

MEMORANDUM

TO: Brett Keiper, Biochemistry
Angela Lamson, Child Development and Family Relations
Cheryl McFadden, Counselor and Adult Education
Andrew Morehead, Chemistry
Marie E. Pokorny, Nursing
Carl Swanson, History
Terry West, Biology

FROM: Robert J. Thompson
Chair, Graduate Council

DATE: January 10, 2014

RE: Thesis/Dissertation Oversight Committee

First of all, I want to thank each of you for agreeing to serve on this committee and to Brett for agreeing to chair it. As our discussions in the Graduate Council have indicated, the topic of appropriate roles and responsibilities for the various individuals involved in the oversight of theses and dissertations is an important one for our programs and our students. Your work will have a positive impact on the future of graduate education.

Your charge is to prepare a generic set of definitions of the roles and responsibilities with regard to the preparation of theses and dissertations for the following positions and others you determine should also be included.

- Program director
- Committee chair
- Committee members
- Student
- External representative of the Graduate Faculty
- Unit heads (chairs, directors, and deans)
- Dean of the Graduate School

Your definitions should be in the form of a set of best practices that can be adopted by the Graduate Council for use in reviewing programs and serve as a guideline for new programs or programs revising their practices. They will serve as the Graduate Council and the Graduate Faculty's recommendations for best practice. I do not, however, foresee them being requirements for programs, but that is a decision the Graduate Council will need to make.

Overall, your aims in preparing this general set of definitions are to recommend definitions and practices which:

- Ensure quality of theses and dissertations produced in our programs,
- Clarify the roles and responsibilities of various participants,
- Do not impose undo additional time constraints for faculty or students,
- Protect the rights of students and faculty,
- Permit programs to expand upon these roles, and
- Establish what we can adopt as Graduate Faculty expectations and standards.

Please also make recommendations as to where the final definitions should be published. For example, do these need to be in the Faculty Manual, in Graduate School policies in the catalog and on the web, in the Graduate Program Director's Handbook, in the various program handbooks, or some combination thereof?

I recommend you begin your work by reviewing the current definitions in the university's existing masters and doctoral handbooks, especially your own. I will commit five hours per week of graduate assistant time from my personal graduate assistant, Mr. Jared Stalling, to aid you in this process during the spring 2014 semester. You are, of course, free to seek additional examples from other institutions should you need to do so. Dean Gemperline has also extended the resources of the Graduate School if needed.

In the Graduate Council meeting when we discussed this topic, I indicated that I would prefer your recommendations by March 1st. That date was selected so that if we had recommendations, they could be considered by the Graduate Council in March and April. That tentative deadline is probably too ambitious. I would appreciate a progress report to the Graduate Council at its March meeting with a projected completion date. This will enable planning of when and how drafts may be circulated to graduate programs directors and others for comments prior to Graduate Council action which will most likely occur in the fall of 2014.

Thanks again for undertaking this task!

cc: Paul Gemperline
Members, Graduate Council