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Academic Policy Committee Report - March 14, 2013

Graduate Council

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ACADEMIC POLICY COMMITTEE
THURSDAY, MARCH 14, 2:15 P.M. – 3:30 P.M.
111 STUDENT SERVICES BUILDING

Present: Stefanie Ohnesorg (Chair), Ralph Brockett, Russell Crook, Carolyn R. Hodges, Jennifer Morrow, Christian Parigger, Kay Reed, Marian Roman, Amanda Sanford, Shawn Spurgeon, Martin Walker.

The meeting was called to order by Stefanie Ohnesorg, Chair, at 2:15 p.m.

1. DEFENSE OF DISSERTATION EXAMINATION - APPROVED BY APC – TO BE EFFECTIVE FALL 2014

In response to discussion at the Graduate Council meeting February 28 concerning, the committee considered the addition of a statement to provide direction for the Director of Graduate Studies in academic programs when emergency situations arise. The committee voted in favor of recommending the following policy change, seven votes for and one abstaining vote:

A doctoral candidate must pass an oral examination on the dissertation. The dissertation, in the form approved by the major professor, must be distributed to the committee at least two weeks before the examination. The examination must be scheduled through the Graduate School at least one week prior to the examination. Except with prior approval from the Dean of the Graduate School, the examination must be given in university-approved facilities. The examination is announced publicly and is open to all faculty members. The defense of dissertation will be administered by all members of the doctoral committee after completion of the dissertation and all course requirements. This examination must be held at least two weeks before the final date for acceptance and approval of dissertation (indicated on the Graduate Student Deadline Dates) by the Graduate School on behalf of the Graduate Council. The major professor must submit the results of the defense (Pass/Fail form with original signatures) by the deadline date.

After the defense has been scheduled, subsequent emergency situations concerning participation of committee members require that the Director of Graduate Studies from the student's academic unit consults with the Dean of the Graduate School or his/her designee to determine whether the emergency situation warrants a rescheduling of the dissertation defense. Guiding principle for resolving such ad-hoc emergency situations will be to guard the integrity of the process.

2. REMOTE PARTICIPATION IN ORAL DEFENSES – APPROVED BY APC – TO BE EFFECTIVE FALL 2014

NEW POLICY PROPOSED:

This proposal is designed to provide documentation of approval by the academic department when remote participation is part of the thesis or dissertation defense. The documentation is then recorded in the student's record in the Graduate School.

The committee approved this proposal unanimously for presentation to the Graduate Council.

POLICY STATEMENT:

Remote Participation in Oral Defenses

It is expected that all members of graduate committees should be physically present at all required oral thesis or dissertation defenses. Under special circumstances, however, it is permissible for the student, and/or committee members to participate from a remote location provided the conditions listed below are met:

- Advance agreement of the student and all committee members has been obtained;
- All participants join in with two way audio and video connections; audio only connections must be approved by the major professor if the video connection is not possible. When the student is the remote participant, his or her connection must be an audio and video connection;
- Any visual aids or other materials have been distributed in advance to the remote participants;
- The committee members participate in real time during the entire, complete meeting, discussion, presentation, and evaluation;
- The student is responsible for making the scheduling arrangements, and the major professor accepts responsibility for the oversight of any logistical arrangements necessary;
- Any costs associated with remote participation are not the responsibility of the Graduate School, and must be arranged in advance; and
- The UTK requirement of a public presentation for oral defense of dissertation is still in effect.

The student is required to submit the Remote Participation at Oral Defense Notification Form together with the Scheduling of the Defense Form to the Graduate School when the student or member(s) of the committee participate remotely.

The dissertation represents the culmination of an original research project completed by the student and is submitted in electronic format to the Thesis/Dissertation Consultant in the Graduate School for examination, final approval, and acceptance. The consultant will review the material and assure that it is appropriately presented, free of technical errors in format. It must be prepared according to the most recent *Guide to the Preparation of Theses and Dissertations*, available at <http://web.utk.edu/~thesis/Guide.shtml>. An electronic copy of the dissertation must be accompanied by one original approval sheet (not a photocopy). The approval sheet must have the original signatures of the members of the doctoral committee. The approval sheet reflects the final format for submission. The approval sheet certifies to The Graduate School that the committee members have examined the final copy of the dissertation and have found that its form and content are

satisfactory. If the dissertation is not accepted, the student must make corrections and resubmit the material.

Rationale:

This policy is designed to assist students and departments with discussions for arrangements of oral defenses. The "Remote Participation at Oral Defense Notification Form" would be attached to the Scheduling of Defense of Dissertation Form so that it is submitted at the same time, two weeks in advance of the defense. A reminder should be inserted into the instructions for the two forms to encourage students to plan for collection of signatures on the Pass/Fail Form when part of the committee (or the student) is participating remotely.

3. GRADUATE STUDENT LEAVE POLICY

Martin Walker, from the Graduate Student Senate (GSS), assisted the committee with the discussion of the proposal from GSS on Graduate Student Leave Policy. The committee will try to schedule another meeting to work more on this policy before the end of the academic year.

The meeting adjourned at 3:30 p.m.