

Message from the Dean

The Last Act – the Defense

Recently, I've had the opportunity to talk with two faculty members who had been appointed by SGS to chair a thesis and dissertation defense. One of the important functions that faculty members perform for our graduate students and University is representing the School of Graduate Studies at oral defenses of theses and dissertations. This sometimes poses problems for faculty new to USU and for faculty who have never represented SGS in a department or college different from their own (which is usually always the case). Typically, SGS selects a committee member who is from outside the student's department to chair the defense.

It might be advantageous to briefly describe defenses and provide a somewhat generic model for such so that faculty new to USU, or defenses, or both will know what responsibilities they have and how a defense might be conducted.

The oral examination and defense take place after the completion of all courses and after the dissertation, thesis, or Plan B paper are completed. Changes to the supervisory committee cannot be made within six weeks of the defense. At least one month before the defense a copy of the document is given to each committee member for approval or corrections. This implies that if corrections are asked for by a committee member, then the exam will have to be rescheduled.

As a protection for the faculty member as well as the student, an Appointment for Examination form must be completed by the student and the committee indicating the committee's agreement as to the time and place of the defense. The completed form must be turned in to the School of Graduate Studies at least 10 working days prior to the exam. Each faculty member should sign personally. Here is a quote from the University *Catalog* about signing the Appointment for Examination form: "No committee member should agree to proceed with a defense until he or she has carefully

read and approved the thesis, Plan B paper, or dissertation. If any member of a committee believes that the document is not ready to be defended, he or she should notify the student and major professor and not sign the Appointment for Examination form. The defense should then be rescheduled."

Sometimes there is confusion about when a student must register for coursework as they defend. The regulation requires a student to be enrolled for at least three credits during the semester in which he or she defends. If a defense is scheduled during a semester break, the student must enroll for the following semester.

The chair of the examination is appointed by the graduate dean. During the exam the student defends his or her work and answers questions about the area of specialization. Results are recorded on the Record of Examination Completion form and submitted to the School of Graduate Studies. Only minor changes (editorial in nature) should be required after the defense; otherwise a defense of the revised document is held. All members of the committee must approve and sign the thesis, Plan B paper, or dissertation. Otherwise the matter is taken to the dean of the SGS. Any final exam that deviates from these procedures is invalid. Students who fail to complete all requirements within a year of their successful defense will be required to register for three credits and re-defend.

The format for the defense varies across the University. However, there is a pattern that generally describes defenses. Before the exam begins, the chair may confer privately with the committee to determine how the questions will be handled (e.g., will each committee member take turns, or will the document be followed with questions from any committee member as the document is reviewed).

The chair welcomes the committee, the candidate, and guests and explains how the defense will be conducted. He or she may indicate that the candidate has a short presentation to make to the committee. The chair may note that only the committee will ask questions, or that questions might be taken from guests for a

specified number of minutes and then the committee will ask questions. After all of the committee members have had their questions answered, the candidate and guests are excused and the committee determines if the examination results were satisfactory or unsatisfactory. Any changes that the committee requests are noted (usually the supervisory faculty member takes notes for use with the candidate). The candidate is invited into the room and the results are communicated orally to him or her. All committee members sign the form and the Examination Chair either returns the report form to the SGS or makes arrangements for its return. In no case is the student to return or otherwise handle the form.

We appreciate faculty members who spend time and effort in making certain and certifying that students have completed the requirements for their advanced degree. We have great students because we have great faculty. I hope this has been helpful; if you have any questions, please contact myself or Shelley Lindauer, the associate dean.

Byron Burnham
Dean

New Networking Website for Student Researchers

The following is reprinted from an email from the creators of The Graduate Junction:

The Graduate Junction is a brand new website designed to help young researchers make contact with others with similar research interests, regardless of which department, institution or country they work in.

Designed by two graduate researchers at the University of Durham, U.K., The Graduate Junction has proved very popular with research students and academics alike. Since the launch of the website in May 2008 The Graduate Junction has already 4000 registered users spread across 40 countries.

Currently research students have two main sources of information: published literature, and academic conferences. Whilst published literature reviews are essential, these can only ever reveal completed work. Relevant academic conferences provide a forum for students with similar research interest to interact but occur infrequently. It is very easy to become isolated, overly focused on the specifics of one's own work and lose a sense of what other related work is being carried out.

The Graduate Junction hopes to prevent that isolation and allow young researchers to start forming the networks which can stay with them throughout their careers. The Graduate Junction aims to provide an atmosphere similar to that at academic events and through the use of the internet aims to establish an on-line worldwide graduate research community.

Often very separate research literatures exist within subject area. The Graduate Junction, however, is unique because it links researchers based on 'research keywords', promoting interdisciplinary relationships. By simply registering a few basic details, users can search for fellow researchers by keyword, institution, department, supervisor or name. Alternatively, users can search The Graduate Junction's on-line research groups which allows them to find and communicate with a number of other researchers sharing their research interest.

The Graduate Junction is useful for all young researchers at any stage of the research process, and allows them to stay informed about current developments in their field. With the addition of conference and postgraduate job listings imminent, The Graduate Junction aims to be one of the most useful resources available for all graduate researchers.

www.graduatejunction.com

Fall Semester Degree Completion Deadlines

Here are three scenarios for fall graduation/participation in commencement.

1. To have one's name in the commencement program and participate in commencement, the following must be done: By **November 7** all graduation forms must be completed and submitted to the School of Graduate Studies, along with proof of payment of the \$15 graduation fee. Plan A, B, and doctoral students *must have had a successful defense*, and the signed Record of Examination form indicating such must be returned to the School of Graduate Studies.

2. If the steps outlined above are completed **between November 8 and December 5**, students may still participate in commencement but their name will not appear in the commencement program until next May.

3. Degrees will be posted as Fall completions for the following: (a) Plan C students who finish coursework this semester and whose department

submits a letter of completion by December 12, (b) Plan A and doctoral students whose theses or dissertations are taken to the library for binding by December 12, and (c) Plan B students whose project is taken to the library and whose department submits a letter of completion by December 12.

Graduate Council Actions

In February, the Council approved wording changes in the "Transfer and Nonmatriculated Credits" section of the *General Catalog* (effective August 15, 2008). The new wording is intended to clarify the intent of the policy. In March, the Council approved a request from the Engineering and Technology Education Department to offer a doctoral degree in engineering education (no specific specializations approved). This action moved the request to EPC for approval. In April, the Council reaffirmed its support of the requirement that **all** Plan B reports/projects be bound and housed in the Library. The requirement was extended to art projects, engineering projects, filmed projects, etc. Those projects should be captured in some capacity (DVD, CD, etc.) and turned in as well. The Library will receipt such projects so that students can notify the SGS that the archiving is completed. In September, the Council voted to approve a request from the Family, Consumer, and Human Development Department to change the name of their doctoral degree to Family and Human Development (formerly, Family, Consumer, and Human Development). This name change will more accurately describe the content and focus of the degree. This action moved the request to EPC for approval. The Council also approved a motion to eliminate the *requirement* for graduate assistants to be registered for six credits during summer semester. The reasoning is that the tuition awards pool will stretch farther without the requirement.

Do Your Students a Favor

The intent of this headline is to draw attention to the problem that master's and doctoral students face following a successful defense of a thesis or dissertation when committee members fail to sign the title page. It is not the intent of the SGS to dictate how or when a title page is signed. There are obviously two scenarios for such signings. One, *all members of the committee sign the title page while gathered for the defense*, but someone holds the page until the student

makes all final committee changes to the document. Two, no one signs the title page until all committee changes have been made. Scenario two creates **all kinds of problems** for students who subsequently make the committee changes and then attempt to bring the thesis/dissertation to the SGS for processing here. We do NOT accept a thesis or dissertation for processing unless the paper is accompanied by a COMPLETELY signed title page (whether it be the original or a copy). Under extenuating circumstances, provisions can be made for review here if one committee member (no doubt as a result of Scenario 2 above) has disappeared from campus for whatever reason (sabbatical, retirement, summer vacation, illness, etc.), but absolutely NO exceptions are made to not having ALL signatures in ink (by the *actual committee member*, not "signed for") on an original title page when the document is ready for Dean Burnham to sign. Please consider internal departmental policy for signing title pages after defenses and the consequences of NOT doing so in terms of student convenience. In our view, scenario one works well for all involved, i.e., sign while you are all in the same room at the defense.

Tuition Award Updates

There have been some important (some urgent) developments concerning tuition awards of which all departments should be aware.

Residency and Nonresident Awards

Fall 08 was the last semester that students could apply for residency based on the 40-credit option established prior to Fall 07 (unless they are earning their 40th credit this fall). Starting Spring 09 semester, all students, regardless of when they started attending USU, will only be able to apply for residency under the 12 continuous months law. Hence, if you have nonresident students who have been attending longer than 12 months (began Spring 08 or previously), their eligibility for nonresident tuition awards has expired. Please have them apply immediately for residency. Ann Gibbons in Admissions has specified that in order to accomplish this, students must submit their application for residency by **October 16th**. Among the necessary documentation, students must have Utah driver's license, Utah vehicle registration (if you have a car in Utah for your regular use), and voter registration **AT LEAST THREE (3) MONTHS PRIOR TO THE BEGINNING OF THE TERM FOR WHICH THEY ARE APPLYING FOR RESIDENCY**. It may be helpful to

visit the Admission's residency requirements website for further details concerning residency deadlines and qualifications (<http://www.usu.edu/admissions/information/residency.cfm>). If nonresident students who began their studies Spring 08 or before do not achieve residency, they will be responsible for paying the nonresident portion of their tuition without the aid of a tuition award.

Distance Education Courses and Tuition Awards

Due to budget constraints and inability to compensate nonresident master's students on banner, the Graduate School will no longer give tuition awards for the difference between the cost of distance education and on-campus courses. However, nonresident tuition awards will pay the full amount for nonresident tuition as if the student had been enrolled in all on-campus courses, although students are not charged nonresident tuition for distance education courses. For instance, if nonresident/international students are taking three credits of an online course and three credits of an on-campus course, they will receive six credits of the instate award and six credits of the nonresident award even though they are only being charged for three credits of nonresident tuition by the university. This will offset some of the online tuition costs and fees that will be assessed by Distance Education.

Change in Fulltime Status Requirement for Summer Semester

Currently graduate assistants are required to register for six credits to be considered fulltime during this semester. However, the Graduate Council has recently waived this requirement in order to accommodate departments and the Graduate School. In essence, students working as graduate assistants during the summer will not need to be enrolled in order to have their EPAF approved.

If you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to bring them to the attention of the Graduate School.

USU WATER FELLOWS PROGRAM OFFERS FUNDS, EDUCATIONAL BENEFITS TO GRAD STUDENTS

Utah State University is internationally renowned for its research efforts in a wide range of water

sciences and engineering. From watershed sciences, climatology and the study of hydrology and water resources to the sociology of water use in a watershed world, USU offers broad, interdisciplinary learning opportunities. USU water graduates occupy influential posts in governmental and private water organizations throughout the globe.

To encourage USU graduate students in water-related fields to take advantage of the breadth of knowledge, expertise and opportunities available throughout campus, Water@USU, a Water Initiative project, offers the Water Fellows program.

Water Fellows are self-identified graduate students, involved in water-related study and research, who wish to strengthen collaboration with their campus colleagues in similar disciplines. Application to become a Water Fellow is made to the leadership of the USU Water Initiative through an online application at <http://wetwater.usu.edu/htm/fellows/application>.

Upon initial selection as a Water Fellow, students receive a \$200 award applicable to either the purchase of water-related books or student membership in a water-related professional society. In subsequent years, continuing Water Fellows receive \$100 awards annually toward continuing student membership in a water-related professional society.

Water Fellows also have the opportunity to apply for \$500 travel grants to defray the costs of attendance at water-oriented professional meetings.

Water Fellows are expected to regularly attend Water@USU seminars, make presentations at the Water Initiative's annual Spring Runoff Conference and assist in hosting invited seminar speakers. Continuing Water Fellows are expected to have attended most of the previous year's Water Initiative events in order to receive continuing support.

Water@USU, a Water Initiative project, is an interdisciplinary collaboration of the university's Utah Water Research Laboratory and the colleges of Agriculture, Business, Engineering, Natural Resources, Science and Humanities, Arts & Social Sciences. Established in 2003, the initiative fosters collegial sharing of water-related research and ideas throughout campus and the community.

For more information about the Water Fellows program and Water@USU, visit the initiative's Web site at wetwater.usu.edu or contact Kim Schreuders, project manager, at 435-797-2941 or kim.schreuders@usu.edu.

2008-09 Scholarship and Fellowship Recipients

A number of scholarships and fellowships have been awarded for the 2008-2009 academic year. Recipients represent both outstanding incoming graduate students and exceptional graduate students who are completing their programs.

The Presidential Fellowship includes a \$12,000 stipend for the academic year and a waiver of the nonresident portion of tuition. Criteria include a 3.50 GPA and quantitative and verbal GRE scores at the 70th percentile or above. The Presidential Fellowship is specifically intended to recruit excellent new graduate students to Utah State University.

For the 2008-2008 academic year, Presidential Fellowships were awarded to Curtis Adams (Parowan, Utah; Plants, Soils, and Climate), Siwei Qi (Chengdu, China; Instructional Technology), Christine Snyder (Rogers, Arizona; Psychology), Jessica Olson (Logan, Utah; Family, Consumer, and Human Development), Elisabeth Linton (Logan, Utah; Biological and Irrigation Engineering), Joshua Templin (Cedar City, Utah; Electrical and Computer Engineering), Scott Murphy (Draper, Utah; Civil and Environmental Engineering), Kenneth Richley (Spokane, Washington; Landscape Architecture and Environmental Planning), Aseem Hasnain (Lucknow, India; Sociology, Social Work, and Anthropology), Jan Redd-Summerhays (River Heights, Utah; Wildland Resources), Gretchen Hochnedel (Knoxville, Tennessee; Wildland Resources), Yao Yao (Shanghai, China; Computer Science), and Chinthaka Weerakoon (Polgasowita, Sri Lanka).

In the Jon M. Huntsman School of Business, Shibashis Mukerjee (Chandannagar, India; Economics), Qian Lin (Fuzhou, China; Accountancy), Adam Fowles (Mesa, Arizona; Master of Business Administration), Jeremy Jennings (North Logan, Utah; Master of Business Administration), Craig Kelley (Nibley, Utah; Master of Business Administration), Ron Saunders (Smoot, Wyoming; Master of Business Administration), and Jing Zhai (Xuan Cheng City, China; Accountancy) received partial (\$3,000) Presidential Fellowships.

The Vice President for Research Fellowship includes a \$15,000 stipend for the academic year and waiver of the nonresident portion of tuition. Criteria include a 3.50 GPA and quantitative and verbal GRE scores at the 70th percentile or above. In addition, the student must be in a research degree program that

includes a master's thesis or doctoral dissertation. The Vice President for Research Fellowship is specifically intended to recruit excellent new graduate students to research focused programs at Utah State University.

Eleven students were awarded Vice President for Research Fellowship for 2008-2009. These students are Jeffrey Endelman (Houston, Texas; Plants, Soils, and Climate), Yang Liu (Guangzhou, China; Instructional Technology), Xin Zhao (Yangling, China; Psychology), Courtney Henry (Moorestown, New Jersey; Psychology), Angie Dahl (Battle Lake, Minnesota; Psychology), Emilie Garbi (Bristol, England; Mechanical and Aerospace Engineering), Roger West (Sandy, Utah; Electrical and Computer Engineering), Charles Oughton (Manti, Utah; History), Brian Gall (Burlington, Iowa; Biology), Robert Willis (Odin, Illinois; Chemistry).

Seven Dissertation Fellowships of \$5000 each have been awarded for the 2008-2009 academic year. Recipients are Boris Averkiev (Moscow, Russia; Chemistry), Brian Jennings (Morgantown, West Virginia; Sociology, Social Work, and Anthropology), Chaoqum Lai (Chengdu, China; Economics, Inga Maslova (Vilnius, Lithuania; Mathematics and Statistics), Andrejus Parfionovas (Vilnius, Lithuania; Mathematics and Statistics), Chunbo Zhang (Shanghai, China; Mechanical and Aerospace Engineering), and Ming Zhang (Jinan, China; Computer Science). The Dissertation Fellowship is intended to provide outstanding doctoral students with additional time to draft and to revise their dissertations. For many doctoral students, the need to teach or to serve as a research assistant interferes with their ability to complete their dissertation work in a timely way. This fellowship aims to help doctoral students move more efficiently and quickly toward the completion of their dissertations.

One Martin Luther King fellowship for an African American graduate student has been awarded for 2008-2009. The amount of the award is \$7,500. The recipient is Odessia Knowles (Houston, Texas), a doctoral student in Psychology. Dr. and Mrs. Allen W. Stokes established the Martin Luther King Graduate Fellowship in 1968 to assist deserving African American students achieve graduate education goals at USU.

Chien-Ti Lee (Taipei, Taiwan), a doctoral student in Family, Consumer, and Human Development, has been awarded the 2008-2009 Dr. Dinesh and Kalpana Patel Doctoral Graduate Fellowship, in the amount of \$5000. In 1973, after completing his undergraduate

education in his parents' native India, Dr. Patel emigrated from Zambia to the United States to pursue his dream of starting his own business. His doctoral degree in physical pharmacy from the University of Michigan provided him with the training and connections to succeed in his goal. Patel holds numerous patents in the drug delivery field. In 1985, he co-founded the Salt Lake City-based biotechnology firm, TheraTech, Inc., which he eventually sold for \$350 million. This fellowship, for underrepresented and international doctoral students, was established by the Patels as a way for others to benefit, as Dr. Patel did, from higher education in the United States.

The Seely-Hinckley scholarship is for outstanding graduate students with superior academic achievements who face serious financial difficulties. Although there is no obligation to do so, the donors have re-

quested that scholarship recipients consider repaying the scholarship amount to the Seely-Hinckley scholarship fund when they are financially able to do so. In this way, recipients can further the education of other excellent students for whom attendance at Utah State University would be difficult without financial support. Recipients of the Seely-Hinckley scholarships for 2008-2009 are Rafay Ahmed (Lahore, Pakistan; Sociology, Social Work, and Anthropology), Tracy Bowerman (Bend, Oregon; Watershed Sciences), Jacoba Mendelkow (Richmond, Utah; English), Marsha Tafoya (Cicero, Illinois; Psychology), Jennifer Thurgood (Syracuse, Utah; Nutrition and Food Sciences), and Luke Zachmann (St. Michael, Minnesota; Wildland Resources). These students receive in-state tuition for up to nine credits and student fees for two semesters.

