change via memo to the Graduate Dean indicating the membership change and the rationale for such a change.
• Should we determine standard conditions and processes for when and how a student might request a new committee chair? The following addition to the Graduate Catalog was approved: In general, once a major advisor (committee chair) has been identified for the student (via Plan of Study or other document sent to the Graduate School), that advisor stays in place for the duration of the thesis or dissertation. Students considering a change in their major advisor should consult departmental guidelines for doing so. Students changing major advisors would likely need to submit a new proposal.
- Is it possible to hold (or call for) the oral defense without the consent of the student’s committee chair? If so, under what conditions and who may do so (departmental chair, majority of the committee members, etc.)? The following addition to the Graduate Catalog was approved: The oral defense of the thesis or dissertation is scheduled (via the Request to Schedule Oral form submitted to the Graduate School) when the committee chair makes the determination that the student is ready to defend. The thesis or dissertation manuscript must be delivered by the student to the committee members at least 2 weeks before the date of the oral defense.

- Dean Kovar indicated that all of the above approved actions would be taken to the Graduate Council for the discussion and approval.

VI. As May Arise

- The digital dissertation pilot project is underway. If there are any questions regarding forms or issues please contact Melissa Fleeker. The CSD representative indicated some anxiety, from the students, over the digital dissertation program. Dean Kovar understood the timeliness issues and lack of training as indicated by the CSD representative.

Meeting adjourned at 2:30 p.m.