

TO: Deans, Department Chairs, Graduate Advisors and Graduate Studies Committees Chairs

FROM: Philip Cohen, Dean, Graduate School

RE: Change in Policy Regarding the Size of Doctoral Committees

DATE: 1 March 2007

The Graduate Assembly has unanimously approved a change in the policy requiring that a dissertation committee consist of no fewer than five members. **The revised policy takes effect immediately.** To summarize, the new policy allows traditional programs to set the minimum number of members on a dissertation committee to three members and interdisciplinary degree programs to set the minimum number to four members. Individual programs may choose to require all students in their programs to assemble larger committees. Programs setting a higher minimum number may not reduce that number for an individual unless minimum membership requirements are reduced for all students. Programs may not reduce committee size below the minimums specified above. The Graduate Catalog will be revised to reflect this change as follows:

...the Dean of Graduate Studies will assign an examining committee, members of which are recommended by the Graduate Advisor and appropriate Committee on Graduate Studies. The committee will consist of no fewer than 3 [voting] members, at least two of whom must be from the student's major area. One qualified external person who is not a member of the graduate faculty may serve as a voting member of a committee following a request accompanied by documentation, such as a vita, from the appropriate Committee on Graduate Studies to the Dean of Graduate Studies via the nomination form available from the Graduate School for this purpose and approval by the Dean of Graduate Studies. In interdisciplinary programs the committee must have no fewer than four members with at least two members representing each field concerned. Three members in traditional degree programs or four members in interdisciplinary degree programs constitute minimum requirements set by the Graduate School. Individual programs may require the committee to have more members and students are required to conform to such requirements. Students should consult with their program's Graduate Advisor make sure their committees have sufficient membership to meet program requirements. After the student has passed the comprehensive examination (see next paragraph), the doctoral supervising committee may be altered or expanded to accommodate the dissertation research needs of the student, but the committee must include at least three voting members. Committees in interdisciplinary programs must include at least four voting members with two members coming from each discipline. Any external, non-voting members in addition to the required number of voting members of the committee must be approved by the Dean of Graduate Studies.