

Graduate Council

February 1, 2017

Minutes

Fisheries and Wildlife Request – Selina Heppell

Fisheries and Wildlife is requesting to separate the PhD defense public presentation from the oral defense. Please see the attached [email string](#) on this topic initiated by Selina Heppell, and be prepared to discuss.

- Rationale – Selena didn't feel it's necessary for students to have the two defenses at the same time. For PHD students finishing in spring, Fisheries & Wildlife (F&W) would like students to give their defense public presentation during the scheduled unit spring seminars; if both are combined, attendance may be lower. Several F&W PhD students have requested the separation.
- What would be the length of delay between the two defenses? Could be flexible.
- Has the unit considered that students would need to re-present their materials during the oral defense since questions may pertain to the seminar? Selena noted that questions are initially focused on the seminar, but move quickly past the seminar topics. Defenses contain hard questions about the work, but moves to career plans, ethics questions, etc. She didn't feel that the separation would be onerous, but this Spring could be used as a pilot. The unit would discuss with students whether they felt there were problems separating the two. This separation would apply only to Spring graduates.
- Can the spring seminar times be changed? Selena noted that the F&W seminars have been at 4:00 for over 20 years. They've discussed changing the time, but it can't be changed this Spring.
- The Council expressed concern regarding the timing of the presentation vs. the defense. One noted that the public portion is part of the defense.
- Would the entire committee, including the Graduate Council Representative, be required to attend? Yes, at least via electronically.
- Selena noted that presentation of the student's seminar may help them refine their thesis. One Council member noted there is an expectation of reviewing the thesis prior to the defense, including the oral presentation.
- Would students graduating in Fall or Winter expect the same format as those graduating in Spring? There could be some students who don't have the same option as the Spring students.
- Could students present the seminar with a shorter defense? Selena responded that students could advertise as a public seminar, but likely wouldn't have anyone attend other than the committee members if it wasn't included with the F&W Spring seminars.
- The burden of having committee members attending two different times was mentioned. F&W did discuss this issue since there are agency and external committee members, which already makes it difficult.
- Are there student seminars during Fall and Winter outside of the F&W seminar series? The proposal would showcase students more, and is attended by many people outside of F&W. In Fall & Winter, the F&W seminar series is tied to Botany and Plant Pathology and Forest Ecosystems and Society.
- Selena felt that different academic disciplines have different perceptions of the public seminar and defense. There was a concern that all students are treated equally; perhaps it would be better to not approve the proposal if there is a potential or perceived inequity.
- Selena felt that a better quality defense comes from having the seminar first. One suggested that the students could present a practice seminar during the Spring seminar, which is separate from the formal public presentation and oral defense. Another noted that their unit has students engage in a 15-minute seminar presentation in preparation of their public seminar.

Graduate Council Discussion:

- Would it be acceptable if the defense is presented two weeks prior to the seminar? If the proposal is allowed, is there a length of time between the two that would be acceptable

to the Council if the defense is presented separately? The website states that the public seminar 'follows' the defense, but does not state the length of time. Typically, the two are presented one after the other on the same day. The request also creates issues for the Graduate School in managing the process.

- One member didn't like that Fall and Winter students would not be subject to the same requirements as Spring students.

Action: There was consensus that the Graduate Council deny the request from Fisheries & Wildlife; Theresa will forward a response to Selena.

Action: At a later date, the Graduate Council needs to determine whether it would allow the requested break between the two defenses.

Crop Science Graduate Program Review – Dan Arp, David Hannaway, Joyce Loper, Jay Noller

- [Newly Revised Action Plan](#)
- [Original Action Plan](#)
- [Reviewer Report](#)

The Crop Science Graduate Program Review discussion was continued from January 25 with unit representatives.

- David Hannaway prepared and distributed an updated Action plan; he felt it addressed some of the Graduate Council questions. The review team noted that this unit is primarily individual scientist program-leader driven. David noted that there are no core course requirements. The updated plan (page 2, #4) defines competencies in key areas, defines coursework that aligns with competencies, and incentivizes advisors to gain improved skills in developing and assessing Graduate Learning Outcomes and student advising.
- David explained that page three contains ten-year totals for graduates, and noted that the MS graduate metric is lower than the Provost's metric; they provided strategies for increasing funding and support.
 - Are there other ways to document meeting core competencies? Forest Ecosystems and Society was noted as a model since they also have no requirements.
- Concerns: no numerical goals; the Action Plan indicates things they're going to do, but what are the measurements to determine whether they're successful? What will they start assessing in different areas? David responded: traditional goals for graduation rate, ability to hire, what types of positions they're going to, manuscript completion, etc. How will these be measured? David responded that the normal expectations are to prepare two manuscripts and submit for publication. Is this tracked to determine if it's occurring? David indicated that they could track it. Jay Noller noted that this information can be pulled from CV's. One noted they could implement a checklist including how many publications the students plan to publish, and how many they expect to be submitted.
- Regarding restructuring, the program review report recommended that the program restructure in a way to be more collaborative with the Soil Science program, which mentions collaboration with Crop Science, but Crop Science does not mention collaboration with Soil Science. She noted that this same recommendation was made during the last review. Jay explained that the two faculties are physically separate, but collaborate in other ways; he sees opportunities. In terms of disciplinary, they are a bit apart due to crop production and small farms; Soil Science faculty may not step on a farm for quite a while. The common thread is that they put seeds in the soil and host the soil; the distinction among faculty is quite sharp. A new faculty member has lab and office space with Soil Science, but his work is with Extension faculty. Another Soil Science Extension faculty member will be hired who will work with Crop Science faculty. Both new hires will advise graduate students. They are moving to a not historically-based faculty.
- The 10-year review indicates a reason for collaboration, but Jay provided rationale for not collaborating; why does this keep appearing in program reviews? Jay noted that agronomy is an interface between Crop Science and Soil Science but, at some institutions, they are separate. The overall focus is on production at the landscape level (corn or soybean production). OSU has a laboratory that is unparalleled anywhere

because all types of soils can be found in Oregon. The Soil Science national meeting is seeking divorce from Crop Science due to less and less overlap. The recommendations keep appearing because external reviewers are taking a traditional view of OSU's Crop Science unit; at the reviewers' institutions, the two units are combined while other institutions are split. Theresa felt it would be helpful to include Jay's explanation in the Action Plan since the combined units have been recommended several times, and the Sr. Vice Provost may have this same concern after reading the report.

- Are there separate Crop Science and Soil Science graduate faculty? Yes. Are new faculty advising both Crop Science and Soil Science students? This type of advising has occurred at the Master's level. Is there a double major? The Crop Science and Soil Science degrees are staggered (i.e., Masters and PhD).
- There is a vast difference in research – is there value for students to take both Crop Science and Soil Science courses to assist with integration?
- Dan, David, Joyce and Jay were thanked for their input, and the Council will continue the discussion next week.

Minutes prepared by Vickie Nunnemaker, Faculty Senate staff