**Policy on Change of Academic Advisor**

Applicability:  This policy applies when a chemical engineering graduate student changes advisors during a degree program.  This policy does not apply when a student completes a degree with one advisor and then starts a new degree with another advisor.  For example, a student may complete an M.S. in chemical engineering with one advisor and start a Ph.D. in chemical engineering with another without penalty.  This policy does not apply if the change is forced by extreme circumstances, such as the advisor leaving the chemical engineering graduate faculty.  Also, a student may change advisors within a center or institute without invoking this policy, although the student or either advisor may request that the Assistant Chair for Graduate Studies invoke this policy in such a case.

This policy affects student support from department, college, or university resources administered by the department or an associated research center (e.g., research assistantship funded by a grant to a faculty member, Stocker fellowship/associateship, department graduate assistantship).  This policy does not affect support from a stipend or fellowship funds granted directly to the student by an entity outside the department and its associated research centers (e.g., university named fellowship, National Science Foundation Graduate Fellowship).  Policy for a student who changes advisors more than once during a degree program will be decided by the graduate committee in accordance with the spirit of this policy.

Rationale:  A student–advisor relationship is a professional commitment that should not be dissolved lightly by either party.  Graduate students may have legitimate reasons for changing advisors during a degree program.  The management style of the advisor and the work style of the student may be incompatible.  A student may find, having embarked on research in a particular area, that it does not match his/her interests or abilities as he/she had expected.  It should be possible for a student to change advisors for a legitimate, professional reason.  The chemical and biomolecular engineering department has legitimate concerns about students changing advisors.

Faculty members invest time, money, and planning in their students, making commitments to funding agencies and coworkers based on those students finishing their degrees in a timely fashion.  Aside from the lost investment, a student leaving disrupts the project and the research program.  The department has a strong interest in discouraging "stipend shopping" and in encouraging students to select an advisor and research project primarily for reasons of professional interest, since this will promote quality in thesis/dissertation research.

Rules for changing advisors:  In general, advisor changes will be initiated by the student.  If a faculty member wishes to cease serving as advisor to a particular student, he or she must provide a written explanation to the Assistant Chair.  In such a case, the graduate committee will determine whether there should be any penalty to the student or the advisor.

A student who engages in unsafe or unethical behavior or fails to make satisfactory academic or research progress will normally be dropped from the program, not assigned a new advisor.

A student may approach a prospective advisor to inquire whether he/she would be accepted as a student.  A prospective advisor is not obliged to inform the student's current advisor, regardless of the answer.  The prospective advisor may consult the Assistant Chair about funding and stipend levels prior to answering the student. If a student approaches multiple faculty about changing advisors, the Assistant Chair may conclude that the student is "stipend shopping" and notify the current and prospective advisors.

The student must inform his/her current advisor of his intention to change advisors.  The student may do this either before approaching prospective advisors or within one working day after accepting a position with a new advisor.  The student must inform the Assistant Chair when he/she has changed advisors.  The Assistant Chair will request that the advisor be changed in university records.  Within three weeks of changing advisors, the student must schedule a meeting with the Assistant Chair and the new advisor to work out a revised timetable for procedural requirements (e.g., course of study, proposal, comprehensive exam, etc., as appropriate).  The timetable for the Ph.D. qualifying exam will not change.

During the first two semesters of a degree program in the department, a student may change advisors and be supported by the new advisor at whatever level the new advisor deems appropriate.  Note that many offers of student support are conditional upon the student working in a particular research area or for a particular advisor.  When a student violates these conditions, such as by changing advisors, the offer becomes void.  After the third semester of a degree program in the department begins, a student who changes advisors will typically endure one semester of reduced stipend/fellowship support.  The reduced level is typically 50% of the previous stipend/fellowship, or the amount to trigger a tuition scholarship, whichever is larger.  A student who completes one degree program may undertake another degree program with a different advisor without penalty.

The prior advisor is entitled to compensation for loss of the student, if he/she was paid from one of the advisor's research accounts.  The amount of compensation is the difference between the prior stipend level and the reduced stipend level.  The new advisor should contribute in this amount from a research or research incentive account to support a student selected by the prior advisor.  If the new advisor does not have sufficient funds, the new advisor shall forfeit current or future departmental support in the appropriate amount, and the prior advisor shall receive current or future departmental support in the same amount.  The Assistant Chair shall decide when compensation thus organized with department funds shall be paid.