

# **By-laws of The Graduate Council of JMU**

## **Purpose**

The Graduate Council serves as the legislative and advisory body on graduate education at James Madison University. As a legislative body, the Council formulates major policies and procedures in graduate education on behalf of the graduate faculty; as an advisory body, the Council advises The Graduate School (TGS) on major issues and initiatives in graduate education.

## **Major Functions**

To achieve the purpose above, the Graduate Council performs the following functions:

1. Approving the establishment and termination of programs, the adoption of new courses, and approving changes to programs and courses;
2. Establishing and maintaining the standards of graduate instruction through the responsibilities including, but not limited to:
  - setting policies and procedures for admitting students to graduate study;
  - formulating administrative policies, procedures, and regulations governing graduate students;
  - determining the standards for selecting instructional personnel at the graduate level;
  - identifying campus-wide issues and concerns regarding graduate education, and developing and encouraging the implementation of solutions to problems, and best-practices for graduate education;
  - advising The Graduate School through deliberations and recommendations on policies, initiatives, and procedures in graduate education.

## **Membership of the Graduate Council**

The Graduate Council shall be chaired by the dean of The Graduate School (TGS). (Note. The titles “Chair” and “dean of TGS” shall be used interchangeably throughout these by-laws.)

The Graduate Council membership shall include a representative from each academic unit that currently offers one or more graduate programs or certificates and two graduate student representatives. The Dean and Associate Deans of TGS serve as ex-officio, nonvoting members. The Assistant to the Dean serves as Secretary.

Non-voting, but regularly participating guests of the Graduate Council will include representatives from the Office of the Graduate School, the Office of Academic Policy and Curriculum Development, Libraries and Educational Technologies, Outreach and Engagement, the Center for Global Engagement, and Associate Deans of the Academic Colleges. All Graduate Program Directors/Coordinators and Academic Unit Heads are welcome to be regularly participating guests.

New and returning Graduate Council members assume their responsibilities on the first day of the fall semester.

Additional guests may attend Graduate Council meetings with prior notification to the dean of TGS. Meeting space may limit the number of guests permitted.

### **Selection of Graduate Council Members**

Faculty who serve as Graduate Council Members are selected by Academic Units from among the Graduate Faculty of their Academic Units. Representatives are selected annually and serve starting on the first day of classes during the fall semester. Academic Units establish their own representative-selection procedures and are encouraged to develop an agreed-upon written protocol for selection. Academic Unit Heads will inform the Graduate Council Secretary of the individual who will represent their unit the following academic year by the last day of the prior spring semester.

Students who serve as Graduate Council members are selected by the Graduate Student Association (GSA). Representatives are selected annually and serve starting on the first day of classes during the fall semester. The GSA will employ a written protocol for selection of their representatives. The GSA President will inform the Graduate Council Secretary of the individuals who will serve as student representatives during the following academic year by the last day of the prior spring semester.

### **Responsibilities of Graduate Council Members, Chair, Co-Chairs and Secretary**

#### **Members of the Graduate Council are responsible for:**

- Attending all Council meetings or for sending an appropriate replacement.
- Participating in Council committees and taskforces
- Representing the opinions of the members' constituency to the Council
- Communicating the decisions and discussions of the Council to the members' constituency

#### **Duties of the Chair (Graduate Dean)**

- Calls meetings of the Graduate Council and Executive Committee. Presides at meetings of the Graduate Council and Executive Committee.
- Prepares, with the assistance of the Co-Chairs and the program representatives, the agenda for regular and special meetings of the Graduate Council.
- Requests reports on specific issues/items.
- Supervises the appointment of the Curriculum Committee.
- Appoints ad-hoc committees

#### **Duties of the Co-Chairs (Associate Deans)**

- Presides in the absence of the Chair at Graduate Council and Executive Committee meetings.
- Assists the Chair in preparation of agenda items for meetings of the Graduate Council.
- Performs other duties as the Chair may request or as may be appropriate in the temporary absence of the Chairperson.
- One of the Co-Chairs (Associate Deans) serves as a non-voting Chair of the Curriculum Committee.

### **Duties of the Secretary**

- Schedules meetings of the Graduate Council and Executive Committee.
- Distributes the meeting agenda and prior-meeting minutes to the members of the Graduate Council and regularly attending guests at least two days prior to the meeting.
- Records and publishes draft and approved minutes of the meetings of the Graduate Council.
- Tallies e-votes and notifies Graduate Council of results.
- Coordinates special events of the Graduate Council such as periodic retreats.

### **Graduate Program Director Assembly**

At least once each semester (typically at the start of the fall and spring terms), all graduate degree and certificate program Directors and Coordinators as well as all Graduate Council members and regularly participating guests, will be invited to attend meetings of the Graduate Director Assembly. These discussion-oriented meetings will focus on issues and concerns of graduate education. The Graduate Director Assembly will advise the Graduate Council and the Dean of The Graduate School regarding matters of importance to graduate education at JMU.

The Dean and Associate Deans of TGS will serve as co-chairs of meetings of the Graduate Program Director Assembly. The Assistant to the Dean serves as secretary. Additional meetings of this body may be scheduled as necessary at the discretion of the Dean.

### **Curriculum Committee**

The Graduate Council will elect a curriculum committee who will be responsible for reviewing and approving program and course additions, changes and deletions on behalf of the Graduate Council. This C&I Committee reviews curriculum from a university-wide perspective and considers, among other things:

- The clarity of the proposal,
- The appropriateness and value of the curriculum as graduate-level experiences,
- Any potential impact of the curriculum offered by one department on other departments, **and**
- Whether all departments agree to participate in programs that list courses offered by multiple departments.

This committee will regularly function independently of the Graduate Council but will report its actions to the Graduate Council and will seek the advice of the larger council before taking action on matters that are likely to have significant cross-university implications.

The Curriculum Committee will be composed of one graduate faculty member representing each college, one at-large graduate faculty member representing all doctoral programs and one at-large graduate faculty member representing all master's programs. Curriculum Committee members can, but are not required to be members of the Graduate Council.

Annually, each April, members of the Graduate Council representing each college will nominate a Graduate Faculty Member to represent their college on the Curriculum Committee. The Executive Committee will nominate one Graduate Faculty Member who will serve as Curriculum Committee member representing all doctoral programs and another who will represent all master's programs. The

Graduate Council will affirm the membership of the Curriculum Committee with a vote during their final meeting of the academic year, for appointment starting the first day of the following fall semester.

The Curriculum Committee will be chaired by an Associate Dean of the Graduate School appointed by the Dean of the Graduate School. The Associate Dean is responsible for organizing matters to be presented to the Curriculum Committee, and in coordination with the Office of the Provost, confirming that proposals are complete and consistent with Graduate School, University, SCHEV and SACSCOC policies. The Associate Dean is not a voting member of this committee.

### **Executive Committee**

The Graduate Council will elect an Executive Committee that will discuss matters relevant to graduate education. Executive Committee actions may include, but will not be limited to:

1. Working with the Dean and Associate Deans in the drafting of documents for presentation to the Graduate Council.
2. Advising the Chair of the Graduate Council regarding matters that should be included on the agenda of meetings of the Graduate Council.
3. Recommending implementation of Taskforces, consisting of members of the Graduate Council, and others as appropriate, to address particular issues and concerns.

The Executive Committee may be called upon between meetings of the full Council and during the summer months to provide advice to the Dean and to aid in urgent decision-making when the full Graduate Council cannot be gathered. Executive Committee meetings will be in addition to the regularly scheduled Council meetings.

The Executive Committee will be composed of one graduate faculty member representing each college, and the Associate Deans of the Graduate School. The Dean of the Graduate School will serve as chair of the Executive Committee.

Annually, each April, members of the Graduate Council representing each college will nominate a Graduate Council member to represent their college on the Executive Committee. The Graduate Council will affirm the membership of the Executive Committee with a vote during their final meeting of the academic year, for appointment starting the first day of the following fall semester.

### **Graduate Council Meetings**

The Graduate Council meets at least once each semester. The Chair of the Graduate Council will announce meeting dates and times by April 1 of the prior year. The Graduate Council Chair may call additional meetings, as necessary. The Graduate Council may conduct additional business by e-mail.

Special meetings of the Graduate Council may be called according to the following provisions:

- By the Chair of the Graduate Council.
- By request of the Executive Committee.
- By request of the President or Provost/Vice President for Academic Affairs.
- By petition of 1/3 of the voting membership of the Graduate Council in which the reasons for the calling of a special meeting are clearly stated. Special meetings will be called as soon as is practicable after such requests or petitions are received.

## **Meeting Procedures**

Agenda items. The order of business will typically be conducted by consent agenda, with discussion only if an objection is raised or if the need for discussion is requested in advance. Any member of the Graduate Council, Executive Committee Members, Curriculum Committee members, or guests may submit items for the agenda one week prior to the Council meeting. Those wishing to place an item on the agenda must submit their request in writing directly to the Graduate School Dean. Anyone may also suggest agenda items to members of the Executive Committee; this committee is charged with advising the Graduate School Dean regarding the Graduate Council Agenda. The agenda for each regularly scheduled meeting will be made available to all members of the Council via electronic mail at least two days prior to the date of the meeting.

Guests of the Graduate Council who state in writing (including electronic mail) their intention to speak to an issue may do so but may not vote. Such speakers shall submit a request to the Chair of the Council at least two days prior to the meeting. The Chair may establish a time limit at the beginning of each Council meeting at which there will be a non-member speaker.

Generally, no matter shall be presented to the Graduate Council for discussion or consideration unless notice thereof has been circulated among its members at least two days prior to the meeting. Any matter may be brought before the Council without prior notice if a majority of those voting consent.

The Chair of the Graduate Council may refer any matter to an appropriate committee or sub-committee of the Council for investigation and recommendation. Such recommendations shall be reported on the agenda of the Council as committee reports and recommendations for adoption by the Council. At the discretion of the Chair, proposals for matters not requiring review by a committee of the Council may be placed directly on the agenda. Any matter may be referred or returned to a committee by a majority vote of the Graduate Council.

The Graduate Dean chairs each meeting of the Graduate Council, facilitating discussions and motions to vote, when appropriate.

Minutes. Draft minutes of meetings shall be posted to the TGS website within 15 working days following a regular or special meeting. In addition, the minutes of the previous meeting will be sent electronically to all members of the Council and regularly-attending guests, along with the next meeting agenda.

## **Voting Procedures and Eligibility**

To provide ample time for Graduate Council representatives to consult with their departments, no votes on policy matters will be taken unless the matter has been under discussion by the Graduate Council for a minimum of two weeks. Votes may be taken without prior notice regarding procedural matters such as approval of minutes, assignment of a matter for discussion by a committee, or tabling a matter.

Items requiring vote by the Graduate Council will be decided by ballot, voice vote, or show of hands, at the discretion of the chair or the request of any Council member. A voting member may assign his or her proxy to the chair or another voting member or appoint an alternate to attend the Council meeting and vote in his or her place. A written (or electronic mail) proxy must be received by the chair or another voting member prior to the meeting. Notification of the assignment of an alternate must be received by the Secretary in writing (or electronic mail) prior to the meeting.

At any Graduate Council meeting, a request by a Graduate Council member for a secret ballot must be granted.

Votes taken at a Council meeting will be considered official if there is a quorum present. A quorum is defined as at least half of the voting members being present at the meeting. If a quorum is present, a simple majority of the voting members present will decide on the issue under consideration.

### **Electronic Votes**

Electronic votes may be taken regarding any matter that comes before the Graduate Council. The same quorum rule shall be in effect. An electronic vote is not official unless at least half of the voting membership votes. If the vote is official, a simple majority of the members voting will decide on the issue under consideration. Results of each electronic vote will be sent to all Graduate Council Members within one week of tabulation.

### **Executive decision**

Since there will be no official meetings during the months of June, July and August, during this period the Graduate School Dean shall be empowered to make executive decisions on matters of a routine nature, including curriculum decisions.. If a major policy decision is necessary, the dean of TGS shall call upon the services of the Executive Committee, call for a special meeting of the full Council, or call for a special electronic vote. The same procedures apply to special meetings and electronic votes as in the usual voting procedures.

### **Adoption, Implementation and Amendment Process**

Adoption and Implementation. These by-laws will become effective upon approval by a 2/3 majority vote of the voting members of the Graduate Council. The implementation of these by-laws shall occur immediately upon their approval by the Graduate Council membership.

Amendment Process. The by-laws may be amended by a 2/3 majority vote of the voting members of the Graduate Council. Members of the Graduate Council must have had a copy of the proposed amendment at least two weeks in advance of the vote.

Original by-laws approved by the Graduate Council February 17, 2005

Revision approved by the Graduate Council: May 20, 2011

Revision Approved by the Graduate Council: March 12, 2019