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# Purdue Graduate School Thesis and Dissertation Policy Changes: Giant Leaps Forward

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PURDUE GRADUATE SCHOOL  
THESIS AND DISSERTATION  
POLICY CHANGES GIANT LEAPS FORWARD

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# Ongoing Discussions

## National and Regional Dialog

- CGS, MAGS and BTAA have all been focused on discussions about the changing nature of dissertations and theses
- Conversations range from type of research document/report to non-document output as evidence of scholarship for doctoral and master's work
- Additionally, the focus for doctoral students is shifting (or has shifted) from how to create more academics and instead help candidates relate their experiences, skills, and knowledge to something applicable to business and industry

## After "Beyond the PDF"

- Were our students at Purdue thinking about non-traditional formats?
- What did our policies look like and what was the university culture propagating?
- The Graduate School and the Graduate Council set the standard but what standard were we setting/maintaining?

## The Nature of the Thesis

- We were barely beginning to come to terms with article based theses (but there was still much discrepancy across campus; views on this radically varied)
- We created a survey to find out what the faculty were truly thinking and seeing

# Policy Evaluation

## INSPIRATION

- Beyond the PDF
- 1 page thesis with attached brochure
- Anthropology student concerned that the format of the dissertation wouldn't be an accurate portrayal of their creativity and would be an embarrassment to publish.

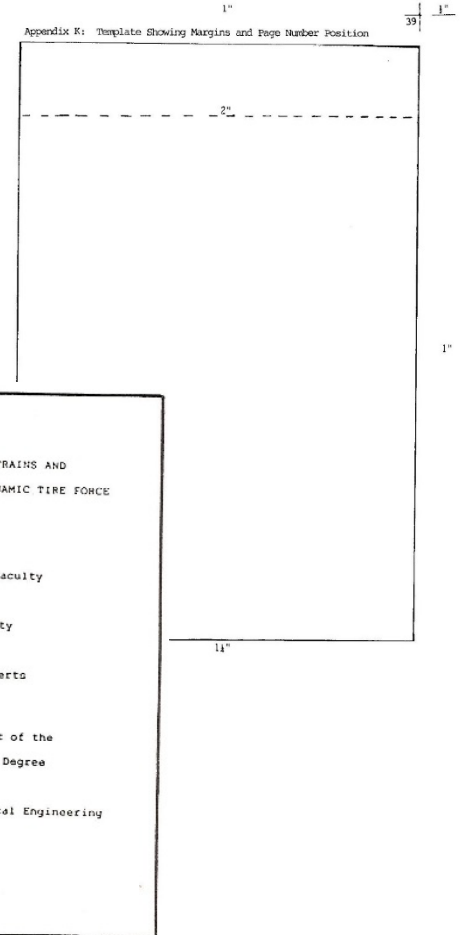
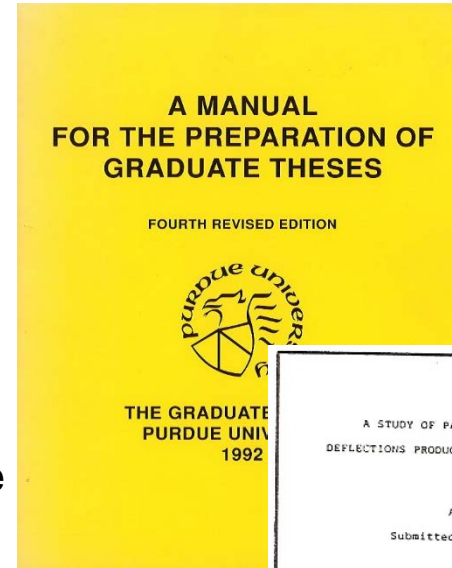
## FINDINGS

- Format requirements were unambiguous
- Theses were required to be submitted in PDF format
- Theses were required to follow the format guidelines that were found in 'A Manual for the Preparation of Graduate Theses'

## SETTING THE STANDARD

- Policies restricted students from depositing other than traditional theses.
- The Graduate School would accept article-based or creative work theses; however, current policies suggested that we would only accept the traditional format.

THE GRADUATE SCHOOL



## DEPARTMENTAL INFLUENCE

- Would the Graduate departments approve a non-traditional thesis structure?

DEPARTMENTS THAT SUPPORT PRIOR-PUBLICATIONS SUBMITTED AS CHAPTERS (ARTICLE BASED)				
Aeronautics and Astronautics	Anthropology	Curriculum and Instruction	Health and Kinesiology	Math
Agricultural Economics	Biochemistry	Educational Studies	Health Science	Medicinal Chemistry & Molecular Pharmacology
Agricultural Sciences Education and Communication	Chemical Engineering	Engineering Education	Hospitality and Tourism Management	Nutrition Science
Agronomy	Computer Graphics Technology	Environmental and Ecological Engineering	Human Development and Family Studies	Public Health
American Studies	Consumer Science	Forestry and Natural Resources	Information Security	Sociology

DEPARTMENTS THAT SUPPORT CREATIVE WORK SUBMITTED IN LIEU OF THESIS				
Agricultural Sciences Education and Communication	Engineering Technology	Public Health	Information Security (possible)	Computer Graphics Technology (possible)
American Studies	English	Technology	Biochemistry (possible)	Building Construction Management (considering)
Anthropology	Health and Kinesiology	Hospitality and Tourism Management (possible)	Communication (possible)	Consumer Science (considering)

# Policy Revision

## CHALLENGES

- Benchmarking

## THESIS STRUCTURES

- Traditional (Monolithic)
- Article-based (Pluralistic)
  - Challenge: Copyright and self-plagiarism?
- Creative work (open to interpretation; other)
  - Challenge: What can we accept? How can we preserve?

## OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

- Open Access Requirement
- ADA Compliance Requirement

# Early Impact of New Policies

## THESIS STRUCTURE IMPACT

- Increase in the number of article-based theses submitted
  - Discussion of portfolio thesis submission
- Summer 2019 – first website thesis to be submitted

## OPEN ACCESS IMPACT

- Since mandating OA in August 2018, Fall 2018 and Spring 2019 theses have the following impact:
  - Views: 10,560
  - Downloads: 1,956

COULD THESIS/DISSERTATION POLICIES  
AFFECT THE FUTURE OF GRADUATE EDUCATION?

CAN WE ENCOURAGE OTHER GRADUATE  
SCHOOLS/COLLEGES TO BE CHAMPIONS?





QUESTIONS?

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