Guidelines to selecting your Dissertation Committee

Dissertation Committee Composition:

• The committee shall typically be composed of 3-4 faculty members (in addition to the advisor), recommended by the advisor, and approved by the Bioengineering Graduate Group Chair. In special circumstances, an additional member may be added, subject to the approval of the Graduate Group Chair. Appointment of committee members who are not part of Penn faculty requires details of their full title, affiliation and a short biographical sketch.
• The dissertation advisor is an ex officio member
• Three committee members must have full-time Standing or Research faculty appointments at Penn.
• In addition to your advisor, two committee members must be members of the Bioengineering Graduate Group.
• One committee member must hold a doctorate in an Engineering discipline or a highly quantitative subject (e.g. math, physics), OR is a Primary Faculty member in a School of Engineering and Applied Science Department.
• One member (who meets the criteria listed below) is recommended as Chair by the advisor, and must be approved by the Bioengineering Graduate Group Chair

Responsibilities of Dissertation Committee Chair:

• At every stage, verify that the dissertation meets the Bioengineering requirements for rigorous engineering and biomedical science content. Discuss any concerns in this regard with the student and advisor, and contact the Bioengineering Graduate Group Chair when concerns arise.
• Ensure that the content and tone of the proposal defense, annual committee meetings, and dissertation defense meeting are constructive for the student and advisor. If the student and advisor have difficulty in scheduling meetings in a timely manner, the Committee Chair will contact the Bioengineering Graduate Group Chair to recommend replacement of committee members with limited availability.
• At each meeting of the committee, review the student's course planning guide and transcript (provided by the student) to ensure the student is meeting Bioengineering course requirements in a timely manner. Inform the advisor and Graduate Group Chair of any concerns, and include committee recommendations for additional coursework in the official meeting report.
• At each meeting of the committee, ensure that proper forms are completed with comments to the student, signed by all members of the committee, and submitted through the

Qualifications of Dissertation Committee Chair (must satisfy all criteria):

• Is member of the Bioengineering Graduate Group
• Is a member of the Standing Faculty of the University of Pennsylvania
• Has served as a member or advisor on the proposal defense of at least one University of Pennsylvania Bioengineering dissertation committee previously.
• Is NOT the advisor of the student.