

ECE Graduate Programs Curriculum Committee Meeting

Monday, May 2nd, 2024

Attending: Anantram, Arabshahi, Hauck, Kalavakonda, Kirschen, Li, Murali, Overly

Agenda:

1. Energy Group Presentation of Graduate Course Offerings (Kirschen)
2. Grad School Policy Change Proposal Regarding 300-Level Courses – **POSTPONED**
3. PhD Funding Question – Discussion (Anantram)

Minutes Meeting of 4/4/24: Approved

Energy Group Presentation of Graduate Course Offerings (Kirschen)

([Slides](#))

In its exploration of the current state of the current courses offerings for the graduate curriculum, the committee requested Kirschen to present the Energy Group's offering of graduate courses:

- See [slides](#) for details of material presented.
- More Power Electronics courses would increase the strength of offerings, but hiring faculty in the Power Electronics area is very competitive, and not many universities have more than one.
 - ECE lost its previous Power Electronics faculty member (Johnson) and have just recently hired a new faculty member (Choi) to teach Power Electronics courses.
- If graduate students took one or two graduate power courses as undergrads, there aren't many graduate course options left for them since the number of offerings the Energy Group can support is limited.
- PMP has asked about offering additional Energy courses, but there are not enough faculty resources to support it.

PhD Funding Discussion (Anantram)

With the increased number of TA-Funded PhD offers made for the upcoming academic year, Anantram wanted to get clarification on the budget for TA positions for the coming academic year.

- In regard to a concern that the budget for TAs would be reduced for the coming academic year, Arabshahi clarified:
 - The budget is not going to be cut. Rather, the impact of salary increases for RAs and TAs currently under negotiations between the University and the student workers union may reduce the number of TAs the budget can accommodate.
 - Priority for TA positions:
 - PhD students with guaranteed funding will be placed first, with MS and BS students placed into remaining positions, if any are still available.
 - To address the issue raised by some faculty about the lower perceived quality of TAs in positions held by PhD students, there are discussions among leadership and various faculty about designing a new course to train all students who will be TAs for our courses.
- Anantram raised an additional issue regarding faculty outside of our department wanting to take on students who have applied for ECE's PhD program.
 - Do we still guarantee funding for these students since they are officially in our program even though they are participating in research outside of our department?

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- Currently, we do fund some students, generally ones who work with faculty who have been a part of our program in the past, such as past PhD students, who are now faculty and maintain a strong relationship with the department, or are affiliate faculty.
- The GPC has been making these decisions, and does not feel comfortable being in the position, and would like a policy in place so it is not up to a single person.
- The department receives little to no benefit from the students aside from an additional student in our numbers.
 - Contributions to research primarily benefit the outside department.
- **Final determination of committee:**
 - **Non-ECE faculty are expected to provide the guarantee of funding.**
 - **Exceptions may be made in cases where there is an established relationship between the faculty from the outside department and ECE.**
 - **Requests for exceptions will be brought to the ECE Chair for review for possible approval.**
 - **Regardless of which department is advising the student, students should credit ECE on papers they author.**