

**Role of Soon-to-Retire and Retired Faculty
in Research Supervision and Advising**
(Approved at EDST Department Meeting, May 20, 2004)

Background

As an increasing number of faculty retire, some questions have been raised (by both students and faculty) about the role of soon-to-retain and retired faculty members on research supervisory committees and as pro tem advisors. On the one hand, it can be disruptive for the composition of supervisory committees to change abruptly upon the retirement of a faculty member whose expertise may be very helpful to the student. On the other hand, faculty who are retired have a different relationship to the university and may not be as accessible to the student. There has also been some concern raised about assigning a soon-to-retain faculty member to advise or co-advise a “new” student when that faculty member will retire before the student can complete program requirements.

The current policies of the Faculty of Graduate Studies address this issue in part under the heading “Supervisory Committee Members Who are not Full-Time Faculty”:

“Although each supervisory committee must be chaired by a full member of the Faculty of Graduate Studies, the committee may include individuals who are not full members. In particular, honorary faculty, adjunct faculty and off-campus professionals who are academically qualified to advise graduate students may be members of the committee if approved by the Dean of Graduate Studies.

When a faculty member approaching retirement accepts an assignment as chair or as research supervisor, the faculty member and the head of the department should ensure that provision is made for an alternate supervisor if or when the need arises.”

Because it is very difficult to anticipate when the need might arise for an alternate supervisor, it seems prudent to establish a policy that spells out a process whereby the expertise and experience of the retiring/retired faculty member remains accessible to the student while protecting the student from unanticipated events that might seriously delay progress.

The Proposal

The expertise and experience of soon-to-retain and retired faculty members can be important resources for both masters and doctoral students in EDST. Current policies of the Faculty of Graduate Studies require that supervisory committees must be chaired by full members of the Faculty of Graduate Studies. Since retired faculty members are no longer full members of FoGS, our departmental policy should provide for a continuing

role for those faculty who wish to do so that is consistent with current policy. Therefore, we propose the following policy be adopted in EDST:

A soon-to-retire or retired faculty member who wishes to do so may continue to serve as a member of student research supervisory committees (masters and doctoral). If that member has been serving as research supervisor (or chair of the committee), then arrangements should be made to formalize a co-supervision relationship with another qualified faculty member who will remain full-time until the student completes program requirements. This co-supervision arrangement should be formalized no later than the date of retirement.

In assigning pro tem advisors to new doctoral students, consideration should be given to the expected retirement dates of possible advisors. A person who expects to retire within 3 years of the beginning of a doctoral student's program should be assigned only as a co-advisor with another member who can work with the student until a research supervisory committee is formed.

Faculty who are within one year of their date of retirement should not be assigned pro tem advising duties for incoming master's students.