

The University Senate of Michigan Technological University

PROPOSAL 05-05

(Voting Units: Academic Units)

Change in Course-work Only Master's Requirements

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Background

MTU currently offers Masters degrees that require only course-work. There is no thesis, report or practicum. This proposal is to make the oral examination for course-work Masters degrees optional at the departmental level.

The proposal was developed by the Graduate Faculty Council and endorsed by the Dean of the Graduate School before it was sent to the Senate Curricular Policy Committee for review. This is included in the most recent Graduate Bulletin as a provisional change "subject to University Senate agreement".

There is concern that dropping the requirement for an oral exam lowers expectations for students. There is also some sentiment that every graduate degree should have some "capstone" experience. Since 12 of the 30 required credits in the Plan C Masters degree can be 3000 and 4000 level courses, some reviewers thought that a Plan C Master's without an oral examination would simply be a "bigger bachelors" degree.

Plan C Masters degrees are not offered by all departments. Generally those departments that do offer them endorse this change. Most opposition to the change is among faculty in departments that do not offer the course-work only Masters degrees. The compromise arrived at in Graduate Faculty Council was to make the oral examination in the course work Master's degrees optional at the departmental level.

Proposal:

The oral examination for course-work Masters degrees is optional at the departmental level. Each department will establish a policy regarding an oral examination for course-work only Masters degrees. The policy established for a program within a department must be applied to every student in that program.

Proposal Defeated 27 October 2004