CBE Graduate Program Special Committee Selection, taken from the Graduate School Handbook
Updated November 2017

Each student is responsible for putting together his or her own Special Committee, which is composed of a faculty member from your major field who will serve as your chair and additional members from any field or discipline in the University-provided they are a member of the Graduate Faculty.

Items in bold are important grad school rules/guidelines to note. Items in italics are important CBE-specific guidelines.

When to Select Special Committee Members
You must select your Special Committee chair within three weeks of registering with the Graduate School. If you are uncertain of your choice for chair, you may select a temporary one or your field's Director of Graduate Studies may assume the role. In CBE students are matched to advisors after this three-week period, so by default you are assigned the current DGS until you change it to your assigned advisor.

Deadlines for constituting a full committee depend on your expected degree:
- Master's degree students must complete their Special Committee selection by the end of the second semester.
- Doctoral candidates must have a full Special Committee no later than the end of the third semester.

Choosing a Special Committee Chair
The faculty member who represents your major subject is considered the chair of your Special Committee. Your chair will supervise your thesis or dissertation work and will typically provide the facilities and supervision necessary to conduct your research.

Your chair may serve for up to one year without special approval if he or she leaves the university. To maintain chair status, you must petition on that individual's behalf. A retiree may continue serving as either chair or minor member.

Choosing Special Committee Members
You have a lot of flexibility when it comes to selecting members of your Special Committee. Any member of any graduate field may serve on your Special Committee, with occasional limits imposed on the faculty based on their field standing. In CBE it is typical to have a chair from CBE, one other CBE member, and one external field member. If your committee chair (primary advisor) is not a field member of CBE, then you must have at least one member from CBE who will serve as the chair of the committee and ensure you are fulfilling the requirements of the CBE field to complete your degree.

Your Special Committee chair must be from your graduate field.

At a minimum, master's students must select one faculty member to represent their major subject (the chair) and a second member to represent their minor subject. For those MS students who may continue on in CBE for a doctoral degree, they must have a third committee member as well from within CBE.

Doctoral candidates must have one faculty member representing their major subject and two minor members, each representing one of their minor subjects. For those fields that have secured permission from the General Committee to require only one minor subject, the third member of the Special Committee must represent an additional concentration within your major subject.

Others Who May Serve on a Special Committee
Some fields require and assign a field-appointed member to Special Committees to help administer exams. This member serves in addition to existing committee members. If you request-and the field-appointed member agrees-this appointee may be counted as one of your selected members and serve on the Special Committee beyond examinations.

CBE does not have this requirement; however, if you wish to have a fourth committee member you are permitted to do so. Some examples where this might be appropriate would be to include additional collaborators, dual advising situations, inviting a person who can offer a particular expertise or evaluation of an area in your work, or other reasons.
Making Changes to Your Special Committee
Changing the members of your Special Committee requires approval from all members of the newly formed committee. It does not require approval from members who are leaving the committee. File these changes immediately in the Student Center.

For Master's students- you may make changes at any point prior to three months before the Final Examination by visiting your Student Center.

For Doctoral students- may make changes to your special committee at any time prior to your A exam. Committee changes after your A exam require the dean's approval. Additionally, you may not schedule your B exam within three months of a committee change.

Changing your Special Committee Chair
Changing your committee chair is the same as changing any other committee member. Your Director of Graduate Studies may ask to meet with you if you request a change of your chair, especially if such a change is requested after the A exam.

Committee Member Resignations
Any member, including your chair, may resign at any time from a Special Committee. It is your responsibility to reconstitute your Special Committee. If you fail to reconstitute a committee, you will not be permitted to continue registration in the Graduate School.