Minutes for Doctoral Programs Subcouncil Meeting

Meeting held on Friday, November 11, 2005 at 2:30 p.m. in room 210 RSC.

Members Present: Dean Kovar, Interim Associate Dean Eichhorn, A. Acker, A. Ikram, J. Bann, B. Hodson, K. Hoffmann, K. Lewis, L. Paarmann, J. Patterson, J. Snyder, and J. Watkins.

I. Minutes of the April 12, 2005 were approved as distributed.

II. Dissertation Chairing Nominations
   a. Dean Kovar indicated she is working with the College of Engineering to strengthen their criteria for awarding dissertation chairing status.
   b. New Nominations
      i. Dr. Coskun Cetinkaya, Electrical/Computer Engineering, was awarded dissertation chairing status with a review in three years
      ii. Dr. Fred J. Meyer, Electrical/Computer Engineering, was awarded dissertation chairing status for six years.
      iii. Dr. Bob Minaie, Mechanical Engineering, was awarded dissertation chairing status for six years.
      iv. Dr. Jianliang Qian, Applied Mathematics, was awarded dissertation chairing status for six years.

III. Old Business
   a. Dean Kovar provided Subcouncil members with a summary of the approved oral defense processing changes (see last page of minutes). These changes will appear in the 2006-07 Graduate Catalog. Dean Kovar agreed that when changes to the dissertation committee are approved by the Dean, the Graduate School office notifies all parties (members who were added, deleted or remained on the committee) of the changes if time permits (e.g., cannot notify if changes come through on the Oral Defense Request form and the oral is held within the week).
   b. Further discussion occurred and final revisions were made to the “Oral Defense Outside Member Assessment Form.” Programs areas will be asked to pilot the use of the form during the spring 2006 semester. At this point in time, the Graduate School will simply review and keep the completed forms in the Graduate School’s program files. Further discussion will occur as to the need for storing this data electronically. Also at this time, the completed forms will be shared with the program area when the Dean believes a sufficient number of forms are available so as to avoid being able to identify particular oral defenses.

IV. Update on Electronic Thesis/Dissertation (ETD) Project
   Beginning fall of 2006, all WSU theses and dissertations will be filed electronically with the Graduate School. Students appear to be accepting this format readily and seem not to be experiencing any technical difficulties with the format. The step-by-step process for filing electronically is available in a handout for students to consult. A copy of that handout was distributed to Subcouncil members at the meeting. The handout is available on the Graduate School web site. Members
wondered if students were having problems with embedded fonts. Dean Kovar indicated she would check on that issue.

Currently, with the electronic process, no signature page is required for theses; however, dissertation signature pages (with accompanying paper-copy of the abstract) are routed and signed as usual. Subcouncil members discussed these current processes and recommended that signature pages be scanned to be become part of the final electronic submission. Dean Kovar will consider this recommendation.

Discussion occurred on access to these documents (for WSU faculty and staff as well as for those around the country) and the cost of such access. Dean Kovar agreed to seek answers to these questions and report at the next meeting.

V. Possible New Initiatives – no substantive discussion occurred on any of these possible initiatives.
   a. Manual on Conducting Ethical Research (for graduate students)
   b. Periodic, Random Reviews of Dissertations
   c. Audit of Graduate Catalog for Consistent Doctoral Program Requirements
   d. Establishing Recommended Load Credit for Advising Dissertation Students

VI. As May Arise
   a. While discussing the ETD project, members made a recommendation that the binding form (for both theses and dissertations) should contain a place for the department chair to sign so the department knows that a student is ready to graduate. Dean Kovar will investigate this suggestion.
   b. Subcouncil members indicate they wanted to have a discussion regarding the funding of doctoral students. Dean Kovar will add that item to the next agenda.
   c. Dean Kovar reminded members that December 2 is the last day to hold oral defenses for students who are graduating this semester.
   d. Dean Kovar announced that, with funding from a number of sources (Academic Affairs, Graduate School, Office of Research Administration, Office of University Communications, and the academic colleges), the Graduate School will be hiring a Graduate Student Recruitment Officer for a trial period with the goal of increasing applications and enrollment in programs with the resources to handle more students.
Thesis/Dissertation Oral Defense Approved Changes

Additions will be made to the 2006-07 Graduate Catalog (based on recommendations from the Subcouncil approved by the Council). Please share this information with the graduate faculty in your program area.

i. The candidate passes the oral defense (of thesis or dissertation) if no more than one negative vote is cast in the committee and that negative vote may not come from the committee chair.

ii. Once the committee has approved the 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.

iii. 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.

iv. 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.

_These statements were approved by the Graduate Council at meetings held on March 5, 2005 and May 5, 2005._