

## **POLICY MEMORANDUM NO. 229**

**TO:** All Faculty and Graduate Students

**FROM:** Charles W. Steger

**DATE:** December 15, 2003

**SUBJECT:** Update to Policy No. 1 —  
Evaluation of the Progress of Graduate Students

Approved by the Commission on Graduate Studies & Policies: October 1, 2003  
First Reading, University Council: November 17, 2003  
Approved by University Council: December 1, 2003  
Recommended by the President: December 1, 2003  
Effective Date: Spring 2004

The University Council, on recommendation of the Commission on Graduate Studies and Policies, approved a resolution updating Presidential Policy Memorandum No. 1 on the Evaluation of the Progress of Graduate Students. Following is the text of that resolution.

**Whereas**, it has come to the attention of the Graduate School that the performance and progress of many graduate students are not being reviewed annually as required by Presidential Policy Memorandum No. 1, resulting in an increasing number of students seeking assistance from the Graduate School in the resolution of academic problems with their departments; and

**Whereas**, Presidential Policy Memorandum 1 (PPM 1) was first issued in 1977, stipulating the procedures for evaluation of the progress of graduate students; and

**Whereas**, PPM 1 would benefit from updating and new distribution to the university community to encourage greater awareness and consistent application of the annual review of the progress of individual graduate students;

**Therefore**, be it resolved, that the Evaluation of the Progress of Graduate Students, originally issued as PPM 1, be updated and replaced by the following statement, and that this revised policy be distributed to the university community as a new Presidential Policy Memorandum and incorporated in the catalog and elsewhere as appropriate.

### **Evaluation of the Progress of Graduate Students (Revision of PPM 1)**

Graduate education is a complex activity involving a higher order of student-faculty relationship than is ordinarily found at the undergraduate level. The teacher/student relationship of the undergraduate years is replaced by an evolving partnership between the graduate student and mentor, and the development of research sophistication is frequently fostered by their close collaboration.

It follows that the evaluation of the graduate student's program is, and must be, dependent in large part upon the judgment of the major professor, augmented by the collective judgment of the members of the assigned committee. To be sure, the University, through the Graduate School, can define minimal entrance standards and can prescribe general rules governing eligibility for continuation. But the crucial entity in student evaluation is the department in which the student's work is centered, and the crucial evaluator must be the faculty advisor.

It is important, therefore, that each graduate student be fully informed, not only of the University's expectations but of the department's expectations as well. It is incumbent upon each department to prepare a statement of Policies and Procedures for each of its graduate degrees. Such a statement should cover such items as course requirements, committee composition/meeting requirements, research progress, the nature and timing of oral and written examinations, and the nature of the evaluation that will be given to the thesis/dissertation.

A copy of each departmental statement should be on file in the office of the Graduate School and should be made available to each student at the time of matriculation.

#### Procedures for Evaluating the Progress of Graduate Students

Grade reports issued at the end of each semester are reviewed by the Dean of the Graduate School, who takes any necessary action in consultation with the department head.

Each department is responsible for developing procedures for their graduate advisory committee to use in annual evaluation of the progress of each graduate student. Overall evaluation (including GPA, courses with a grade of incomplete, progress on plan of study, preliminary exam performance, research performance, teaching performance, assistantship status and performance, general

departmental citizenship, and recommendations for the next review period) should be conducted by the student's advisory committee at least once a year. For those students who have not yet established an advisory committee, the evaluation should be conducted by the department head or a designated department committee. An indication of the results of the evaluation should be placed permanently in the student's folder and the student should be informed of the results of the committee's annual evaluation. Normally the graduate student would not be present during the actual evaluation process.

When developing procedures for use in the annual evaluation of the progress of graduate students, departmental graduate advisory committees should recognize that this policy permits flexibility. Departments should formulate review procedures that call for annual evaluations that are meaningful and suitable to their particular circumstances. A copy of each departmental procedure should be on file in the Graduate School.

The department should confirm to the Graduate School annually by the end of the spring semester that the evaluation process for all departmental graduate students has been completed. In addition, the department should provide to the Graduate School a summary report of all instances in which a graduate student has received an unsatisfactory review.