EE GRADUATE STUDENT TOWN HALL

October 14, 2013

Answers to Pre-Asked Questions

Academics

*What is the purpose of the prelim requirements and is there a better way to accomplish this goal given the high percentage of passing rates?*

The EECS Preliminary Requirement consists of 2 components: the oral examination and breadth courses. The oral exam serves an advisory role in a student's graduate studies program with official feedback from the exam committee of faculty members. Students must be able to demonstrate an integrated grasp of the exam area's body of knowledge in an unstructured framework. The breadth courses ensure that students have an exposure to other areas outside of their concentration. It is expected that students achieve high academic standards in these courses.

Given that only students of a high caliber are admitted to the doctoral program, and many of them have previous academic knowledge of the preliminary oral exam areas, it can be expected that the percentage rates of passing the oral exam are high. In addition, the preliminary requirements are only one facet in being eligible for the doctoral degree. Other factors are put in place (such as the teaching requirement, the dissertation talk, and additional coursework) to ensure graduates of the program leave with a well-balanced pedagogical experience.

Administrative

*There are multiple complaints about BearBuy. Is there a way the department can ease the complex process of placing orders through the university?*

A BearBuy resource page, including demonstration videos, can be found here, [http://procurement.berkeley.edu/bearbuy](http://procurement.berkeley.edu/bearbuy). If there are more concrete examples of what is specifically complex about the system, they can be shared with the Staff Graduate Advisors who will notify the appropriate personnel.

Some important points that might help to expedite the process are:

1) The ORG NODE is EHEEC.
2) Anytime you are not sure about an order being placed, please they add a comment. It can really speed up the process. Things to mention are: ship to address, urgency, what date the items are needed, a funding source (e.g. Prof. Smith’s chair funds), and the business purpose.
3) Attach any email communications with the P.I. so the administration will know what has been approved of the purchase and eliminates an extra step.
4) Attach any quotes for prices.
5) Please do NOT assign carts to the administration or it will be returned to you.

_The email spam is overwhelming. The department should either keep a calendar up to date for events and announcements or at least limit who can post what on each list._

The amount of email is a ubiquitous problem for the entire EECS community. Everyone should be mindful before posting something to a listserv. Unfortunately, this is generally self-regulated. One suggestion is that individual’s create filters in their email settings based on their own preferences. Regarding the calendar, anyone with a Cal Net ID should be able to post items to the campus/EECS calendar ([http://events.berkeley.edu/index.php/login.html](http://events.berkeley.edu/index.php/login.html)). After logging in, there is a form and instructions on posting.

**Ergonomics**

_Who can get an ergonomics evaluation and who do I ask?_

Everyone in the department (faculty, staff, and students) are eligible for an ergonomics evaluation. These evaluations are done on a request basis only, and are typically done by the building facilities managers. Currently, the only building manager for both Cory and Soda halls is Mark Davis ([medavis@eecs.berkeley.edu](mailto:medavis@eecs.berkeley.edu)). However, given the large population of the EECS department, and some of the recent staff changes, there has unfortunately been a recent backlog for requests. Students should follow up with their request if they did not hear back.

It has been suggested and noted by the administration that more staff should receive the ergonomics training in order to perform these evaluations in a timely manner.

_Do the matching funds policy apply to graduate students?_

The matching funds policy can be found here, [http://www.uhs.berkeley.edu/facstaff/ergonomics/matchingfunds/](http://www.uhs.berkeley.edu/facstaff/ergonomics/matchingfunds/). The Ergonomics@Work program currently provides matching funds only for employees working 50% or higher, which precludes most graduate students since they are generally hired at 48%. Graduate students would be covered under this program only if they are hired at 50% or more time. In addition, it should be noted that if a matching funds reimbursement request is approved, students should discuss with their faculty advisor about funding the remaining balance and any expenses not eligible to be covered by the matching funds program.
Facilities

Are there small break out rooms that can be used?

There have been several areas that have recently been renovated that can be used as break out areas, particularly on the third floor of Cory Hall (including 373 Cory). A small meeting room (557 Cory) recently has been restored on the 5th floor. Students can also use the room reservation system (http://www.eecs.berkeley.edu/Resguide/roomsched.shtml) to reserve a room.

There are places in the building that still need fixing. What can be done?

Any facilities related problem can be submitted through an online form on the Building Maintenance and Security site, http://www.eecs.berkeley.edu/Resguide/admin.shtml#building1. There is also an option to view the status of a request. When submitting a request, it is best to provide as much detail as possible, as opposed to saying “550 Cory still needs fixing.”

Can students have access to conference rooms in both Cory and Soda halls?

All graduate students should already have access to the conference rooms in Cory and Soda halls. If a student does not have access, they should contact Kali Chhay Mills (chhay@eecs.berkeley.edu) in 387 Soda Hall. Please bring your student ID card with you.

Can students have access to Sutardja Dai Hall?

Sutardja Dai Hall (SDH) houses several different departments and research centers, and is under purview of CITRIS (Center for Information Technology Research in the Interest of Society). CITRIS will continue to provide graduate student and undergraduate student access to specific collaboratories in SDH when approved by their P.I., or collaborating P.I.s. For security purposes CITRIS cannot provide open access to all collaborating department graduate students.

Recently there have been several significant thefts in Cory. What is being done to prevent similar occurrences in the future?

Many areas in Cory Hall are already card-key only access. In addition, there are several surveillance cameras throughout the building. Mark Davis, the building manager, periodically sends alerts to the community if there are crimes within close proximity that we should all be aware. However, the most important strategy to remain safe is to be vigilant of your surroundings. Make sure you lock desks and doors when you are not around, and keep any valuable items in a safe, secure place. In addition, notify the administration if you notice any suspicious persons in the building.
Wet chemistry labs are not monitored or maintained at all. The department needs to make it clear to the students what is required of students in terms of waste disposal, cleanliness, and how to leave workspace after one's work is done. Is there any service the department could provide to help maintain the lab space?

All labs in Cory Hall are the responsibility of the Lab P.I. It is required that every lab be assigned two safety officers who oversee the lab and ensure that all appropriate safety protocols are followed. Additionally, anyone using lab spaces must sign the Lab Chemical Hygiene Plan for that space, which acts as a record that those individuals have been properly trained in all safety protocols and standard operating procedures for those labs. Lastly, access to labs is only granted if the lab P.I. or safety officer signs off on the access request form, acting as another safeguard and acknowledgement that the individual requesting access has been properly trained to work in that lab.

Additionally, every Fall, lab P.I.s and safety officers are required to complete lab self-inspections. And, every Spring EH&S performs independent inspections of labs.

If anyone notices an unsafe condition or wants to report a safety concern, please notify Mark Davis ASAP and/or submit a safety request utilizing the online request form.

International Students and the ITAR Policy

International students tend to feel discriminated against and limited because of the ITAR requirements on certain projects. Is there something that the department can do?

The International Traffic in Arms (ITAR) policy is established by the federal government (http://www.pmddtc.state.gov/regulations_laws/itar.html) and the university must adhere to it. Generally, the university does not accept funding for research projects which are subject to export control laws (see http://www.spo.berkeley.edu/policy/exportcontrol.html).

Online Education

How can we find out more information about the new online degree program, the Masters of Advanced Studies in Integrated Circuits?

The MAS-IC is an online part-time degree program focused on developing an in-depth and advanced knowledge in the field of Integrated Circuits, including but not restricted to the digital, mixed-signal and radio-frequency domains. The program is targeted to working professionals who are seeking to advance their careers by getting in-depth state-of-the-art knowledge and becoming a true expert in the field of Integrated Circuits. More information about the program can be found on the website, http://www.eecs.berkeley.edu/MASIC/. Professor Jan Rabaey (jan@eecs.berkeley.edu) is the Executive Faculty Advisor, and Jennifer Gardner (jenng@eecs.berkeley.edu) is the Staff Graduate Advisor for the MAS-IC program. They can address most questions regarding the newest program addition to EECS.
There are concerns over the online education programs affecting the in-person quality of lectures. For example, accommodating for filming a lecture limits how the professor is able to teach. Is there a way these programs can be accomplished without sacrificing the quality of our education?

Instructors are provided with several methods to capture content for online courses, some of which involve the live lectures. They are using all of the various options and learning from the whole process. Many instructors prefer the live capture methods because of the energy of their students in the room. Some faculty have reported that the innovations included in these online lectures have enhanced their teaching.

Will graduate students ever be expected to teach these online courses like MAS-IC?

Presently, only postdocs have taught the online courses. If a more senior student had a lecturer or Acting Instructor position, they may also be eligible. Students may also opt to GSI for an online course, and there are also opportunities to work with the faculty to develop the course. However, at the present time, serving as a GSI for an online course does not count towards the teaching requirement.

Undergraduates

Could the department sponsor an easy way to access the undergraduate students looking for research opportunities?

Graduate students that want to advertise their research opportunities can post descriptions to this site, http://www.eecs.berkeley.edu/Research/Projects/. Updates can be made by sending an email to researchupdates@eecs or by logging in to MY EECS Info. More targeted emails directed to the undergraduate community can be sent by request through the Undergraduate Staff Advisors, Dahlia Case (dahliacase@eecs.berkeley.edu) or Christopher Hunn (cthunn@eecs.berkeley.edu).

If you have suggestions for future Town Hall discussions, or would like to view an archive of the handouts from previous years, please visit, http://www.eecs.berkeley.edu/GradAffairs/TownHall.

We would love your input!