Chapter III. Coursework Stage

INTRODUCTION

III. Coursework Stage

In the first stage of a doctoral program, students develop an advanced level of familiarity with their fields. While fulfilling departmental requirements and formulating a specialization within the field, students are also integrating themselves into the departmental culture. This section describes departmental mechanisms for keeping students in the Ph.D. program--assisting them in meeting coursework and research requirements, and encouraging peer support and interaction.

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Graduate Division Resources

- "Choosing your Major Adviser," reprinted from The Graduate newsletter.

Materials are available at 325 Sproul.

Triad Advising Structure

The Department of City and Regional Planning has implemented a triad advising structure to provide more continuity and consistency in student advising. All Ph.D. students are assigned an adviser at the time they are accepted for admission, but after one semester in the department (either at the end of Fall or the beginning of Spring) each student is asked to submit a list of names of five faculty members they would like to have on their guidance committee. The Ph.D. Committee chair selects three of the five people on the list, and these three people constitute the student's guidance committee. The department reports a lower attrition rate with the triad structure and higher student satisfaction with departmental advising. The Program Statement for the Department of City and Regional Planning includes a section describing the triad advising structure.

Advising

The advising process should assist students in making the most of the educational opportunities in the department and on the campus. At best it helps students to develop rich, but coherent, programs of study that achieve their goals in an effective way. Faculty serve as intellectual resources as well as practical guides. Advisers differ in their knowledge, skills, and availability, however; and students generally need to rely on more than one source for advice.

Moreover, some faculty go on sabbatical and leave during the student's stay, making some problems of continuity in advising. Therefore, each pre-candidacy student has a special guidance committee of three faculty members. This committee will be selected as much as possible on the basis of student preferences by the Ph.D. Committee chair. All members will be familiar with the student's field of interest, and at least one will have some expertise in methods. Though students may not get all their choices of committee members, as the advising load must be distributed among the faculty, no student will be required to have any committee member he or she does not wish. Students may request changes in these committees at any time.

Guidance Committee

The main responsibility of the Guidance Committee is to meet at least once a year with the student to review progress and to provide guidance. In addition, these faculty are individually to assist the student informally throughout the year. Committee members may or may not serve on the students' field and oral examination committees. There is no obligation one way or another.

The guidance committees determine whether the student's progress is sufficient each year for the student to continue. Their approval is required for a student to register for the following semester. They can use the guidelines in the Ph.D. program statement for normal progress, but they may decide that there are legitimate reasons for slower progress. Committee chairs should pass their comments to the Ph.D. Committee chair (via the Graduate Assistant) so that records may be kept.

After the oral examination, students should keep in touch with their dissertation committee members. Students who do not keep advisers informed of their progress may be dropped from the program to make room for others.

Mechanical Engineering: MEGSCO Survey

Advisory Council

The Mechanical Engineering Graduate Student Council (MEGSCO) is the graduate student advisory group for the department. Initiated by the vice-chair in Mechanical Engineering to get feedback from the students' point of view about how the department functioned and what could be improved, the council serves as the liaison between students and faculty.

Questionnaire

In order to identify some of the concerns of the graduate students in Mechanical Engineering, MEGSCO distributed a questionnaire and presented the tabulated responses to faculty in the department. With input from students, faculty could readily relate their own concerns to students' feedback. The survey results highlighted students' concerns and prompted some positive changes in the department. New emergency lighting has been installed in the stairways, and students have initiated a peer counseling network for potential incoming students.

The MEGSCO survey is reproduced on the following pages.

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA AT BERKELEY
DEPARTMENT OF MECHANICAL ENGINEERING

GRADUATE SCHOOL SURVEY
FALL 1990

MEGSCO
(Mechanical Engineering Graduate Student Council)
tel.: x2-5109 email: meagner @cmlds6

MEGSCO is a recently formed group whose purpose is to provide a liaison between students and ME faculty and staff, as well as to help with the organization of academic and social activities for ME grads. Some of the things we have done so far are the organization of the volleyball tournament at the grad picnic and weekly happy hours on Thursdays at 5pm at Triple Rock. In addition we have raised several concerns with the ME administration including the cleanliness of Etcheverry, bad lighting of the stairwells, absence of an emergency notification system and availability of night time on-campus parking. Also we discussed the orientation procedures for new graduate students. We have established a new campus computer network news group called "ucb.me.grads" as a way to distribute and collect information relevant to ME graduate students. Anyone can read or post a message using "rn" from Unix.

The objectrve of this survey is to help us identify some of the concerns of the graduate students in the ME Department. The goal is to get some feedback on some specific topics that we have selected as key issues, as well as receiving new information on subjects that any of you may consider important.We are just getting off the ground so we welcome your input. Please feel free to include any comments.

I. GENERAL INFORMATION

1. Sex ..... Male
..... Female

2. Number of years in the department .....

3. Major area of interest
..... Bioengineering
..... Materials
..... Thermosciences
..... Controls
..... Other
..... Fluid Mechanics
..... Solid Mechanics
..... Dynamics
..... Design

4. Final Degree objective
..... Master of science
..... Master of engineering
..... PhD

5. Position
..... Graduate student instructor (GSI)
..... Graduate student research assistant (GSRA)
..... Visiting Scholar
..... None

II. WORKING ENVIRONMENT

1. In which building is your office located?
   ..... Etcheverry Hall, floor # .....
   ..... Hesse Hall
   ..... Other .....

2. Is the physical appearance of the buildings of any concern to you?
don't care ..... 0 ..... 1 ..... 2 ..... 3 ..... 4 *very concerned*

3. Select which of the following you consider important in order to improve the physical appearance of the buildings:
   ..... Cleaning of the hallways
   ..... Cleaning the laboratories and offices
   ..... Painting the buildings
   ..... Other .....
   ..... I don't care

4. Is the safety of the building you work in of any concern to you?
don't care ..... 0 ..... 1 ..... 2 ..... 3 ..... 4 *very concerned*

5. Select which of the following represents a major safety concern for you:
   ..... Emergency communications or alarm system
   ..... Emergency lighting of the buildings
   ..... Fire hazard
   ..... Earthquake hazard
   ..... Other .....
   ..... I don't care

6. Comments:
.....
.....
.....

III. ACADEMIC AFFAIRS

1. Select the subjects about which you feel you are inadequately informed.
   ..... Degree completion requirements
   ..... Financial aid availability
   ..... Preliminary examinations procedures and requirements
   ..... Qualifying examinations procedures and requirements
   ..... Other.....
   ..... None

2. I have enough opportunities to present my research work in the department.
disagree ..... 0 ..... 1 ..... 2 ..... 3 ..... 4 *agree*

3. I would be interested in independent research and design competitions sponsored by industry.
disagree ..... 0 ..... 1 ..... 2 ..... 3 ..... 4 *agree*

4. The department and MEGSCO should promote graduate student research fairs and seminars.

"disagree" ..... 0 ..... 1 ..... 2 ..... 3 ..... 4 "agree"

5. New graduate students at orientation receive sufficient and timely information about research projects currently available in the department.
"disagree" ..... 0 ..... 1 ..... 2 ..... 3 ..... 4 "agree"

6. Comments:
.....
.....
.....

IV. SOCIAL ACTIVITIES

1. In which social events would you most likely participate?
..... ME weekly "happy hour"
..... Inter-departmental sports tournaments
..... Intra-departmental sports tournaments
..... Annual ME graduate students picnic
..... Annual ME family picnic
..... Other .....
..... None

2. What location would you suggest for the ME weekly "happy hour"?
..... Triple Rock
..... La Vals (north)
..... Etcheverry Hall lawn
..... Etcheverry Hall skylight room
..... Other .....
..... I don't go to "happy hours"

3. Comments:
.....
.....

V. MISCELLANEOUS

1. Would you be willing to be an overnight host for a prospective graduate student during a visit to campus next year?
..... Yes ..... No

2. An ME Christmas Party/Banquet is being organized for the weekend before final exams; the cost will be approximately $10 per person and we are planning to hire a band and provide drinks and food. Do you be planning to attend?
..... Yes ..... No

3. Would you be interested in purchasing a T-shirt with an ME logo? (not I ME!)
..... Yes ..... No

4. Comments
.....
.....

*** PLEASE RETURN THIS FORM WITH YOUR REGISTRATION PACKAGE ***
THANK YOU VERY MUCH FOR YOUR COOPERATION

Chemistry: Choosing a Research Director

In the sciences, students choose a research director, who is also their dissertation adviser, during the coursework stage of the doctoral program. The Department of Chemistry, recognizing the central importance of the choice of research group to a graduate student's success, publishes a handout entitled *Choosing Your Research Director.* The handout is reproduced below.

(SAMPLE)

CHOOSING YOUR RESEARCH DIRECTOR

One of the most important decisions you will make as a graduate student is your choice of research group. Chemistry graduate students at Berkeley normally choose a group during the first half of the first semester. You should work hard during this time to find the group that will be the best for you. The essential parts of the process are: talking to the first-year graduate adviser; reading the research interests brochure; meeting with professors you are interested in working with; talking to graduate students in the groups; reading the papers of the groups you are interested in; meeting with the professors again, with a better sense of what questions to ask.

Formally, the system works as follows:

1. You should meet with your adviser during orientation, which is the week prior to the beginning of classes. During this initial meeting, you and your adviser will agree on a minimum of five faculty whom you will interview as a prospective research director. You will be given a form that has the names of these five faculty, but you are encouraged to talk to other faculty members about research in their groups in addition to the five specific ones.

2. You will make appointments with professors to discuss possible research projects, and the professors will acknowledge that the discussions have taken place by signing the advising form.

3. After you have interviewed all of the faculty on your list, you must see your adviser again to discuss your situation. At this point, you may ask a member of the faculty if you may join his/her research group. (This faculty member need not be one of the five "specified" ones.) If the professor agrees to accept you into his/her research group, the bottom part of the advising form should be completed **and returned to your adviser, who will then obtain approval from the department chairman**. If the professor does not accept you into his/her group, this is a confidential matter entirely between you and this faculty member. The professor may tell you that he/she cannot make a commitment at that time but will let you know later. During this period you are still a "free agent" and may talk to other faculty and decide to join one of their groups. If you

do so, of course, you (or your adviser) should inform the first faculty member promptly.

The purpose of this procedure is to encourage you to talk to a wide range of faculty about the possibility of thesis research under their direction while you are in the process of making up your mind. These discussions and interactions are directly between you and the individual faculty members, but you should feel free to consult frequently with your adviser during this decision period. We anticipate that most students will have joined a research group by the middle of the fall semester, and in any event, but the end of the semester.

A sample graduate student advising form is reproduced on the following page.

(SAMPLE)

Department of Chemistry

First-Year Graduate Student Advising Form

Student Name_____

Academic Adviser_____

Fall Semester Courses:

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Faculty Members to be Interviewed as Possible Thesis Advisers:

_____Signature:_____

_____Signature:_____

_____Signature:_____

_____Signature:_____

_____Signature:_____

==========

I accept the responsibility of serving as thesis director for the above-named graduate student. If a Research Assistant salary is needed for the spring term, the student is to be paid from the following account:

Name:_____Cost Center Number:_____

The student is assigned the following workspace:

Room:_____Building:_____

The most recent occupant of this workspace was:

Name:_____Date the workspace was vacated:_____

_____

(signed) (date)

Approved:_____Date:_____

Final Assignment to a Thesis Laboratory

(1) The rotation periods are an opportunity to experience three *different* research environments.

Since each of your three choices represents a potential laboratory in which you might pursue your doctoral dissertation research, you should keep an open mind at all times.

(2) Prior to completion of your rotations, it is inappropriate for you to seek a firm commitment about a position in a laboratory, and faculty are not allowed to make a firm commitment to any particular student.

Students interested in a particular laboratory are free to express their intentions at any time. However, at the end of the 3rd rotation (last week or so), it is essential that students talk, in person, with each faculty member in whose laboratory they have a serious interest. In addition to exploring likely thesis projects, you should also discuss the possibility of space being available for you in the laboratory. Although a faculty member can, in principle, indicate that space may be available, it is also possible that several other students may be interested in the same laboratory. Moreover, a faculty member may even suggest that given the level of student interest, or other circumstances, it is unlikely that you could be accommodated in that group. For these reasons, it is in your best interest to explore in a serious way all of your options for thesis laboratory assignment.

(3) It is imperative that you submit to the MCB Graduate Affairs Office by the required deadline (which will be announced) a written list of four choices of thesis laboratory, in rank order of preference.

Students should list only those faculty with whom they have explicitly discussed the possibility of conducting thesis research. If a faculty member has indicated that it is unlikely that there would be space for you, they should not be listed as a high choice. Assignment of students to laboratories attempts to satisfy two goals: (i) to honor in so far as possible the preferences of the students; (ii) to meet the needs of the MCB Graduate Program at large by achieving a reasonable *distribution of students among the various* available laboratories. For this process to work optimally to everyone's advantage, students should carefully explore all their opportunities and provide a realistic list of preferences. It may be useful, if you so choose, to explain your order of preference in writing, or to discuss your concerns in advance with your First-Year Advisor.

(4) No faculty member is allowed to accept more than two students into their laboratory in any given year.

Final assignment of students to *research laboratories is the official responsibility* of the Committee of First-Year Divisional Advisors. The Graduate Advisors take into account the needs of all of the students in the program. Individual faculty are not permitted to make binding commitments to any particular student on their own. Input from faculty and students is sought in cases where compromises are necessary. In this way, the process of choosing a laboratory avoids the emotional and psychological burden of a rigid commitment to a particular laboratory and the consequent trauma should assignment to that laboratory not be possible. *It is our firm belief* that a student will receive an outstanding graduate education in the laboratory of any faculty member in this program.

(5) In unusual cases where it is not possible to reach a compromise that provides a good match between student and faculty, the option of an additional (fourth) rotation can be explored and will be given consideration.

January 19, 1990

Mathematics: Availability to Supervise Dissertations

Choosing an Adviser

Choosing the right dissertation adviser can be difficult, especially if you are a student in a large department and aren't familiar with all the faculty and their research interests.

Faculty Availability to Supervise Dissertations

Mathematics requires its faculty to complete an information sheet on their availability to supervise dissertations. Once the forms are completed, they are collected and filed in a ring binder in the graduate office. The binder is available to students who are in the process of selecting a dissertation adviser.

A sample information sheet is printed on the following page.

(SAMPLE)

Information Sheet on Faculty Availability to Supervise Dissertations

In order to facilitate students in the process of selecting a dissertation adviser, please provide the following information:

Name:

Areas of current research interest:

Some relevant books/articles in my research area are:

Going into a qualifying exam, I would expect any student wanting me as an adviser to have the following preparation (e.g., courses or seminars; of course the student should consult with me well before the exam):

Number of students currently:

Please check one:

___ I am currently interested in taking on new students.

___ I am not currently interested in taking on new students.

Some of my current/former students are:

Over the next 3 years I anticipate being on leave during the following period:

Comments (may continue on back):

School of Education: Education in Mathematics, Science and Technology First- and Second- Year Projects

EMST First- and Second-Year Projects

Students in Education in Mathematics, Science and Technology (EMST) have the opportunity to hone their research skills, prepare for dissertation research, and often gain professional exposure and the opportunity to publish. Here's how it works. On the first day of the school year in their second and third years, students in EMST are required to submit to the faculty a research project written up as though for publication in a professional journal. Typically students will have done a pilot for this research in a course project. Over the summer they refine the work and then write it up in finished form. The project and a student's coursework are major components of the annual student evaluations.

Advantages

1. Students get a chance to do research early in their graduate careers. As a result, they don't suffer from the "I've done reading for three years, now how do I do research?" syndrome;

2. Second-year projects often evolve into thesis proposals;

3. Many student projects turn out to be publishable or to warrant inclusion at national meetings. In fact, the acceptance rate for EMST graduate students at the annual meetings of the American Educational Research Association is better than the national norm.

While the projects spring out of faculty research groups or courses, they do require a substantial amount of faculty supervision. At least two faculty members read each paper. The benefits are worth the work.

Connie Long of the School of Public Health

EASING THE WAY FOR STUDENTS

This new feature will highlight activities undertaken by departments to give special support to their graduate students. If you think that students in your department could profit from a similar program, we encourage you to show this article to your department chair or graduate assistant.

With 14 doctoral and master's degree programs, the School of Public Health can be a pretty complicated place to get your bearings as a new graduate student. Graduate Assistant Connie Long, Coordinator of Admissions, Records, and Student Affairs, makes a special effort to reach students and to explain the complexities of negotiating a graduate degree at Berkeley. Part of that challenge lies in figuring out how the bureaucracy works and how the rules and regulations affect you as a graduate student.

Here's what Long does to ease students' way:

First, she tells new students at their general orientation that she has an open-door policy and encourages them to use her as a clearinghouse for information and help. Many departments give their new students an orientation (some, as in Public Health, with continuing students on hand to give a seasoned perspective of graduate school). But in Public Health, the orientation doesn't stop there.

Each of the 11 doctoral degree programs has an ongoing seminar for students in all stages of their graduate careers. Long attends a session of each program's seminar at least once a year. She discusses subjects such as preparing for the qualifying exam, advancement to candidacy, choosing a committee, the Normative Time Program, writing a dissertation, the facts about Filing Fee, and the ins-and-outs of withdrawal status.

In this informal setting, students see how faculty and staff work together to guide them through their degree programs, and students who have passed through certain stages share their experiences with more junior students. They are also encouraged to ask questions and to air their particular problems.

When Long attends a session, she brings two large poster boards she's prepared that show the various forms students need to know about to move officially from one stage of graduate school to another. She talks about the forms and when students need to file them. The result? By the time students get to a stage where they need to file a specific form, they've usually heard about it several times and know what to do.

At the seminars, Long again advertises her open-door policy. She thinks these ongoing seminars help to allay students' anxieties as they move through the rigorous demands of graduate school.

"I've been doing this for four or five years and have good feedback from students," she says. "It's a program that's worked for us because I have the backing of the School and the faculty. You need that to make it successful."

PROGRAM PROFILE

Audience: Master's and doctoral students

Organized by: Connie Long, Graduate Assistant and Coordinator of Admissions, Records, and Student Affairs, School of Public Health

Cost to Department: $0

Purpose: To acquaint students with the forms and procedures they will need to move from one stage of their graduate careers to the next. Students also get to know the academic and staff resources within the School.

For more information: Connie Long (642-6534)

• • •

Excerpted from *The Graduate* newsletter by permission of the Graduate Publications Office.

Student Learning Center: Graduate Student Support Service

The Graduate Student Support Service offers assistance to graduate students. In individual appointments, departmental seminars, and student support groups, Michael Hardie, the Center's student affairs officer, gives practical advice on how to manage all aspects of the graduate program.

(SAMPLE)

Graduate Students !

If you need assistance with

- writing papers
- organizing your research/writing schedule
- preparing for oral exams
- completing those incompletes
- preparing a dissertation proposal
- working productively with your committee
- getting the dissertation written
- getting the most out of meetings with your advisor
- establishing/maintaining a network of colleagues
- getting that degree as soon as possible

!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

Check out the

Graduate Student Support Service (Michael Hardie)
Student Learning Center
Room 260B, Golden Bear Center
Phone: 643-9826

Academic Support Assistance provided to

- individuals
- groups
- classes

gf: 9/91

Psychology: The GASP News

Peer Support
The social/academic support of peers cannot be underestimated as a factor contributing to the successful completion of a doctoral program. The Graduate Association of Students in Psychology (GASP) is an active organization which represents graduate students across the seven areas of the Psychology Department. GASP publishes a newsletter (reprinted excerpts follow) written in a satirical style relating gossipy tidbits about students, faculty, and staff, poking fun at colleagues and itself, and congratulating fellow students and faculty on their successes.

Facilities
GASP also maintains the Warner Brown Reading Room which serves as a reference library and a quiet place for graduate students to work and interact. GASP sponsors a coffee hour each morning at 10:00 a.m. in the Reading Room to further facilitate faculty, staff, and student interaction.

Geology & Geophysics: Speakers Program and St. Barbara's Day Celebration

Following are descriptions of two activities that the graduate students in the Department of Geology and Geophysics sponsor. In both cases students feel that they get to know each other better and, through working together, develop a comradeship.

Speakers Program

While the department has traditionally hosted a Speakers Program, in the last 20 years students have assumed management, inviting speakers from all parts of the United States to present their latest research.

Organizing the Event

At a Geology and Geophysics Association meeting (the department's graduate student organization), students elect one geologist and one geophysicist to manage the program for one semester. Guests are invited well in advance, and mailings go out before the semester starts. All students help out with coffee-making and cookie-buying as well as with clean up, mailings, and other tasks. Students also provide the visiting speaker with transportation to and from the airport.

Format

Every Thursday afternoon graduates, undergraduates, and faculty gather for coffee before the program. Talks typically last about 50 minutes and are followed by a short question and answer period. All beginning graduate students are expected to attend; undergraduates are encouraged to attend. Students and faculty may continue the discussion at LaVal's, and a small group of graduate students host the speaker for dinner.

Cost

The cost per semester is approximately $3,500. Alumni and friends' donations cover all the costs.

St. Barbara's Day

This entertainment-filled evening commemorating the Feast Day of St. Barbara, the patron saint of miners and geologists, is hosted by graduate students who do all of the cooking and most of the faculty "roasting." Staff and undergraduates are usually safe from graduate barbs, although sometimes they are caricatured in the skits written and performed by grads. Dance music performed by "The Geotones," a student and staff ensemble, caps the evening.

Organization

Students begin writing their skits one month before the feast, and practice ardently the week before. When the day arrives, students cook a big dinner, bring in beverages, and put on the floor show. They also clean up. Everyone (except graduate students) pays for a ticket.

Molecular and Cell Biology: Mega Follies

The Department of Molecular and Cell Biology sponsors numerous social events which build a strong esprit de corps and sense of belonging for the students. Periodic lab parties, weekly Friday afternoon beer hours in each of the department's five buildings, Friday afternoon volleyball and numerous spontaneous get-togethers are organized by students and lab personnel. There is no cost to the department.

The announcement for one light-hearted evening activity for students and faculty in MCB appears below.

(SAMPLE)

You are cordially invited
to display your excellent sense of humor at the
2nd Annual *MEGA-FOLLIES*

WHAT are the ***MEGA-FOLLIES*** ??

The mega-follies began many years ago in a land far away called the Department of Molecular Biology. This annual event featured skits, spoofs, videos and any other talent departmental members were willing to share. There was only one rule. One could only lampoon people of equal or higher status. In other words, first year graduate students could make fun of everyone, while the faculty could only ridicule themselves. When the department reorganized, so did the follies. The results were hysterical as you may have seen last fall (still available on video).