

Academic Senate Meeting  
Approved Minutes  
November 15, 2006

## APPROVED MINUTES

### ACADEMIC SENATE MEETING November 15, 2006

PRESENT: Mark Anderson, Duane Buhrmester, John Burr, Gregg Dieckmann, Juan Gonzalez, John Gooch, Gopal Gupta, Marilyn Kaplan, Robert Kieschnick, Sumit Majumdar, Homer Montgomery, Simeon Ntafos, William Pervin, Ravi Prakash, Brian Ratchford, Tim Redman, Liz Salter

ABSENT: Poras Balsara, Dinesh Bhatia, James Bartlett, Gail Breen, Tom Brikowski, Cy Cantrell, R. Chandrasekaran, Jeff DeJong, Santosh D'Mello, Warren Goux, Jennifer Holmes, D.T. Huynh, Murray Leaf, Dennis Miller, Ramachandran Natarajan, Shun Chen Niu, Sheila Pineres, Beatrice Rasmussen, Young Ryu, Mary Urquhart, S. Venkatesan,

VISITORS: Basheer Benhalim, Chris Dickson

### CALL TO ORDER, ANNOUNCEMENTS AND QUESTIONS

Provost Wildenthal called the meeting to order in President Daniel's absence.

He told the Senate that Assoc. Provost Robert Nelsen was close to completion of the reviews of Deans Helms, Moore, Sall and Provost Wildenthal. The Academic Programs scheduled for this academic year are also nearing a close.

About the Campus Beautification Project, Dr. Wildenthal said Peter Walker & Partners, the landscape architects hired to redesign the university's landscape and create a new look to the campus, will be back on the campus in January. On this visit, they will be out on the campus with Facilities Management.

When asked if any limitations had been placed on the agreements UTD signed with the local community colleges, Dr. Wildenthal said the only limitation UTD could require is the grade point average of 2.5 for transfer students that had been approved in a previous Senate meeting. He said the main objective for making this arrangement with the community colleges, other than to satisfy the legislature, is to keep good relationships with the schools and encourage enrollment of students from the surrounding area.

### APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

Dr. Wildenthal asked for a vote to approve the minutes with noted corrections. There was no opposition, and the minutes were approved.

## SPEAKER'S REPORT

Marilyn Kaplan gave the report in Speaker Leaf's absence.

The Calendar Committee is looking at a conflict with the public schools over the scheduling of teacher educations during the summer semester. The UTD courses begin before the public schools in the area are finished with classes for the summer, and the courses continue past the beginning of the public schools in the fall. Thus far, no solution has been found.

Regarding appointments to Senate and University-Wide committees, Philip Loizou was reappointed to the Committee on Qualifications of Academic Personnel. Tom Brikowski was appointed to the Commencement Committee. On the Institutional Review Board, Candice Mills was appointed in place of Cynthia Ledbetter. Orlando Richard declined his appointment to the Committee for the Support of Diversity and Equity, and Xiachui (Gloria) Liu, in the School of Management, has been recommended to take his place. Pat Michaelson declined the appointment to the Faculty Mentoring Committee and the Academic Council is still considering who to appoint in that vacancy.

The Library Committee is reviewing a complaint from the library administrators concerning a lack of resources for new academic programs and the required courses. The library administration is recommending a representative from the library attend the Council on Educational Policy (CEP) meetings so the library will be better informed and have ample time to order the necessary resources for the course work. Dr. Cantrell, the Chair of the CEP, asked for specific names of library personnel who would attend the meetings and he will see that they are invited.

Dr. Kaplan described the Street Naming Committee, which is working with the Campus Enhancement Committee. They have been getting suggestions for names ranging from Floppy Drive and Hard Drive to names for Texas landmarks. One suggestion was to name one street "President Drive" instead of having many roads named for individual prior UTD presidents.

Dr. Kaplan has been attending the Student Government Association meetings. The students of all U.T. System components have an organization similar to the Faculty Advisory Council, which is called the U.T. System Student Government Association. Some of the items on their agenda are 1.) clarifying time-lines for degree plans so students know if a degree will require four or five years to complete; 2.) system-wide incentives for encouraging undergraduate research; 3.) Coordinating Admissions Program, which is a program in the U.T. System that allows required courses for degree plans at one component to be applicable at all U.T. System campuses. UTD does not currently participate in this programs, but the students are urging that this policy be reexamined; 4.) teaching required courses twice every semester; 5.) Texas Academy of Mathematics and Sciences, or TAMS, a program that encourages high school seniors and juniors to pursue math and science in college by hosting camps which give students some hands-on experience with those subjects. The UTD students would like to see the program expanded at UTD; and 6.) Students would like to have a Philosophy degree offered.

## TEXAS COUNCIL OF FACULTY SENATES

Dr. Leaf submitted a written report to the Senate. This is attached as Appendix 1. Privacy, as a possible academic freedom issue, was a major focus of the meeting. The TCFS executive board wanted to know if the members thought it had been eroded. The consensus of the members was that it had not been eroded because it has been clear from the outset that faculty cannot expect privacy in the use of university equipment. There was also discussion of a number of Coordinating Board initiatives and concerns. As an aside to the meeting, Professor Leaf spoke to the Coordinating Board representative about the CB's concern with "tightening up the requirements for approving new PhD programs. The reasoning was as we had previously understood, namely with assuring high quality and resisting the proliferation of programs that were essentially upgrades of what have historically been vocationally oriented Masters programs.

## ANNUAL REPORT FROM THE ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON RESEARCH

Dr. Gopal Gupta, Chair of the Advisory Committee on Research, presented the report. The major points include:

- Cultivating a Pervasive Culture of Research: Primarily through close mentoring of junior faculty members and Associate Professors, by tenured Professors.
- Scaling up of UTD's Research Enterprise by increasing the number of Ph.D. students in research and increasing tenure-track professors.
- Increasing Faculty Productivity
- Inter-disciplinary Research and Teaching
- Fellowship Money for Graduate Students: finding ways to increase the pool of fellowship funds

A motion was made by Dr. Cantrell , and seconded by Dr. Kieschnick, to accept the report as submitted. The motion carried.

## B.S. IN COMPUTER ENGINEERING: CATALOG COPY AND COURSE DESCRIPTIONS

Dr. William Pervin explained the final draft of the degree plan was sent from CEP to the Academic Council for their approval to place it on the Senate Agenda. He made a motion to open the floor to discussion of the plan and Dr. Cantrell seconded.

Some of the highlights of Dr. Pervin's explanation of the plan included:

- the fact that the Eric Jonsson School of Engineering and Computer Science already employs the faculty needed to teach the required courses;
- only a few new classes will have to be added to complete the degree plan;
- the degree will cover hardware and software engineering; it will cost minimal dollars to initiate;
- and nine out of ten universities of equal standing with UTD offer a Electrical Computing Engineering Degree

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Dr. Pervin has attended several of the UTD recruiting sessions and said this degree has generated much interest among prospective students. It is hoped that the program can start next spring.

After further discussion, a motion was made and seconded to accept the degree plan, as amended by the Council on Undergraduate Education and the Committee on the Core Curriculum and which has yet to be determined. The motion carried.

### GRADUATE STUDIES COMMITTEE

A motion was made by Dr. Cyrus Cantrell to amend the charge of the Graduate Studies committee to include responsibility for monitoring the quality of theses and dissertations. The text of the amendment is attached. The motion was seconded by Dr. Robert Kieschnick. The motion carried.

### REMEMBERING DISTINGUISHED FACULTY

This was a discussion item to help generate thought and ideas in the Senate on how to remember deceased faculty members who are considered by their peers have contributed distinctively to the development and standing of the university as a scholarly community. Suggestions included sculptures, gardens, walkways, hall ways, and the naming of classrooms and buildings. Most of the members present thought it a good idea to have a place for people to gather, take pictures or be a central point of interest on campus. Forming a sub-committee of the Campus Enhancement Committee to explore the possibilities was also suggested.

No definite action was taken. Senate members were encouraged to discuss the idea with other faculty members and the issue will be discussed again in the Academic Council and the Senate.

### REQUIREMENT OF TWO WRITING CLASSES (DISCUSSION ONLY)

The Senate discussed the advantages of requiring undergraduates to complete a second upper-level writing class in their particular major for graduation. One of the courses would be the Freshman Rhetoric class. The second course would be in the student's major area of study, which would place more emphasis on the unique aspects of writing in their particular major.

Questions about the idea included increasing the number of hours needed for graduation, and thus, an extra semester of college; what are students' writing skills when they enroll at UTD, and should the level of those skills be higher; and, are UTD graduates adequately prepared when they graduate with only one writing course, which is a basic writing course?

After some discussion, Tim Redman made a motion that this issue be referred to the Council on Educational Policy and the Committee on the Core Curriculum for their review and to meet with the director of the Rhetoric Department and Lisa Bell, the Acting Director of the Professional Communications program for their suggestions. Dr. Cantrell seconded the motion. The motion carried.

#### CANDIDATES FOR GRADUATION IN FALL 2006

Dr. Kaplan read the following statement to the Senate to approve the named of the candidates for graduation who were listed in the Senate agenda:

"These students have applied for graduation and have been reviewed by the Office of Records. The Office of Records declared that all of these students will be eligible for graduation upon the completion of the current semester's work at the necessary levels. I request, therefore, that the Academic Senate certify these students to graduate upon receipt of final grades, and notification of completion of other requirements, provided that the grades are consistent with the standards for graduation prescribed by this University. I also request that the Academic Senate certify those students designated as eligible to graduate with honors upon completion of coursework and requirements consistent with the standards for honors at the levels offered by this University."

Dr. Pervin seconded the motion, and it carried.

#### DOCTORAL CANDIDATES FOR GRADUATION IN FALL 2006

Regarding the names of the doctoral candidates for graduation, Dr. Kaplan read this statement:

"These students have applied for graduate degrees and have been reviewed by the Graduate Dean. The Graduate Dean certifies that all of these students will be eligible for the degrees indicated upon satisfactory completion of the current semester's work. I request, therefore, that the Academic Senate certify these students to receive the degrees as indicated upon receipt of final grades and notification of completion of other requirements, provided that the grades received are consistent with the standards for credit prescribed by this University."

Dr. Cantrell seconded the motion to approve the listed doctoral candidates for graduation. The motion carried.

#### ADJOURNMENT

A motion was made and seconded to adjourn the meeting. The motion carried and the meeting was adjourned.

APPROVED: \_\_\_\_\_  
Speaker of the Faculty

DATE: \_\_\_\_\_

## APPENDIX #1

### TCFS report

Texas council of Faculty Senates met Friday and Saturday 20—21 Oct 2006.

1. Legislative matters. TCFS always meets with TACT and the Texas AAUP. Before the meeting board members who were also TACT members went the TACT lobbyist to talk to legislators. Those who went before this meeting spoke to the TCFS members about their conversations.

First, there will be another textbook bill, attempting to require standardized textbooks across systems or the state and prohibiting changes less than every three years. Possibly also a negotiated contract price by the state, like for school texts.

There will probably be more efforts to change the top ten percent rule.

Representative Fred Brown, from College Station, has introduced House Bill 1172, which “amends the Texas Education Code to encourage the timely graduation of students at the state’s colleges and universities.” The main theme is that it “allows” a college or university to charge higher than its usual tuition rates for courses taken beyond 30 semester credit hours more than the number required to complete the student’s degree program. The current limit is 45 hours beyond the number required to graduate. The bill also in effect will *require* such charges by correspondingly reducing the number of credit hours taken by such students that the university can get formula funding for.

The bill prohibits a college or university from “requiring a student to complete more than the minimum number of semester credit hours required for the student’s bachelor’s degree program by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools or its successor unless the school determines that there is a compelling reason for doing so.”

The bill also makes a series of related changes regarding scholarship money, designed to assure that a student takes no less than 24 semester credit hours a year while being funded and that the funding ends in four years or less. It provides that the savings thus realized will be used to fund the TEXAS grant program. The same bill is sponsored in the Senate by Senator Zaffirini.

On the other hand, Lieutenant Gov Dewhurst and others have indicated that since public school finance is now taken care of, this will be the year for higher ed. There will be an effort to help.

No one mentioned closing the gaps

2. The CB and more legislative matters. The next speaker was Catherine Parsenault, of the CB. Her first point was that we should not be concerned only with education aimed directly at higher education. HB1, the omnibus public school bill, also has important implications.

For example, one major thrust is that it will set “college readiness standards.” This is the in the “academic distinction” component of the recommended high school curriculum. In effect this means that the Texas Education will specify what these standards mean, not any body that actually represents higher educational institutions. This is inappropriate in itself, but the deeper problem, or fear, is that since it is predictable that some students meeting these standards at the high school level will in fact either not be admitted to the colleges of their choice or not do well there, the next step may be an effort to require that we accept this “college readiness” preparation by law.

The Coordinating Board has been involved in these discussions, and the position of the Dr. Parades has consistently been that it is up to the higher education institution themselves to determine what their admission standards are, and hence more generally college readiness in general.

Another initiative, in the Leg and at the CB, is “course redesign project.” “Course redesign” is a buzzword for the program of the National Center for Academic Transformation, headed by Carol Twigg. She has been retained as a consultant by the CB for a year. The website of the NCAT states their purpose:

‘NCAT is an independent non-profit organization dedicated to the effective use of information technology to improve student learning outcomes and reduce the cost of higher education. NCAT provides expertise and support to institutions and organizations seeking proven methods for providing more students with the education they need to prosper in today’s economy.’ So it sounds like the same stuff we are getting from SACS. Dr. Twigg, according to the website, “was Associate Vice Chancellor for Learning Technologies for the State University of New York and held a number of senior academic administrative positions at Empire State College. Carol holds a Ph.D. in English Literature from the State University of New York at Buffalo and Bachelor of Arts degree from the College of William and Mary.”

According to Catherine, the aim or concern is “how to deal with students in ways that make them more responsible for their own learning”. The focus will be on “foundation” or “gateway” courses. According the legislative mandate the “redesign needs to result in more efficient learning and cost savings.” One course will be calculus.

According to testimony given by Twigg to the Congressional Committee on Education and the Workforce Subcommittee on 21<sup>st</sup> century competitiveness, Twigg starts from the point that we have often recognized: that online courses are commonly not as good and virtually never better or cheaper than traditional courses. She attributes this the fact that such courses are commonly “tacked on” regular, conventional, programs, rather than especially designed for the web environment. Her solution is that they should be especially designed for it. Hence the focus on

“redesign” – which obviously makes a certain amount for courses to which her characterization applies. But equally obviously, to us, not all courses can be so characterized; hence it is almost certainly not the case that this will result in the kind of across the board breakthrough that NACT is promising. Not quite academic snake oil, but certainly some unjustified claims. Anywhere, here it is—more noise in the system, and probably more wasted resources that would have been better used going into normal channels.

Degree Mills. A different matter: Last year, on the initiative of the CB, the Legislature passed a law making it a class B misdemeanor to seek a job with a “fraudulent or substandard degree.” This is aimed at degrees from degree mills. This is in the Texas Education Code, Chapter 61, section 61.301. The aim was to make it easier for the CB to do some policing, by way of consumer protection, although it is not a police agency. One place that issues such degrees goes by the name of Ashwood University (also Belford University and several other names) formerly located in a PO Box in Humble, Texas, but now moved to places unknown. Ashwood’s website is headed “Get Accredited Degrees for what you already know.” You can get the degree delivered by DHL within seven days of the time you place your order. From Belford, for \$549.00 you can get a Doctorate Degree with ten documents, entitling you to put PhD after your name. According to the testimonials, it is a great help in getting respectful treatment while traveling. This degree, too, is awarded based on assessment of your life experiences. If you are not now graduate degree-ready, they have a bargain package in which you can get a High School Diploma, Bachelors, Masters, and Doctorate for \$1,034 in your “preferred major.” The preferred majors go from Accounting to Women’s Spirituality and include Mathematics and Philosophy. They claim accreditation from the International Accreditation Agency for Online Universities and the University Council for Online Education Accreditation. Neither are recognized by the USDOE. The CB website maintains a not very easy to find list of unaccredited institutions. The main url is <http://www.thecb.state.tx.us/AAR/PrivateInstitutions/consumer.cfm>. Belford is included on the Texas list. Ashwood is on the non-Texas. They are both still in business.

Automatic Admission to Higher Education institutions in Texas. Last year Senate Bill 1227 Section 58 called for the CB to conduct a study of the feasibility of “implementing an automatic admission program for students who earn an associate degree or certificate from a two-year institution and who apply to transfer to a University.” The CB has completed that study. The general findings were that most graduates of such programs do in fact transfer, although few do so using the automatic transfer programs already in place. Its first recommendation is:

“Any automatic admission program for undergraduates continuing from two-year to four-year institutions which is proposed for statewide implementation should not include an automatic admission guarantee based solely on certificate program completion.”

The other recommendations, consistent with this, also would leave admission standards in the universities hands. They also exclude non-public two-year schools (which I presume was to shut the door to marginal and non-accredited institutions).

After her presentation I spoke with Catherine briefly about the CB policy on new Ph. D. programs, and whether the CB concern has shifted dramatically since Parades has arrived. The



basic answer is that it has not: they are still primarily concerned with the proliferation of new PhDs in professional and vocational areas where formerly the highest degree was a Masters—as in nursing. The Board recognizes that we do not have a surplus of PhD programs in the core arts and sciences. She is aware of what UTD is trying to do new areas of advanced science and the like. This is not something the Board would try restrict.

I would paraphrase her description of the Board's concerns and aims as that they have to make rules that apply to everyone. In order to do this in way that lets them deal with both types of situations they are focusing on tightening up the requirement that new programs have strong contextual bases. There should be good undergraduate and institutional foundations, have regional support, and fit with the mission of the institution.

### 3. Academic Freedom Issues.

Presentations by Pat Somers, Associate Professor of Education, UT Austin, and Lynn Tatum, Professor Religion, Baylor. They both concerned the new wave of attacks on academic freedom in the guise of defenses of academic freedom, primarily originating in the world of right-wing internet blogs but leaking into the mainstream press and politics. Somers theme was “super patriotism” and dealt mainly with two cases: Ward Churchill's treatment at U of Colorado, Boulder, for having equated the victims of the World Trade Center attack with the Nazis, describing them as “little Eichmans” and deserving their fate, and David Horowitz's *The Professors: the 101 Most Dangerous Academics in America*. Horowitz is an organizer of a great deal of far-right anti-academic activity, and Churchill is a perfect foil for him. Churchill is listed as one of the 101 most dangerous academics. His academic degree is a Masters in Communications; a faculty group investigated charges of various kinds of dishonesty; their 125 page report is on the web.

Churchill's remarks and the ensuing storms in what Somers termed the blogosphere led to his removal as head of the department of ethnic studies at Colorado. The President of the University defended Churchill's right to speak, and resigned not long afterwards.

Tatum read a paper on the denial of tenure to a faculty member in Biology at Baylor for teaching “Intelligent Design.” In this case, the equivalent of Horowitz is the Discovery Institute, in Seattle Washington, and its Center for the Renewal of Science and Culture. This is not only a blog, but a full-scale advocacy organization dedicated to inserting Intelligent Design into curricula around the country, especially in higher education, in order to combat what it sees as the empty materialism of science. It is clearly a new form of Creationism, although they claim that they are secular. Their strategy is explicitly titled “the wedge.” It was originated by Philip Johnson, a UCB law professor. Johnson wrote *Darwin on Trial* (1991). This was taken apart in a review by Stephen J Gould in *Science*. The wedge movement, and group who then formed the Discovery Institute came together in 1992 as a response. (see: <http://www.talkreason.org/articles/Wedge.cfm>. Johnson's description is at: <http://www.touchstonemag.com/docs/issues/12.4docs/12-4pg18.html>.)

At Baylor, the conflict began with the previous president, Robert Sloan. Sloan is a theologian. He was appointed in 1995 and began an expansion program to increase Baylor's intellectual

and research standing, but also tried to make the campus more “Christian.” Part of this involved bringing in William Dembski as head of the new science institute, called the Michael Polanyi Center. Dembski was one of Johnson’s original supporters and is a “fellow” of the Discovery Institute. The science faculty was upset. A faculty investigation concluded that there was no place for Dembski or ID at Baylor, and after a public debate and an off-campus meeting in May, 2004, 84% of the faculty voted for President Sloan’s removal. This is not the sort of thing that normally happens at Baylor. His resignation was accepted by the Board of Regents in January, 2005. I don’t recall Tatum naming the person he was talking about. Probably it was Dembski. After Dembski left the Polanyi Center was renamed the Program in Science, Philosophy and Religion.

Baylor has subsequently denied tenure to another fellow of the Discovery Institute, Francis Beckwith. Beckwith is Professor of Church State Studies in the Dawson Institute of Church-State Studies. Beckwith had evidently been hired by Sloan, and members of the Dawson family had previously petitioned Sloan in an open letter to remove him (Baptist Standard, Sept 1, 2003). The institute is dedicated to the separation of Church and State; they viewed Beckwith and the DI as rejecting this separation.

Tatum’s main point was that in the established AAUP view, tenure does not protect free speech as such; the first amendment does that. What tenure protects is the kind of academic speech within a discipline that should be subject to peer review, and hence also the integrity of the academy and academic review processes.

My view of it is that the Discovery Institute saw Baylor as a soft target but Baylor has fought off the attack, mainly through faculty initiative. Both are cases of people and groups claiming the protection of academic freedom in order to undermine it. There is no problem in dealing with either one in principle; the difficulty is only in developing the rhetorical language to explain the options involved to the public.

4: TCFS generally breaks up into regional groups to identify issues, and brings the results together for a general discussion to see if there is consensus. The topic was “Is Big Brother watching you? The erosion of privacy and a private life for college and university faculty.” Examples were such matters as email and the possible loss of control over material like syllabi that are on university computers. The conclusion was that there is no erosion, although for different reasons in different contexts. With emails, it is generally recognized that there can be no real expectation of privacy using university computers, and with respect to intellectual property, like class syllabi and notes, ownership rights are being respected. Faculty generally only loose control if they were given special pay or resources to develop courses with the understanding that the material would belong to the university or system once it was developed, as in the UT system.

5. TAMU Kingsville. There was a little discussion of the problems there because the new Chair of the newly constituted Senate was present and introduced himself, and asked for support. They are trying to rebuild the Senate and it is not easy. TCFS asked for a report on what is happening, and will consider a resolution at the next meeting. He agreed, and welcomed the expression of interest and concern.

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6. For next time, the agenda will focus on SACS accreditation, which several of the institutions have just undergone and others are undergoing. There is a general sense that the new attitude and requirements, originating with the Secretary of Education and packaged in the rhetoric of accountability, the public's right to the information necessary to make a rational choice between institutions, and the necessity for faculty "buy-in" in a sense that means compliance, is a far broader and more insidious threat to academic freedom than the blogs and the crazies of the Colorado and Baylor cases, and it is very important to try to cut through it and formulate a response.

## **APPENDIX #2**

### **THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT DALLAS NUMBERED POLICY MEMORANDA**

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POLICY MEMORANDUM 78-III.25-20

Issued: September 1, 1978

Revised: June 30, 1983

Revised: March 1, 1992

Revised: October 15, 1993

Editorial Amendments: February 2, 1998

Editorial Amendments: September 1, 2000

Editorial Amendments: October 30, 2006

#### **GRADUATE STUDIES COMMITTEE**

A Graduate Studies Committee is to be established for each area of graduate study listed in the Graduate Catalog except those that are offered as joint programs with other components of The University of Texas System. These committees are to be appointed by the Dean of the School or by the Department Head at the request of the Dean. Committees are to be constituted of voting members of the General Faculty as defined in the Handbook of Operating Procedures (Chapter 21, Faculty Organization, Section I.B.1.) -- that is, Regental Professors, Professors, Associate Professors, Assistant Professors, and Instructors holding appointments of half-time or more. They must, in addition, hold the highest earned degrees in their fields, or have an equivalent record of scholarly accomplishment. Terms of office normally commence September 1 of a given year and end August 31 the following year. A Graduate Studies Committee may include all members of a Program Faculty eligible for membership.

The duties of a Graduate Studies Committee, subject to administrative review and review by the University faculty as a whole through its Committee on Educational Policy, include:

- (1) Establishment and review of the content of the Graduate Program in the area concerned;
- (2) Establishment of policies within the Program;
- (3) Establishment of admission standards for the Program; and
- (4) Establishment of policies and procedures to ensure quality control of theses and dissertations.

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The decisions of a Graduate Studies Committee will normally be implemented by the Department Head. Where necessary, the decisions or advice will be forwarded through the Department Head and School Dean to the appropriate office of the University.