

# WESTERN OREGON UNIVERSITY

## Memo

To: Faculty Senate Committee

From: Linda Stonecipher, Graduate Studies Director  
Katrina Nielsen, International Student Advisor

Date: November 20, 2008

Re: Reduced enrollment policy

Immigration regulations stipulate that all international students on an F-1 or J-1 visa must maintain full-time enrollment throughout their program of study in the United States. For graduate students working on a master's degree, this is 9 credits per term, except during vacation terms (e.g., summer) or under special circumstances such as medical leave.

Students often have fewer than 9 credits remaining in their final term, leaving them with two options: take unnecessary courses or take a *one-time-only* reduced course load of 5 credits (half time enrollment) during their final term. However, there are several students who need fewer than 5 credits or need more than one term of reduced enrollment to complete their thesis, professional project or comprehensive exam.

The reduced enrollment policy will allow international students to enroll for a maximum of four terms of thesis, professional project or comprehensive exam work. It would not allow them more time than their American counterparts, but would give them the same benefits. International students would be free to work on their graduation requirements without registering for unnecessary coursework or attempting to complete their degrees with unreasonable deadlines.

The Office of International Students and Scholars Affairs will be responsible for ensuring that the students meet the terms of the policy, and the office will update the Graduate Studies Committee if there are any changes to immigration regulations. ISSA will monitor the reduced enrollment policy and maintain records related to the policy.

The Graduate Studies Committee unanimously approved the attached policy at the November 18<sup>th</sup> meeting.

If approved by the Faculty Senate and Provost, this policy will be implemented Winter term 2009.

### Graduate Office

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