

**West Virginia State University**  
**Graduate Studies Governance : Constitution**  
**May, 2015**

The Graduate Studies Council (GSC) is the organ of faculty governance for graduate programs of study at West Virginia State University. The West Virginia State University GSC consists of elected members of the WVSU Graduate Faculty and *ex officio* members, including the Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs, and Deans of Colleges that contain graduate programs. In addition to its role in shared governance, the GSC serves in an advisory role to the Graduate Program Coordinators, Provost and College Deans to ensure the integrity of graduate studies. The GSC is considered to be a standing committee within the Office of the Provost and its recommendations are advisory to the Provost. The GSC will recommend a Chair to the Provost. All meetings of the Graduate Faculty are presided over by the Chair or his/her designee.

**GSC Responsibilities**

The GSC advocates for graduate education at West Virginia State University in addition to ensuring quality. The Council reviews proposals for new graduate programs and policies, evaluates substantive revisions in graduate program structure, coordinates program reviews, maintains the roster of Graduate Faculty membership, and considers matters affecting graduate education as are brought to the Council by the Provost, a Graduate Faculty member, or a graduate student. Responsibility for administration of the Graduate Faculty policies and regulations, resolving problems of interpretation of these rules, and the recommending of University-wide graduate academic standards, is vested in the Graduate Studies Council. The Graduate Studies Council interprets rules and recommends academic standards in such matters as:

- Policy governing new programs at the graduate level, and recommending to the institution new programs;
- Policy governing review of courses and curricula,
- Policy related to graduate admission standards;
- Policy governing designation of Graduate Faculty members;
- Policy concerning review, assessment and evaluation of graduate programs, standards, and administration;
- Communication to Graduate Faculty members not serving on the Graduate Studies Council, as well as all other interested parties;
- Interpreting other matters affecting graduate education as are brought to the Council by the Provost, a Graduate Faculty member, or a graduate student.

**GSC members**

*Program Coordinator.* Program Coordinators are appointed by the Provost and bear the responsibility for leadership of a graduate program within a College or School. Program Coordinators are automatic members of the GSC.

*Graduate Faculty.* Graduate Faculty are designated within a graduate program of study if they meet the criteria required by a specific program. Three levels of Graduate Faculty exist: Full, Associate and Assistant. One full graduate faculty member is elected to the Graduate Faculty from each graduate program. One full graduate faculty member will be elected as an At-Large member from the entire graduate faculty.

*Ex-officio.* The President, Provost and College Deans serve as non-voting, ex-officio members of the GSC.

### **Graduate Faculty Membership**

All University faculty members who have an appropriate degree/qualifications as determined by the program of study will perform Graduate Faculty functions. Recommendations for membership in the Graduate Faculty come from the individual graduate programs to the GSC. The GSC then reviews these applications and forwards recommended actions to the Provost. Members of the Graduate Faculty may teach graduate-level courses, advise graduate students, direct master's theses, and/or serve on thesis committees. Members are expected to engage actively in the graduate program of the University and to pursue professional activities consistent with that participation. The following levels of Graduate Faculty membership are recognized:

*Ex officio.* The President of the University, the, the Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs, and the Deans of colleges and schools, hold *ex officio* membership on the Graduate Faculty and on the GSC.

*Full.* Unless special circumstances exist, full members of the WVSU Graduate Faculty are individuals who hold the terminal degree in a relevant area of study and are members of the WVSU faculty. Members of the WVSU faculty who are currently full Graduate Faculty members will continue to hold full membership unless they request the status terminated. Full Graduate Faculty Members have voting rights.

*Associate.* Unless special circumstances exist, individuals who hold the terminal degree in a relevant area of study may be appointed to Associate Graduate Faculty status. These faculty are eligible to teach graduate level courses and serve on thesis committees, but shall not Chair a thesis committee or serve as a primary advisor for a graduate student. Individuals may hold Associate membership for a five-year term, but can be appointed to subsequent terms upon re-application. Associate members have no voting rights.

*Assistant.* Individuals may be appointed as Assistant Members of the Graduate Faculty. These faculty are eligible to teach graduate level courses. Individuals may hold Assistant membership for a five-year term, but can be appointed to subsequent terms upon re-application. Assistant members have no voting rights.

### **Powers of the Graduate Faculty**

The Graduate Faculty is empowered to determine policy on matters having to do with graduate programs, except as specified by the WVSU governing board and/or university administration. These

powers will normally be exercised by the GSC. Graduate Faculty within the individual graduate programs:

- elect members of the Graduate Studies Council;
- receive the agenda and minutes of each Graduate Studies Council meeting;
- receive an annual report of Graduate Studies Council activity;
- may refer agenda items and issues to the Graduate Studies Council;
- may review Graduate Studies Council actions; and
- meet as a “committee of the whole” at least once each year, or as called by the Chair of the GSC.

**Duties and Responsibilities of the Graduate Faculty.** The duties and responsibilities of membership on the Graduate faculty include:

- Teaching graduate level courses and seminars;
- Advising graduate students;
- Supervising/guiding graduate student scholarship to its completion;
- Serving on graduate committees;
- Remaining current and actively productive in terms of scholarship and/or creative endeavors;
- Participating in the formulation of graduate curricula and policy; and
- Being eligible to serve on the Graduate Studies Council.

**Duties and Responsibilities of Graduate Program Coordinators.** The key administrative level for graduate education at WVSU is the Graduate Program Coordinator. Graduate Program Coordinators will work with College Deans and program faculty to:

- lead program recruitment efforts
- coordinate procedures for admission of graduate program applicants
- coordinate and provide graduate student advising
- maintain departmental graduate student records and tracking of students in the program
- handle graduate student appeals
- coordinate program review and assessment

**Duties of the GSC.** Keys duties of the WVSU GSC include:

- Review of Graduate Programs. The GSC assist the Provost in conducting reviews of all graduate programs. Following completion of its evaluation of a program review documents, the GSC may recommend to the Provost appropriate actions, including: (1) continuation of the program with or without a request for follow-up information; (2) continuation of the program along with requested corrective actions; (3) program suspension; (4) program termination; etc.
- Evaluation of proposals for new graduate programs. Upon request of the Provost, the GSC receives proposals for proposed new graduate and certificate programs. Members of the GSC may assist and advise in putting together a proposal. The GSC makes recommendations to the Provost on new graduate program proposals. Changes in degree titles, addition/removal of areas of specialization or emphasis within a given degree, and substantive alterations in

graduate degree curricular requirements also are under the purview of the GSC which makes its recommendations to the Provost.

- Review of the Graduate Faculty Roster. The GSC receives applications for Graduate Faculty Status from Program Coordinators and forwards its recommendations for appointment to the Provost.
- Meetings of the GSC. The Graduate Studies Council shall meet at least two times per semester. The Chair of the Graduate Studies Council may call special meetings. Notice of all meetings shall be given in writing at least seven (7) days in advance to all voting and *ex-officio* members of Council. A quorum of the University Graduate Studies Council shall consist of a majority of the voting members. The Chair will vote only to break a tie. Electronic voting is permissible if the majority of the voting members concur. Any member of the University community may make a request to the Chair to attend a Council meeting. Conversely, the GSC may request attendance of same. Agendas and minutes of Graduate Studies Council meetings shall be made available to all members of the Council, the Deans of the University colleges/schools and all Graduate Faculty. It is expected that, for informational purposes, the Graduate Council Chair provide the Faculty Senate with an oral or written summary of Council deliberations and actions.
- Amending Graduate Studies Governance. Amendments to the structure of the governance of graduate programs must initiate from the Graduate Studies Council. Upon a passing vote (majority of GSC members present), the proposed amendment is forwarded to the full Graduate Faculty for vote. The amendment is adopted upon a majority vote of the Graduate Faculty.