

TO: Deans, Directors, and Department Heads
FROM: April Ginther, Director, Oral English Proficiency Program, YONG
DATE: December 28, 2009
RE: OEPP Certification and Graduation Requirements

The Oral English Proficiency Program was created in 1987 in response to concerns that difficulties with oral English proficiency among international teaching assistants could negatively impact the quality of undergraduate instruction at Purdue. The primary mission of the OEPP remains to prepare potential international teaching assistants for instructional positions at Purdue although any graduate student desiring ESL instruction is welcome in the program as space permits.

Because more students test into the class than we can accommodate each semester, ENGL 620 is a limited access class. Last year we tested 507 students. Of those tested, 211 students did not pass the Oral English Proficiency Test. Over the course of the year 164 students took the ENGL 620 class and the remaining students were placed on the course waiting list. Given current budget constraints, we do not anticipate being able to expand our services, and some students will have to wait to get in the class. In addition, many language difficulties are not easily overcome, and some students will require more than one semester of ENGL 620 to become certified.

Departments should not use certification by the OEPP as a graduation requirement. Because opportunity and access involve issues of fairness, requiring oral English certification of *international students in a program* when access cannot be guaranteed could result in a formal complaint or lawsuit against the department and the University.

cc: Christine Ladisch, Vice Provost
Graduate School