Graduate Program Plans

One goal is to shorten the time needed to obtain a Ph.D. Several action items to be implemented include:

- Reducing the Physics Minor requirements from 12 units to 9 units. The three units will be replaced with mandatory colloquium attendance for first and second year students.

- Engaging students in thesis research earlier than present. The oral exam format will be changed and focus on a presentation and defense of research plans. General physics questions will still be asked but aligned towards the research plan presented.

- Improving tracking of thesis research work. It is proposed that each year students make a short presentation of their research progress to their dissertation committees. The committee will respond with a short report including recommendations if and/or how the students should continue in the program.

This goal will be assessed by continuing to record statistics on time towards graduation. The goal is to reduce the time required for a Ph.D. in Physics to four or five years.

Another goal is to better assist graduate students in identifying employment opportunities in academics, government, and industry. Several action items to be implemented include:

- Establishing a graduate alumni network. The alumni would also give feedback as to the effectiveness of the graduate program in preparing students for employment in their fields.

- Establishing a network of affiliated companies. Again, one imagines these companies as another source of feedback to the graduate program.

- Improving tracking of the placement of graduates in the academic, government, and academic settings.

The improved placement tracking data and feedback from graduate alumni will be used to assess the effectiveness of improvements in this area.