

**Graduate Academic Council
2004 – 2005**

Minutes of the Council meeting of April 13, 2005
Approved by the Council on May 4, 2005

In attendance: F. Bolton (staff), H. Meyer, J. Bartow (staff), L.-A. McNutt (Chair), M. Pryse, M. Casserly, M. Jerison, M. Rodriguez, O. Ongiti, S. Friedman, S. Shahedipour, S. Maloney

Guests: E. Wulfert, D. McCaffrey, Sung Bok Kim & S. Messner

Unable to attend: B. Joseph & D. Byrd

1. Ombuds Bill Implementation – Dean Pryse

Dean Marjorie Pryse initiated a discussion with the Council regarding implementation of the recently approved Senate bill, introduced by the GAC, to establish a Graduate Ombuds Office. She indicated her understanding that the President had not yet signed the bill. Professors Wulfert, McCaffrey and Kim were in attendance at the Council meeting, given their interest and/or comments on the Ombuds function as expressed at the Senate meeting, having been invited by Chair McNutt.

Dean Pryse indicated that while attention from a resource perspective had not played a major role in Council considerations of the Ombuds function, the President is apparently interested in seeing implementation as resource neutral. Specifically, it is to be expected that Ombuds performance should be on a service contribution basis, not with course buy-out.

Professor Wulfert commented that due to the fact that the bill was not distributed to Senate members in advance of the meeting at which it was considered by the Senate, there was very limited opportunity to contemplate the matter and offer comments in advance. She has emailed Dean Pryse some ideas about an alternate model having to do primarily with the number of ombudspersons. Her emailed comments and a table prepared by Chair McNutt comparing models was distributed.

Professor Meyer suggested that the issues at hand pertain to implementation and should be a matter for the administration. He suggested that the original idea for the creation of an Ombuds office/function was indeed intended to be cost neutral. Too, he suggested that performance in the role should not necessarily be pro-active. Rather the ombudspersons should be totally neutral.

Professor McNutt commented that one ombudsperson per campus might be problematic, given full-time senior faculty numbers in the School of Public Health. Too, student contact with ombudspersons needs to be very guarded.

Professor McCaffrey, originally opposed to the ombuds idea as unnecessarily duplicative of departmental/school structures, now is supportive due to the anticipated external objective focus of ombuds functioning. He suggested a cadre of suitable people in the role would fit well with President Hall's focus on a more involved faculty.

Professor Rodriguez highlighted her perspective that diversity concerns should also affect the desired number of ombudspersons.

Professor Meyer indicated that the anticipated implementation would contribute to institutional character and set an important "tone." Prof. McNutt indicated that matters of accessibility are very important, and that issues coming to ombudspersons may be very complex. If there are to be many faculty serving in the role, someone may need to take charge of the participants. Dean Pryse indicated her perspective that the role of the graduate dean going into this process needs to be flexible. She would want the graduate dean to also be available to students.

Professor McCaffrey suggested that starting small, but with room for possible growth in numbers (of ombudspersons) might be desirable. Too, a broader title than ombudsperson might be helpful.

Dean Pryse commented on her consultation on the ombuds topic with graduate deans from other institutions at a recent conference. She developed a sense that a group of ombudspersons too small or too large could impact effectiveness. A target of 3 – 5 ombudspersons might allow for inclusion of faculty with common and differing skill sets.

Professor Kim noted his support, given the direction of the discussion, as long as the ombuds office is implemented as cost neutral and on a volunteer basis.

Dean Pryse thanked the Council members and guests for their contributions via the discussion.

2. Governance – S. Messner

Professor Messner, as Chair of the Governance Council, introduced a draft bill on Senate Charter changes that has emerged from his Council with recognition of the input provided by the GAC at its meeting of 4/6/05. The bill calls for the introduction of a governance mediation committee and revised GAC graduate course approval role. GAC members offered various comments on the proposed mediation committee and Prof. Messner clarified the mediation role to be rarely needed but structurally advisable. Mr. Bartow offered a technical bill correction regarding the current Charter language pertaining to GAC course approvals. He offered additionally a historical account of how and why language of the GAC role pertaining to “review of academic [course] merits” had disappeared from Charter language.

Professor Messner thanked the Council for the additional consultation.

3. Dissertation Policy Bill

In response to comments received from the Senate Executive Committee about the possibility of accepting both paper and digital copies, Dr. Casserly explained that the current and projected campus archival copy will be on film. The “in-use” copies will become the digital versions, to everyone’s benefit. Too, multi-media file attachments will be possible. While hyperlinks within works may be problematic, this is not a problem limited to digital works.

The council voted 10-0-0 to approved the revised dissertation policy bill (appended at the end of these minutes) and recommend its adoption by the Senate.

4. Plagiarism Task Force

Dean Pryse reminded GAC members of the opportunity to join this new task force and encouraged members to volunteer.

END OF GAC MINUTES 4/13/05

Draft
Senate Bill No. 0405 - xx

UNIVERSITY SENATE
UNIVERSITY AT ALBANY
STATE UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK

Introduced by: Graduate Academic Council

Date: April 2005

**PROPOSAL TO AMEND UNIVERSITY POLICIES PERTAINING TO THE
DOCTORAL DISSERTATION**

IT IS HEREBY PROPOSED THAT THE FOLLOWING BE ADOPTED:

1. That the University Senate approves the attached proposal to amend University policies pertaining to the doctoral dissertation, as approved by the Graduate Academic Council.
2. That this proposal be forwarded to the President for approval.

Rationale

University regulations pertaining to the development, approval and submittal of doctoral dissertations have been unchanged for decades. No substantive changes are proposed pertaining to the development and approval of dissertations under the supervision of the faculty. However, it is proposed that standards for the submittal of approved dissertations be modified to allow and eventually require the submittal of such works in digital form, in keeping with national trends toward digital publication and the dissemination or research findings. This proposal seeks to modify policy so as to allow the establishment of new digital submission procedures under the direction of the Graduate Dean in consultation with the Graduate Academic Council and the University Libraries. The entire section of policies pertaining to the dissertation are proposed for restructuring as follows:

(Deletions in italics)

[EXISTING UALBANY DISSERTATION POLICIES & PROCEDURES AS SPECIFIED IN THE GRADUATE BULLETIN]

Dissertation

Doctoral programs require the submission of an acceptable dissertation. In general, the dissertation is expected to demonstrate that the candidate is capable of doing independent scholarly work and is able to formulate conclusions which may in some respects modify or enlarge what has previously been known. For particular characteristics of the supporting research and nature of the dissertation and associated requirements refer to descriptions of individual programs.

A student in a doctoral program must be admitted to candidacy at least one regular session in advance of submission of a dissertation.

Dissertations which have been approved must be transmitted to the Dean of Graduate Studies by May 1 for degrees to be conferred in May, by August 1 for degrees to be conferred in August, and by December 1 for degrees to be conferred in December.

Approval of Doctoral Dissertations/Development and Distribution of Dissertation Procedures

Each department and/or school must develop and provide its students with copies of its dissertation procedures and have a copy on file with the Assistant Dean of Graduate Studies. Each department must also file copies of any changes in procedures and inform all concerned of such changes. The Graduate Office, in consultation with the Graduate Academic Council, shall review and act upon the procedures or changes before they become effective.

Doctoral students must have a dissertation or research committee to guide their dissertation project or research and to approve each stage of the process.

Ordinarily each dissertation committee must have a State University of New York at Albany full-time faculty member as chair. Individual exceptions to this requirement must be approved by the Office of Graduate Admissions. A faculty member may continue as chair of the dissertation committee after leaving the University. It is the committee chair's responsibility to be accessible to the student and to see that the other members of the committee are kept informed of the student's progress so that the committee members may react constructively and in a timely fashion. It is the student's responsibility to keep the dissertation chair informed of his/her progress. Each department that plans to permit its students to conduct research away from this campus should agree on guidelines for these arrangements which are known in advance to the student and all others directly involved.

Students must play a role in shaping the membership of their dissertation committee. The student and committee will have to agree mutually on a topic. There should be as much consistency as possible in the membership of the committee which initially agrees to the topic, advises the student, and recommends the final evaluation of the dissertation to the appropriate academic unit.

The dissertation committee must consist of a minimum of three members, two of which must be from the student's school/college, and at least one of these must be from the student's major department. Departments are encouraged to include at least one committee member external to the department. Ordinarily, only those with an earned doctorate or those who hold a full professorship are eligible to participate formally in dissertation advisement and the approval of a dissertation. The final membership of each dissertation committee must be approved in accordance with the process specified in the procedures adopted by each school/college and reported to the Office of Graduate Admissions.

While students must be given an on-going evaluation of their dissertation by their dissertation committee as various sections or chapters of the work are completed, final approval must be given only to a completed document. A final review or examination may be scheduled with the comments, advice, recommendations, and evaluations of outside readers being considered by the dissertation committee. To be accepted a dissertation must be approved by a majority of the dissertation committee. Schools/colleges and departments are encouraged to provide an opportunity for students to publicly present the results of their research.

The final error-free and clean copy presented to the Office of Graduate Studies in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the doctoral degree must be the copy read and approved by the dissertation committee and the copy approved by the department chair.

This revised policy will be effective for all doctoral dissertations begun during and after the 1982 fall session.

GENERAL REGULATIONS GOVERNING THE SUBMISSION OF A DOCTORAL DISSERTATION

The dissertation is the culmination of a program of advanced study leading to a doctoral degree and, as such, is expected to attest to the attainment of a high degree of scholarly competence. The dissertation must report in accepted scholarly style an investigation of a problem of significance, if not a unique contribution, in the major field of study. It must demonstrate that the candidate is capable of sophisticated, independent research and analysis, and scholarly reporting in an academic discipline or professional field.

Responsibility for the evaluation and acceptance of a dissertation rests with the major department and the candidate's dissertation or doctoral committee.

The student ordinarily must be admitted to candidacy at least one session (exclusive of a summer session) before the acceptance of the dissertation.

General regulations and procedures governing the preparation and submission of a doctoral dissertation follow. Full information including detailed procedures and qualifications for undertaking a doctoral dissertation is available in the students' major department and should be obtained by students (and their dissertation advisors) at the beginning of the planning for the research and writing of a dissertation.

1. Each doctoral candidate is required to submit two copies of the accepted dissertation and two similar copies of an abstract to the Office of Graduate Studies and to pay charges for having them bound and for the making of microfilm copies. One copy, after binding, is filed in the University Library and the second copy, after binding, is filed in the office of the dean of the appropriate college or school. Microfilms are filed in the University Library and the Library of Congress.
2. The copies of the dissertation submitted to the Office of Graduate Studies must be in one of the following physical modes:
 - a. A typed original without errors or corrections, on 100 percent cotton or rag bond paper, and a copy, without errors or corrections, on 25 percent cotton or rag bond paper;
 - b. A copy of an original on 100 percent cotton or rag bond paper, and a copy of an original on 25 percent cotton or rag bond paper;
3. The student should be guided by the directions to students for format, style, and general procedures in writing and submitting the dissertation. Directions may be obtained from the major department;
4. The student submits unbound the required number of final copies of the dissertation and abstract to the advisor as required by the department and University;

5. *The department chair or the student's doctoral committee or advisor (depending on departmental procedures) arranges for the reading and evaluation of the dissertation;*
6. *The department chair notifies the student and the Dean of Graduate Studies as to the official evaluation of the dissertation if it is accepted or not accepted;*
7. *Upon final acceptance of a dissertation, the student makes a prepayment of charges to the University Library to cover the cost of binding and microfilming and gives the receipt to the department chair. The student then completes arrangements for microfilming in the Office of Graduate Studies. These arrangements involve completing forms and signing an agreement required by University Microfilms, including arrangements for copyrighting, if desired. If the author arranges for copyrighting, an additional payment to the University Library is required;*
8. *The two required copies of the dissertation are submitted to the Dean of Graduate Studies by the chair of the department along with a) the chair's certification that the dissertation has been accepted by faculty of the department, b) the statement of approval signed by the readers, and c) a receipt from the student for the prepayment of binding and microfilming charges. Unless the copies of the dissertation are unacceptable to the Dean of Graduate Studies (in which case the dean notifies the student and the department), the dean notifies the Registrar of the acceptance of the dissertation. Subsequently, the dean transmits the dissertation to the University Library for binding, microfilming, distribution, and filing (ordinarily after the degree has been conferred);*
9. *No grade or academic credit is assigned to a doctoral dissertation. The title of the accepted dissertation appears on the student's transcript;*
10. *Dissertations which have been approved must be transmitted to the Dean of Graduate Studies by May 1 for degrees to be conferred in May, by August 1 for degrees to be conferred in August, and by December 1 for degrees to be conferred in December.*

[PROPOSED REPLACEMENT POLICY]

POLICIES PERTAINING TO THE DOCTORAL DISSERTATION

Dissertation

Doctoral programs require the submission of an acceptable dissertation. The dissertation is the culmination of a program of advanced study leading to a doctoral degree and, as such, is expected to attest to the attainment of a high degree of scholarly competence. The dissertation must report in accepted scholarly style on an investigation of a problem of significance in the major field of study that modifies, enlarges and/or makes a unique contribution to what has previously been known. It must demonstrate that the candidate is capable of sophisticated, independent research, analysis, and scholarly reporting in an academic discipline or professional field.

Policies and procedures pertaining to dissertation development in each doctoral program, consistent with the minimal University standards that follow, should be available from each doctoral program office or department.

The Dissertation Committee

Doctoral students must have a dissertation or research committee to guide their dissertation project or research and to approve each stage of the process. Ordinarily, each dissertation committee must have a University at Albany full-time faculty member as chair. Individual exceptions to this requirement must be approved by the Dean of Graduate Studies. A faculty member may continue as chair of the dissertation committee after leaving the University. It is the committee chair's responsibility to be accessible to the student and to see that the other members of the committee are kept informed of the student's progress so that the committee members may react constructively and in a timely fashion. It is the student's responsibility to keep the dissertation chair informed of his/her progress.

Students must play a role in shaping the membership of their dissertation committee. The student and committee will have to agree mutually on a topic. There should be as much consistency as possible in the

membership of the committee which initially agrees to the topic, advises the student, and recommends the final evaluation of the dissertation to the appropriate academic unit.

The dissertation committee must consist of a minimum of three members, two of which must be from the student's school/college, and at least one of these must be from the student's major program/department. Departments and/or programs are encouraged to include at least one committee member external to the department or program faculties. Ordinarily, only those with an earned doctorate or those who hold a full professorship are eligible to participate formally in dissertation advisement and the approval of a dissertation. The final membership of each dissertation committee must be approved in accordance with the process specified in the program specific policies/procedures.

Dissertation Approval

Responsibility for the final evaluation and acceptance of a dissertation rests with the departmental or program faculty and the candidate's dissertation or doctoral committee.

While students must be given an on-going evaluation of their dissertation by their dissertation committee as various sections or chapters are completed, final approval shall be given only to a completed work. Departments and/or programs are encouraged to provide, or require, an opportunity for students to publicly present and defend the results of their research as part of the final approval process. Too, a final review or examination may be scheduled with the comments, advice, recommendations, and evaluations of outside readers being considered by the dissertation committee. To be accepted, a dissertation must be approved by a majority of the dissertation committee.

The final dissertation presented to the Office of the Dean of Graduate Studies in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the doctoral degree must be the one approved by the dissertation committee.

Submittal of Approved Dissertations

In order for a dissertation to be accepted by the University in partial fulfillment of requirements for the doctoral degree, it must be submitted in acceptable form according to procedures specified by the Office of the Dean of Graduate Studies, by May 1 for degrees to be conferred in May, by August 1 for degrees to be conferred in August, and by December 1 for degrees to be conferred in December. Specifications for such submittal procedures and "acceptable form" shall be developed and maintained by the Dean of Graduate Studies in consultation with the Graduate Academic Council and University Libraries for archival purposes.

Doctoral students admitted in Spring 2006 or thereafter will be expected to submit the approved dissertation in authorized digital form. Students should familiarize themselves with all digital dissertation submittal regulations and procedures early in their doctoral studies.