The graduate studies committee have circulated the results of the graduate program review to the faculty and received several interesting proposals. The ability of the department to impact several important issues is limited. 1) Additional funds for administrative help in departmental graduate admissions is not currently available. 2) Revision of the graduate application review website to improve access and visibility of applications is within the purview of the graduate school, not the department. 3) Funding for graduate (or Ph. D. only) tuition and fee relief is not currently available. The department is agreed that we can impact the issues below and have outlined the schedule for implementing change.

General:

- A proposed new strategic plan will be completed by 1 January, 2012. Discussion and revision by ECE faculty will be completed and plan published by 1 September, 2012. The strategic plan will be reviewed on a yearly basis by the graduate studies committee.

The strategic plan will be revised by Tim Dallas, Donald Lie and Ranadip Pal. Tim Dallas will lead & oversee the effort. A new revision draft will be submitted to for review by next meeting of the graduate studies committee (week of 15 November, 2011).

- The faculty took exception to the comment that students are not able to take courses outside the department; this is encouraged and routinely approved up to the limit set by the graduate school through the degree plan requirements. The degree plan from the Graduate School stipulates that no more than 2 courses outside the EE department. Exceptions are received, reviewed by the committee, and approved on a case-by-case basis.

Admissions:

- The perceived preferential treatment and consideration of TTU/domestic students was discussed at length. The consensus of the committee was that our current holistic evaluation of all application materials has much merit, and that the applications received from this group often included more information. This group is also uniquely qualified for a certain number of graduate research opportunities by virtue of their citizenship.

Teaching Opportunities for graduate students and academic placement

- The issues of teaching opportunities for graduate students and placement of our graduates in academic positions were deemed to be related and were discussed together. We do in fact have a number of graduate students involved in the college teaching academy, as well as acting as instructors of record for courses in the department. ABET requires that such students have at least twenty hours past the bachelor’s degree. These students have self-selected for this opportunity. We categorically challenge the idea that teaching experience for our graduate students is a limiting factor in their placement in academic career tracks. The number and quality of publications and citation indices is by far the dominant factor in evaluating candidates for faculty positions.

Qualifier / PhD Candidacy

- The Fundamentals of Engineering Examination and its online substitutes will no longer be accepted as the qualifying examination for the doctoral program beginning 1 September, 2012.
We believe that the fundamentals of engineering examination as administered by NCEES is a comprehensive and fair indication of the mastery of basics for our students and will continue to require it for the MSEE and Ph.D. degree programs but a successful FE examination will no longer be sufficient to advance to candidacy in the doctoral program. Due to scheduling issues we will continue to accept online versions of this exam administered by department faculty as a substitute. We agree that this exam is not suitable as a qualifying examination for the doctoral program.

- The department strongly encourages the publication of student research and takes such as evidence of the student’s intellectual maturity, ability to think critically, and written communication skills. Following approval of the student’s program for the doctoral degree and completion of all courses with a minimum graduate GPA of 3.5 the student may present evidence of 1 peer-reviewed conference or journal publication, which will suffice as the qualifying examination for admission to candidacy in the doctoral program.

Proposal and Defense:
- At the proposal defense, the Ph.D. candidate will present evidence of a minimum of 1 peer-reviewed journal publication/acceptance and 1 peer-reviewed conference publication/acceptance and one more journal publication submitted. This requirement will be introduced by 1 September, 2012, and apply to all new Ph.D. students. We will track the percentage of our graduates following academic careers on a yearly basis and evaluate the effectiveness of this change over the next 5 years. The graduate studies committee will determine reasonable percentages by examining aspirational peer institutions.

- At the dissertation defense the candidate is expected to have 3 peer-reviewed journal publications/acceptances, subject to review by the graduate studies committee.

For the Graduate Studies Committee

Richard Gale
Professor and Associate Chair, Graduate Studies
Electrical and Computer Engineering
Edward E. Whitacre Jr. College of Engineering
Texas Tech University
richard.gale@ttu.edu
806-742-3533x252