

Date: 1/16/08

Subject: Thesis Requirement for Copyright Permission from Others

To: department heads for distribution to their faculty

Department heads and faculty:

As the Graduate College prepares for the implementation of electronic thesis deposit (ETD), we want to create a process that safeguards students' interests in their work while protecting them from legal liabilities that might arise from their use of previously copyrighted material, where such copyright is held by others, in their theses and dissertations. The dissemination of student research through electronic means engenders the thrilling potential for that work to reach a much wider audience than with traditional print publications, yet it also raises a much greater risk of the discovery of instances of copyright infringement. Therefore, the Graduate College would like to remind all academic units of Article III, Section 4f, of the General Rules Concerning University Organization and Procedure (<http://www.uillinois.edu/trustees/rules.cfm#art3>), which charges each unit with the responsibility for knowing applicable regulations of the Copyright Act and conducting their programs in full compliance with the applicable laws and regulations. Furthermore, beginning with the December 2007 thesis deposit period, the Graduate College Thesis Office, acting on the advice of the Office of University Counsel, has added a requirement that two (2) copies of each letter of permission to reprint previously copyrighted material, where such copyright is held by others, in both print and electronic formats be included with the rest of the thesis deposit materials. This is a requirement only for theses in which such previously copyrighted material has been included.

With respect to work being done on theses and dissertations, advisers and committees should be cultivating good authorship practices, which include securing all necessary copyright clearances for any previously copyrighted material, where such copyright is held by others, that will be reprinted in the finished paper. Material for which reprint permission is required includes, but is not limited to, figures, tables, illustrations, and substantial portions of text, which are generally defined as the lesser amounts of either 300 words or 10 percent of the whole. Permission is also required to reprint works of a student's own authorship to which the student no longer retains the copyright. In such cases, the student will need to contact the current rights-holder. Many publishers routinely deal with such requests and have established positions or entire departments that are solely responsible for reviewing and granting permissions. Some have outlined their permissions policy on their Web sites. For example, Elsevier grants authors "the right to include the journal article, in full or in part, in a thesis or dissertation" (<http://www.elsevier.com/wps/find/authorsview.authors/copyright>), and Wiley-Blackwell maintains a similar policy (http://www.blackwellpublishing.com/bauthor/faqs_copyright.asp). Furthermore, in the letter granting reprint permission, many publishers will stipulate the appearance of a credit line that should appear with the reprinted material.

One copy of each permission letter will be filed in the Thesis Office of the Graduate College as proof that the theses and dissertations available through the University's electronic repository comply with applicable copyright laws and regulations. The second copy will be included with the materials that are sent to ProQuest/UMI, to whom the University of Illinois and its fellow peer CIC institutions, including Penn State, University of Michigan, Ohio State, and others, have been submitting dissertations for decades. Among the important services ProQuest/UMI provides are those of converting dissertations to microfilm for the University's archiving purposes and of providing student abstracts to researchers worldwide through Dissertation Abstracts International. It also maintains a permanent repository of student dissertations as a satellite unit of the Library of Congress.

Due to the nuances of permissions policies of the myriad journals and the particulars of each author's agreement with his or her publisher, the Thesis Office can not provide the assistance necessary to obtain reprint permission from rights-holders. It is the responsibility of the student, acting in concert with his or her adviser or committee, to identify all previously copyrighted materials being used in the version of the thesis or dissertation to be deposited at the Thesis Office and to obtain the letters of permission necessary to reprint that material in both print and electronic formats. Ideally, students will be aware of this responsibility as they begin their thesis or dissertation research.

Students and faculty wishing to learn more about copyright are encouraged to consult the many valuable intellectual property-related resources available through the University Library at www.library.uiuc.edu/learn/faculty.html#intellectual. In addition, one of the sessions of the Symposium on Graduate Education, co-sponsored by the Graduate College and the Office of the Vice Chancellor for Research, scheduled for February 25, 2008, will focus on the conduct of responsible research and copyright policies and procedures.

The Graduate College has no reason to doubt that University faculty and students are already exercising sound authorship practices. This message is intended to serve as a reminder to all academic units of their responsibility to help their students eschew acts of copyright infringement and as an emphasis on the University's collaborative effort to produce researchers with unimpeachable academic integrity. As the Graduate College moves toward its goal of establishing an ETD process, we appreciate your continued vigilance that allows us to publish responsibly the theses and dissertations produced at the University.

Sincerely,

Richard Wheeler
Vice Provost and Graduate Dean