Graduate Council Bylaws

I. Vision

Columbus State University provides world-class graduate education to meet student and community needs.

II. Mission

The Graduate School provides a framework for supporting excellence in graduate research, scholarship, training, and mentorship in accordance with Columbus State University's mission and consistent with the mission of the Board of Regents of the University System of Georgia. The Graduate School is administered by a Graduate School Director who is assisted by a representative body, the Graduate Council. The Graduate Council promotes academic excellence in graduate education by supporting communication between existing graduate programs, fostering creation of new graduate offerings, and upholding high standards of performance by graduate faculty and graduate students.

III. Charge

The Graduate Council makes recommendations on all matters related to graduate studies to the Graduate School Director who reports to the Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs (Provost/VPAA). These recommendations include: (1) standards for admission to graduate programs and requirements for granting graduate degrees; (2) approval of new graduate programs; (3) policies and procedures governing graduate programs; (4) policies governing graduate research; (5) duties and responsibilities of graduate assistants regarding teaching and research; (6) graduate faculty appointments; (7) development of partnerships with the community aimed at recruiting candidates for graduate programs, and (8) graduate recruitment in general.

Other responsibilities of the Graduate Council include (1) fostering communication among graduate programs; (2) discussing issues of common concern to graduate programs across campus; and (3) maintaining by-laws for the Graduate Council.

Specialized accrediting agencies require that governance in graduate matters be handled at the college level.

IV. Calendar and Agenda

The Graduate Council normally meets on the second Friday of each month during the academic year and maintains minutes, which are posted on the Graduate School web site to inform the graduate faculty of active policy discussions and recent decisions. Meetings are conducted in accordance with Robert's Rules of Order and require a quorum which consists of a simple majority of Graduate Council members to take any action. Any member of the graduate faculty may propose an agenda item for a Graduate Council meeting. The agenda for the Graduate Council meeting is developed by the Graduate Council chair in consultation with the Graduate School Director, chair-elect and secretary.
V. Council Member Absence

In the event that an Assembly member cannot attend a meeting, that member may send (1) a representative (voting) to attend in his/her place, and/or (2) comments to the chair to be shared at the meeting.

VI. Composition and Membership

Officers

The Graduate Council officers shall include a chair, a chair-elect, and a secretary. The Chair and Chair-elect must be from different colleges. Each spring the Graduate Council shall elect a secretary and a chair-elect. The previous chair-elect shall become chair. The secretary shall be responsible for the maintenance of accurate records of the Council's deliberations, the transmission of recommendations and the distribution of minutes to members of the Graduate Faculty.

Membership of the Graduate Council

Every college shall be represented on the Graduate Council. No college shall have more than three voting representatives on the Graduate Council. The dean of each college shall appoint members each spring. The Provost/VPAA shall appoint the Director of Graduate School to serve as an ex officio non-voting member of the Graduate Council. The number of voting members from each college will be based on the proportion of students enrolled in graduate programs across campus so that every academic college will have at least one voting member and no academic college will have more than three voting members. A voting student representative shall be appointed by the Graduate Student Association.

The past Chair of the Graduate Council will serve the year following the year they served as chair. [Approved by GC - 9/9/2011]

The initial voting membership of the Graduate Council include appointees from each of four academic colleges: Letters and Sciences (3), the Arts (2), Business and Computer Science (2), and Education and Health Professions (3).

VII. Graduate Faculty (From Section 136 Faculty Handbook)

Columbus State University recognizes three categories of Graduate Faculty: Regular Graduate Faculty, Provisional Graduate Faculty, and Temporary Graduate Faculty. Appointment to the Graduate Faculty is a prerequisite for teaching any course in which students earn graduate credit as defined by the university catalog. Appointment to the Regular Graduate Faculty is a prerequisite for directing graduate thesis or serving as a dissertation advisor. Nominations based on the following criteria shall be submitted by the appropriate department chair through the dean to the Provost/VPAA. Appointment to the Regular Graduate Faculty shall be made by the Provost/VPAA upon recommendation from the Graduate Council. Any full-time faculty member failing to meet all of the criteria may be recommended by the department chair as Provisional Graduate Faculty. Provisional appointments of one year may be made by the Provost/VPAA.

Part-time faculty or new full-time faculty with no sufficient evidence of scholarly activities and/or prior college/university teaching experience may be appointed as Temporary Graduate Faculty or Provisional Graduate Faculty, respectively, by the Provost/VPAA and for a one-year term under the same criteria and procedures presented below, except that demonstration of effective teaching may be waived for an initial appointment. Part-time faculty who do not hold the terminal degree are eligible for appointment as Temporary Graduate Faculty.
Faculty if they are qualified by experience and/or special expertise, as determined by the department chair, college dean, and Provost/VPAA.

The criteria for appointment to the Regular Graduate Faculty of Columbus State University are:

- hold full-time appointment at the rank of assistant professor or higher at the university;
- hold the terminal degree, such as the PhD, EdD, or DBA in the discipline or disciplines of graduate instruction;
- have a record of effective teaching at the university level;
- have documented evidence of recent scholarly achievement and professional activity indicated by activities such as research, publication, service as an editor or referee of a professional periodical, paper presentation, artistic exhibits or performances, grant applications, and consulting; complemented by service as a panel chair or discussant, and attendance at professional meetings.

Recognizing the very disparate nature of the different disciplines between and among colleges each college will have available a document outlining the types of documentation, accomplishments and evidence considered appropriate for satisfying the criteria for graduate faculty status.

Graduate Faculty members serve at the pleasure of the President. Provisional Graduate Faculty and Temporary Graduate Faculty appointments are for a term not to exceed one year and the criteria and procedures for reappointment are to be the same as for the initial appointment except that effective teaching cannot be waived for Provisional Graduate Faculty.

If a faculty member is assigned to teach courses for more than one academic department, then all impacted departments (chairs and deans) must concur in the recommendation of the faculty member to hold Graduate Faculty status.

The chair or dean may recommend that a faculty member’s status on the Graduate Faculty be terminated.

**VIII. Procedures for Submitting Nominations to or Deletions from the Graduate Faculty**

(A) The department chair initiates a faculty member’s nomination for Regular Graduate Faculty status by preparing a nomination packet consisting of (1) a cover sheet entitled "Nomination to Membership in the Graduate Faculty of Columbus State University -- Cover Page for Packet", (2) a letter of recommendation addressing the nominee’s qualifications for membership vis-à-vis the criteria, (3) any supporting letters from departmental colleagues, and (4) a current copy of the nominee’s vita. The department chair forwards the nomination packet to the college dean "Procedures for Submitting Nominations to or Deletions from the Graduate Council".

(B) The dean evaluates the contents of the nomination packet, makes his/her recommendation on the cover sheet, and forwards the nomination packet to the Director of the Graduate School.

(C) The Director of the Graduate School duplicates and distributes copies of the nomination packet to each Graduate Council member for review and evaluation. The Director reports the Council’s recommendation on the cover sheet, and forwards the nomination packet to the Provost/VPAA.

(D) The Provost/VPAA evaluates the contents of the nomination packet, and approves or denies appointment.
(E) The Graduate School Director notifies the nominees in writing of the final decision regarding appointment or denial to the Graduate Faculty. Copies of this notification are sent to the nominee’s department chair, college dean, and chair of the Graduate Council.

The department chair or college dean may recommend that a faculty member's status on the Graduate Faculty be terminated. This recommendation, a cover sheet entitled "Termination of Membership in the Graduate Faculty at Columbus State University," and a written explanation of the chair's or dean's reasons for termination must be forwarded for review and recommendations as outlined above in steps A through E. Final approval or denial of the recommendation rests with the Provost/VPAA.

Graduate faculty status shall be awarded and recognized according to BOR standards, SACS requirements, and any special provisions required by specialized accreditations within the faculty member’s discipline. The SACS liaison and the Office of the Provost/VPAA for Academic Affairs shall maintain oversight of graduate faculty appointments.

Nominations to provisional and temporary faculty will be initiated by department chair, approved by dean, and submitted to Director of Graduate School for approval.

**IX. Term of Membership and Time of Elections**

Each member shall serve a three-year term of office beginning Fall Semester after the Graduate Council election held each Spring Semester.

**X. Vacancies During Term**

If a position on the Graduate Council falls vacant during the term of a member, a replacement shall be nominated by the dean of the college of the member. The replacement member shall be from the same college of the former member and shall serve until the expiration of the term of the former member. The Graduate Council shall determine when a position falls vacant.

**XI. Committees of the Graduate Council**

Standing committees of the Graduate Council shall be appointed annually by the Chair of the Graduate Council from the membership of the Council. The Director of Graduate School is an ex-officio member of all committees but votes only to break a tie. The Chair of the Graduate Council shall appoint a member of each committee to serve as chair.

The following standing committees of the Council act on the matters indicated and on others, as charged by the Director of the Graduate School:

The Program Committee shall review (a) proposals from colleges for new degree programs and changes to existing programs, and (b) review proposals from colleges for new graduate courses and for changes in existing graduate courses. The Committee shall make recommendations to the Graduate Council concerning the approval or revision of new graduate programs, and the Graduate Council shall in turn make recommendations to the Provost/VPAA.

The Appointment Committee shall consider applications for appointment to the Graduate Faculty. The Committee shall make recommendations to the Graduate Council concerning the graduate status applications, and the Graduate Council shall in turn make recommendations to the Provost/VPAA.

The Graduate Council, the Chair of the Graduate Council or the Director of Graduate School for the University may appoint such other, ad hoc committees as they deem necessary to conduct the business of the Graduate School.
XII. Meetings

The Graduate Council may hold meetings for the discussion of, or action on, matters and issues outlined in Section II and Section III in this document. Meetings of the Graduate Faculty may be called by: (1) the President or designee; (2) the Provost/VPAA or designee; (3) the Director of Graduate School for the University; (4) the Chair of the Graduate Council; or (5) a petition signed by 25 percent of the Regular Graduate Faculty which has been submitted to the President, or a designee. The meeting must be held within ten working days of receipt of the petition during the academic year. Members of the Graduate Council shall receive written notification of meetings which shall include the date, time, place and agenda of the meeting.

XIII. Adoption of and Amendments to Bylaws

These bylaws shall be adopted by a vote of two-thirds majority of the Graduate Council. Voting will be by written ballot (or email).

Proposed amendments to the bylaws shall be debated and voted by the Graduate Council. Any proposed amendment must be circulated in writing to each member of the Graduate Council at least two scheduled academic weeks prior to the meeting at which the amendment will be considered. After the proposed amendment has been discussed at a meeting, a vote consisting of a two thirds majority of the Graduate Council members will suffice for the amendment to pass and be presented to the provost/VPAA for approval.

[Approved: 11/13/09]
[Revised: 11/13/09]