Designated Emphasis in Organism-Environment Interactions
Bylaws
Administrative Home: College of Biological Sciences
Website: http://oei.ucdavis.edu
Approved by Graduate Council: May 17, 2010

ARTICLE I. OBJECTIVE

The Designated Emphasis in Organism-Environment Interactions (DE-OEI) is organized to indicate a specialization for students in established PhD programs and will be administered in conformance with the policy and procedures of the Graduate Council and the Office of Graduate Studies, of the University of California, Davis campus.

A. Specialization:

Sustaining our natural resources depends on understanding physiological mechanisms driving organism-environment interactions. The DE in Biology of Organism-Environment Interactions targets students’ needs and interests to use rapidly emerging molecular technology to tackle the most pressing issues related to how organisms respond to predictable and unpredictable environmental change.

B. PhD Affiliations to date (April 15, 2010):

College of Biological Sciences: Molecular, Cellular and Integrative Physiology
College of Agricultural and Environmental Sciences: Ecology

(NOTE TO REVIEWERS: Additional letters are pending from Animal Behavior (CBS) and Animal Biology (CA&ES) Graduate Groups.)

C. Mission:

The mission of this DE is to promote cross-disciplinary training for students interested in gaining a mechanistic understanding of how organisms respond to environmental change. Mechanisms driving environment-organism interactions are fundamental to understanding sustainability in a changing world, and in particular, to anthropogenic disruption on a global scale.

ARTICLE II. MEMBERSHIP

A. Criteria for Membership in the Designated Emphasis

1. Disciplinary expertise, research area, and accomplishments.

The DE shall consist of those persons associated with UC Davis qualified to guide candidates for the PhD degree with specialization in Organism-Environment Interactions according to this DE’s stated mission. Members must belong to an affiliated graduate group or program, have an active research program, and participate in the activities of the DE.

All members of the program must hold an appropriate academic title as (a) a member of the Academic Senate of the University of California (includes Professors, Lecturers with
Security of Employment, Professors in Residence, Professors of Clinical “__”, Professors Emeritus/a, and Research Professors), (b) Adjunct Professor, (c) Lecturer (without Security of Employment) or (d) Lecturer Without Salary. Academic staff with primary appointments as Cooperative Extension Specialists or in the Professional Research series are not eligible to be members of graduate programs unless they also hold an appropriate instructional title (normally Lecturer Without Salary). (See Graduate Council Policy on Membership in Graduate Programs, http://www.gradstudies.ucdavis.edu/gradcouncil/Membership_in_Graduate_Programs2006.pdf)

2. **Active research-appropriate to the specialization encompassed by the DE.**
   Faculty affiliated with the DE will have an active program of research or scholarship commensurate with the expectations of the University of California.

3. **All members are eligible to vote.**

**B. Application Process**

1. Faculty members associated with an affiliated graduate group may apply for membership by self-nomination or may be nominated by a DE-OEI member. An application consists of a letter of interest and a CV. Applications must be submitted to the Executive Committee of the DE. Admissibility will be determined by a majority vote of the Executive Committee.

2. Faculty members are expected to contribute to the DE in any of the following ways:
   a. Serving in the administration of the DE as a member of the DE’s Executive Committee.
   b. Providing graduate level instruction in addition to research instruction.
   c. Serving on qualifying examination committees for DE students.
   d. Serving as Chairs or members of Dissertation Committees for DE students.

**C. Emeritus**

Emeritus professors will have voting rights, provided they hold membership in at least one of the affiliated graduate programs.

**D. Verification of Continued Membership**

The Executive Committee will review membership once every three years to determine if they meet the criteria for active status.

**E. Membership Appeal Process**

All membership applicants must belong to an affiliated graduate program, or their application cannot be considered. Denied membership or denied renewal of membership may appeal to the Executive Committee in writing for reconsideration. If the Executive Committee upholds the denial of membership, the applicant can make a final appeal for membership to the Dean of Graduate Studies.
ARTICLE III. ADMINISTRATION

The administration of the DE and its activities will be vested in the Chair and the Executive Committee.

ARTICLE IV. DE CHAIR

A. Appointment of the Chair

The Dean of Graduate Studies will appoint the Chair of the Designated Emphasis in accordance with the policies and procedures of the Office of Graduate Studies.

The Executive Committee will act as the Committee for the Chair nomination process. The Executive Committee will: solicit nominations from DE faculty, determine whether the nominee(s) are willing to serve, and solicit comments from the DE faculty on the suitability of the nominee(s) that are willing to serve.

The Executive Committee will forward the candidate(s) for Chair to the Dean of Graduate Studies along with all comments received from the faculty during the nomination and consultation process. All comments solicited from faculty of the group will be treated as confidential information by the DE’s Nominating Committee and by the Office of Graduate Studies. If there are multiple candidates, the DE membership may express a preference and, if it does, it should indicate the basis for determining that preference. The normal term of the Chair’s appointment will be three years, however what is recommended will be based on the nominees’ willingness to serve.

B. Duties of the Chair

The Chair will be the Chief Officer and Spokesperson for the DE and the Executive Committee, and will provide overall academic leadership for the DE. The Chair will call and preside at meetings of the Executive Committee and of the DE in total at least once annually during the winter quarter.

In addition, the Chair will develop and administer policies for the DE, represent the interests of the DE to the campus and University administrators, be responsible for coordinating all administrative matters with the Office of Graduate Studies, be responsible for the accuracy of all publications related to the DE including web pages, develop and maintain liaisons with similar programs on other campuses of the University of California and with related groups on the Davis campus that have interests in DE-OEI, and represent the DE in negotiations for new faculty recruits in disciplines closely related to this area of research.

ARTICLE V. EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

A. Executive Committee Membership

The principal duties of the Executive Committee will be to determine and implement policy for the good of the DE, and to represent the interests of the DE to the campus, other universities and other agencies.

The Executive Committee will have three faculty members in addition to the DE Chair and one DE student member, for a total of five members
B. Election/Appointment Process

The Executive Committee members will be nominated by the membership to the DE Chair. The DE Chair will then forward the list of candidates to the membership who will elect the Executive Committee by a majority vote via electronic mail ballot.

The student representative will be chosen by a student-run election and subsequent approval by the Chair.

C. Executive Committee Membership Terms

Executive Committee faculty members will serve for three-year terms.

Student members will serve for a one-year term.

No member will serve for more than two consecutive terms.

D. Voting Rights

Each faculty member of the Executive Committee will have voting rights; the graduate student member will be a non-voting member of the Executive Committee.

E. Role and Function of the Executive Committee

1. The Executive Committee will be responsible for student admissions to the DE-OEI in consultation with the student's mentor and the appropriate Graduate Group Chairperson.

2. The Executive Committee will act on behalf of the DE to define and implement the program and curriculum. Specific functions will include: consideration of course offerings and electives, as well as reviewing admissions requirements, graduate student progress, and advising policy.

3. The Executive Committee will act as the Membership Committee by evaluating and voting on faculty membership applications, as well as conduct the renewal membership on a three year cycle.

4. The Executive Committee will be responsible for advertising the DE by at least maintaining a website linked to affiliated PhD programs and the Office of Graduate Studies.

5. The Executive Committee will explore means for obtaining funds from the University and sources outside the University to support PhD students in the DE, and will distribute those funds to students.

ARTICLE VI. STUDENT REPRESENTATIVES

The student member will serve one year on the Executive Committee; students may be reappointed for one additional year. The student representative will have no voting rights, but will represent the interests of the students to the Executive Committee. The student representative will be expected to communicate with the other DE students prior to and after each Executive Committee meeting to ensure the students are kept informed about issues affecting the DE and to give them an opportunity to convey information to the Executive Committee via the student representative.
The Chair of any committee with student members must excuse the student representatives from meetings during discussion about other students, personnel actions or disciplinary issues related to students.

ARTICLE VII. GRADUATE ADVISER

The DE Chair will serve as Graduate Adviser. The duties of the graduate adviser include:

- approving DE application and signing form
- providing students with assistance in interpreting DE requirements
- approving DE course plans
- maintaining a file of each student’s progress
- approving DE Advancement to Candidacy and signing the appropriate form
- approving DE representatives for qualifying exams and dissertation committees.

ARTICLE VIII. MEETINGS

One all-group meeting will be held annually in winter quarter.

The Executive Committee will meet at least quarterly. Other ad hoc meetings may be called as frequently and for such purpose as deemed desirable by the Executive Committee.

A. Convening the DE Meeting

The DE Chair will call the annual meeting.

B. Additional Meetings

Additional meetings to discuss matters not covered in the annual or ad hoc Executive Committee meetings will be scheduled upon petition to the Chair of at least two members.

C. Notification of Meetings

Notification of annual meetings and additional all group meetings will be at least a month in advance of the meeting date; notification will be sent by email. Notification of Executive Committee and other meetings will be made at least two weeks prior to the meeting date.

D. Faculty Participation in Meetings

If faculty members are away from campus, it is encouraged that they participate by videoconference or by conference call.

ARTICLE IX. QUORUM

All issues that require a vote must be voted on with a minimum quorum of 50% plus one of the eligible members. Passage requires a 50% plus one supporting vote by the quorum. Voting may be done by electronic-mail ballot. In the absence of a quorum, any number shall be sufficient to adjourn to a fixed date.
ARTICLE X. ORDER OF BUSINESS

For all regular meetings, the suggested order of business will be as follows:

Review accomplishments since last meeting  
Verify goals for the present meeting  
Deal with action items  
Long term planning  
Set assignments to achieve new goals  
Verify date for next meeting (typically quarterly)

In the event of adjournment before all business is complete, another regular meeting shall be held within fifteen days.

ARTICLE XI. AMENDMENTS

All amendments and revisions to the bylaws must be approved by a quorum vote, and must be submitted to Graduate Council for review and approval.

Any faculty member may propose amendments to the bylaws in writing to the DE Chair. The DE Chair will discuss the proposed amendment with the Executive Committee or call for a special Executive Committee meeting. If the Executive Committee agrees that the amendment is worth considering, the amendment proposal will be circulated via email to all faculty members for vote. Members will be given at least two weeks and not more than four weeks to vote on a proposed Amendment.