

BYLAWS OF THE GRADUATE COUNCIL OF THE UNIVERSITY OF TENNESSEE

Approved by Graduate Council: March 6, 2008

Article I Graduate Council Mission Statement

The mission of the Graduate Council is to promote excellence in graduate education at the University of Tennessee, Knoxville. The Graduate Council establishes standards for admission, retention, and graduation; assesses curricular revisions and new proposals for graduate programs; evaluates interdisciplinary, intercollegiate and international programs; approves individuals to direct doctoral dissertations; and considers new initiatives and other matters of policy pertaining to graduate programs. Graduate Council is a special committee of the Faculty Senate that works closely with the Graduate School and a variety of other campus bodies to fulfill its mission.

Article II Organizational Structure

Part A: Committee Structure

Section 1. The Executive Committee

This standing committee is comprised of the Council Chair, Council Vice Chair, Chairs of all standing committees of Council, and the past Chair of Council. The Council Chair, Vice Chair, and past Chair, along with the chairs of all standing committees, serve as voting members of the Executive Committee. The Dean of the Graduate School and/or the Dean's designee serve as ex-officio nonvoting members of the Executive Committee. The Executive Committee serves in an advisory role to the Chair and Council on matters concerning the mission of Council.

Section 2. [Academic Policy Committee](#)

This committee serves as a standing committee of the Graduate Council to consider, investigate, and give detailed attention to policies, and forward recommendations for change to the policies contained in the Graduate Catalog that relate to general requirements for admission to graduate programs, enrollment of students, offering of graduate credit, and awarding of graduate degrees at the Knoxville campus of The University of Tennessee.

Section 3. [Credentials Committee](#)

This standing committee is responsible for procedures that will ensure careful and competent supervision of dissertation research. The goal is to ensure good scholarship, competent management of the process, high academic standards, and completion of dissertations in a timely

manner. To this end the committee will conduct a review of the credentials of those who will be recommended to the Graduate Council for approval to direct doctoral dissertations.

Section 4. Curriculum Committee

This standing committee makes recommendations to the Graduate Council for the approval or denial of all curricular requests submitted to the Council and to ensure quality, consistency, and accuracy in the advertisement of the University's graduate programs.

Section 5. Appeals Committee

This standing committee serves the Graduate Council by considering appeals from graduate students concerning a grievance that is unresolved at the department and college level. Appeals may involve the interpretation of and adherence to university, college and department policies and procedures as they apply to graduate education and grievances over grades. This committee does not consider grievances related to race, gender, religion, national origin, age, or disability. Students with such grievances should file a formal complaint with the Office of Equity and Diversity with a copy to the appropriate academic department head.

Section 6. Nominating Committee

This special committee is appointed by the Executive Committee of Graduate Council and is responsible for identifying and soliciting candidates for Graduate Council Vice Chair, who is Chair-Elect of Council. The committee reports to Graduate Council at the next to the last meeting of the spring semester.

Section 7. Additional Standing/Special Committees

These committees may be established by the Chair of Graduate Council, in cooperation with the Executive Committee. The Chair of Graduate Council will serve as ex-officio nonvoting member of all additional standing/special committees.

Section 8. Standing Committee Bylaws

All standing committees will maintain bylaws to govern their operations. These committee bylaws must be approved by Graduate Council and must conform to Council and Faculty Senate bylaws. Committee bylaws may be amended by a two-thirds vote of committee members and subsequent approval by Council.

Part B: Graduate Council Linkages

Section 1. Faculty Senate

Graduate Council is a special committee of the Faculty Senate and the Chair of Graduate Council serves as ex-officio voting member of the Faculty Senate Executive Committee. Faculty Senate approves implementation of actions taken by Council as stated in Council minutes.

Section 2. Graduate School and Dean of Graduate School

The Graduate School has responsibility for implementation of policies and procedures adopted by Graduate Council. The Dean of the Graduate School makes recommendations to Council regarding graduate programs and support for graduate students. The Graduate School provides administrative support for the activities of Council and its committees.

Section 3. Graduate Deans

The Graduate Deans' Group provides advice to Graduate Council and shares information on Council activities and actions with their respective units.

Section 4. Graduate Student Senate

The Graduate Student Senate provides the students' perspective to Graduate Council and its committees through their representatives. The Graduate Student Senate representatives to Council serve as an avenue of communication to the graduate student body on Council activities and actions.

Section 5. Professional Development Committee

This committee, chaired by the Dean of the Graduate School, solicits proposals for Professional Development and Research Awards. A subcommittee of Graduate Council, along with the Vice Provost and Dean of the Graduate School and the Associate Vice Chancellor for Research, evaluates proposals and makes awards.

Section 6. Other Campus Bodies

To fulfill its mission, Graduate Council interacts regularly with other campus entities, including the Office of the Provost, the Center for International Education, the Office of the University Registrar, the Office of Research and the Undergraduate Council.

Article III**Membership and Officers****Section 1. Membership**

The membership of council consists of faculty members, two graduate students, and a series of ex-officio (nonvoting) members. Faculty members are elected for three-year terms from colleges and intercollegiate programs. They must regularly teach graduate courses or supervise graduate study and must (1) hold full-time or continuing part-time appointment with the rank of assistant professor or higher, and (2) perform academic duties consisting of at least half-time teaching, research, service or departmental administration. The two graduate students who serve one-year terms are appointed by the Graduate Student Senate. Ex-officio members are the Dean of the Graduate School, the Dean of Libraries, the Assistant Vice Chancellor of the Division of Outreach and Continuing Education, the Director of the Center for International Education, and the Chair of the Research Council or their designees. In addition, the administrative officers with primary responsibility for graduate curriculum in each college or for oversight of all intercollegiate programs serve as ex-officio members of the Graduate Council if they are not college or intercollegiate program representatives.

Faculty members are elected in the spring semester for appointments to commence at the start of the following fall semester. Colleges and intercollegiate programs will notify the Graduate School of the election results for new Council members by no later than April 15. Each college and all intercollegiate programs together will have established guidelines to govern election of Council members. The number of Council members apportioned to each college and to all

intercollegiate programs collectively is based on the number of graduate students enrolled in the unit in the previous fall term, using the following table:

Graduate Students	Total Graduate Council Representatives
1-300	1
301-500	2
501-700	3
etc.	

Section 2. Proxies

Proxy members of Graduate Council are elected by colleges and intercollegiate programs using the same procedures and timing that are followed to elect regular members of Council. Proxies serve when regular Council members cannot fulfill their responsibilities due to a leave of absence, travel or other scheduling conflicts. The proxy shall have all the privileges and power of the absentee member.

Section 3. Graduate Council Chair

The Chair of the Graduate Council is a faculty member from Council who serves for a one-year term, following a one-year term as Vice Chair and Chair Elect. The Chair assumes responsibility for Council activities on August 1st and presides over all Council meetings for that academic year. In cooperation with the Dean of the Graduate School, the Chair makes assignments to all standing committees and prepares an agenda for all Council meetings. The Chair may make assignments to ad hoc special committees as needed. The Chair casts the deciding vote on Council matters that result in a tie vote. The Chair serves as ex-officio nonvoting member of all committees of Council. The Chair has Faculty Senate responsibilities as outlined in the Faculty Senate bylaws.

The Faculty Senate bylaws specify that the Chair of Graduate Council will be a faculty member from Graduate Council, elected to a one-year term by voting members of Council. In the year prior to the beginning of the term, the election of Chair is to take place at the last meeting of the spring semester.. Typically, the only candidate for Chair will be the Chair-Elect. A write-in candidate may be added to the ballot by passage of a motion from the floor of Council. A summary of the credentials for the candidate(s) for Chair will be provided to Graduate Council members to aid in their decision. Election of the Chair will occur by secret ballot. Since the Chair serves the entire university and not one constituency, the Chair does not count as part of a school's or college's apportionment of representatives to Council.

Section 4. Graduate Council Vice Chair and Chair Elect

Any current faculty member of Council is eligible to be a candidate for Vice Chair. The Nominating Committee of Council will identify and solicit candidates for this post and will report its results during the next to the last meeting of the spring semester. Nominations may also be submitted from the floor at that time. A summary of the credentials for the candidates for Chair-Elect will be provided to Graduate Council members to aid in their decision. Election of

the Vice-Chair will occur by secret ballot. The Vice Chair of Graduate Council serves as Chair-Elect of Council for a term of one year, commencing on August 1st after election at the end of the previous Spring Semester. The Vice Chair may participate as an ex officio nonvoting member of all standing and special committees of Council. This experience assists the Vice Chair in preparation for assumption of the Chair position in the following academic year. The Chair-Elect, if elected as will be typical to the position of Chair, will assume the responsibilities of Chair on August 1st in the second academic year after being elected to the position of Vice Chair. The Chair-Elect is automatically granted an extension of her or his appointment to Graduate Council for a period of up to three years so as to include membership on Council through one year past her or his term as Chair, serving in the capacity of past Chair. Since the Vice Chair serves the entire university and not one constituency, the Vice Chair does not count as part of a school's or college's apportionment of representatives to Council.

Section 5. Graduate Council Past Chair

Upon completion of a one-year term as Graduate Council Chair, the Chair assumes the position of past Chair. The past Chair provides Council with continuity and experience. Since the Past Chair serves the entire university and not one constituency, the Chair does not count as part of a school's or college's apportionment of representatives to Council.

Section 6. Graduate Council Committee Chairs

Committee chairs are appointed by the Chair of Graduate Council, in consultation with the Dean of the Graduate School. Committee chairs will typically be individuals who have served on Graduate Council and have experience with committee matters.

Article IV

Meetings, Decision-making and Reporting

The calendar for regular meetings of Graduate Council and its committees will be set by the Executive Committee of Graduate Council in consultation with the Dean of the Graduate School. Council and Committee meetings will typically take place on Thursday afternoons. Special meetings of Graduate Council or any of its committees may be called by the Council Chair, the Council Executive Committee, or a majority of the Council membership who hold regular voting rights. Committee Chairs may call special meetings of their committees as needed. Except in the case of emergency, one week's notice will be provided for any called meeting. The schedule of regular meetings for Council and its committees will be published on the Council website and distributed to the membership at the beginning of the Fall semester.

A majority of Graduate Council voting members or committee members constitutes a quorum. Majority voting will guide all decision-making. Secret ballots will be used for decision-making when requested by a majority of Council or committee members.

Committee chairs and Council Chair will provide reports at each meeting of Graduate Council. The Graduate Council Chair reports to the Faculty Senate which, through approval of Council minutes, implements actions taken by Council.

All meetings of Council and its committees will be governed by the most recent edition of Robert's Rules of Order.

Article V

Amendment of Bylaws

The Graduate Council may amend and repeal bylaws by a two-thirds majority of voting members, provided that any proposed changes have been reviewed at the prior meeting of Council. All bylaw changes must be ratified by the Faculty Senate.