

March 2019

### In This Issue

- Dean's Column
- Important Dates to Remember
- Staff Spotlight
- Policies, Procedures, & Reminders

### Dean's Column



*Malcolm Richardson, Interim Graduate Dean*

One of the most difficult issues that has repeatedly arisen in my relatively brief time as interim dean has come from disputes about the relative ownership of intellectual property between a faculty advisor and a graduate student. These disputes typically arise when the student decides to change his or her focus or research methods and therefore feels a need to change advisors. Also typical is that the original advisor is a senior faculty member and the new one a more junior or even an untenured advisor. I'm sure I don't need to spell out the potential problems here. I have been fortunate in having the advice and counsel of our university Ombudsperson, Retha Niedecken, who has borne the brunt of many consultations, meetings, and negotiations among worried students, faculty, and administrators.

Also fortunate is the recent appearance of [PS-27- Authorship Guidelines & Dispute Resolution](#), which has dealt with many of the issues of intellectual property and especially ways to resolve disputes.

Here are some common questions I get. Not all are directly dealt with in PS-27.

1. **Does a student have the right to change advisors, even after a considerable period of working with the original advisor? Yes.** The decision is best made, however, through negotiation between the student, the advisor(s), and the committee. All are involved in the milestone exams. If the student is changing advisors and committees, it's the new advisor and committee who should work with the student on future milestones since they will be working with him or her on the dissertation.
2. **Does the Graduate School have a specific form for the student to change advisors? No.** We formerly had a Program of Study on file for each student, and although that's been abolished, many faculty members and staff still think there's some master list in the Grad School. In practice we only review the committee when the student applies to be given a milestone exam, and then we check the composition of the committee. However, many departments have their own Program of Study, a very good idea.
3. **Can the original Advisor refuse to allow the student to change advisors? No.** Getting a new advisor is the student's choice and responsibility, and the first/current advisor cannot force the student to remain with himself or herself. The research written under the original advisor remains with the original advisor, and the new advisor must approach the research from a new direction, but the student may write the dissertation to reflect what the student learned,

research, or created under the first advisor. In the end, however, the research/experiments are owned by LSU.

4. **Can the department require that the original advisor remain on the student's new committee.** No. This is the policy in a couple of well-run graduate programs, but I'm afraid the answer is still no. Assembling a committee is a matter for negotiation, and one hopes that the former advisor, who has overseen a lot of the student's previous research, would find a place on the committee. But in some cases the student is changing because his or her approach is strongly different from that of the original advisor (theoretical vs practical approaches, academic vs market-based goals, etc.), and it would not be helpful to have someone on the committee with an antithetical approach. This decision naturally has to be case-by-case, and in some, perhaps most, cases it's beneficial to have the original advisor remain on the committee.

5. **Where are issues like these best settled?** In the department, as recognized by PS-27. Once outside the department, units like the Graduate School or even the dean's office don't have the expertise to judge the intellectual content of research and can only deal with procedural issues.

6. **Is it all this straightforward?** Forget about it. "Negotiation" means internal politics, and, well, this ain't easy. But students and faculty have academic rights, and both have the right to be treated with respect and professionalism.

As a final note to graduate students, this semester the Graduate School is administering to all graduate students two related climate surveys, one dealing with academics and the other with student life. One appeared last week and needs your attention. Issues such as relationships with advisors, workload, clarity of department policies, and policies and practices regarding international students will be on the surveys. Graduate students: please take the time to fill these out! The questions are designed to let your concerns be voiced.

Best,



Malcolm Richardson  
Interim Dean of the Graduate School

## Important Dates to Remember

### March

- 4-6 Mardi Gras Holiday.
- 15 Graduate Advisors' Meeting.
- 18 Deadline to Submit Thesis & Dissertation to the Graduate School.
- 22 Last day to drop courses and/or resigning from the University.
- 24 Course Scheduling
  - Fall, Summer Intersession, & Wintersession begins at 5pm.
- 26 Graduate Council Meeting.

### April

- 8 Submission Deadlines
  - Thesis & Dissertation Approval.
  - Final Defense Report (non-thesis students).
- 15-19 Spring Break.
- 24-28 Concentrated Study Period.
- 25 Graduate Advisors' Meeting.
- 27 Last day of Class.
- 29-May 4 Final Examinations.

### May

- 1 Graduate Council Meeting.
- 7 Final grades due by 9am (degree candidates).
- 8 Final grades due by 9am (non-degree candidates).

Visit [www.lsu.edu/graduateschool/calendars](http://www.lsu.edu/graduateschool/calendars) for additional details.

## Graduate School Staff Spotlight



*Clovier I. Torry, Assistant Dean, Academic Services, Professional Development, & Diversity*

### Clovier I. Torry Promoted to Assistant Dean

Clovier I. Torry, Baton Rouge native and LSU Alumna, was recently promoted to Assistant Dean of Academic Services, Professional Development, & Diversity in the Graduate School. Torry has been a vital part of the Graduate School staff since 1992. When asked what she loves most about her job, Torry replied, "working with students and helping them achieve their goals. It is gratifying to be of assistance and see that goal come to fruition." Dean Torry is happily

married with one son. She is very active in community organizations and loves doing service work. She also enjoys reading, traveling, and trying new restaurants.

Please join us in congratulating her on her promotion.

## Policies, Procedures, & Reminders

### PS-27: Authorship Guidelines & Dispute Resolution

LSU has just issued a new Policy Statement about authorship (PS-27 ). This is an important document for all graduate faculty and students who do collaborative work and especially for students who plan to use collaborative work as part of their thesis or dissertation. The document also lays down extensive procedures for settling disputes about authorship.

The Graduate School and the Graduate Council are working on ways in which students' contributions to collaborative research that will go into theses and dissertations can be validated, and we currently are using a temporary form in which such contributions can be confirmed by committees. PS-27 has a bibliography at the end of sources about academic authorship. The APA form listed there is not the form used by the Graduate School, however.

**Editors:** Rodney Goldsmith, Abbie Carrier, and Kareem Awad