

**FAIRMONT STATE UNIVERSITY**  
**GRADUATE STUDIES**  
**PLAN OF GOVERNANCE**

**{September 8, 2015}**

**1.0 DEFINITIONS**

**1.1 Office of Graduate Studies.** The Office of Graduate Studies is the agency of Fairmont State University charged with organizing and administering all graduate programs.

**1.2 Director of Graduate Studies.** The Director of Graduate Studies (DGS), in conjunction with the Graduate Studies Council, oversees the policies governing graduate education, monitors the quality of graduate programs, and sets goals for enhancing graduate education at Fairmont State University. The Director of Graduate Studies reports to the Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs.

**1.3 Program Directors.** Program Directors may be selected by the appropriate Deans of the Colleges or Schools and bear the major responsibility for leadership of the graduate program within a College or School. The Program Directors have an important role as liaisons to the Office of Graduate Studies, and must stay current on policies and procedures relating to graduate education.

**1.4 Graduate Studies Council.** The Graduate Studies Council is the body representing the Graduate Faculty regarding graduate programs and scholarship within the University. Further powers, duties, structures, and functions are specified in greater detail in subsequent sections of this Plan of Governance.

**1.5 Graduate Faculty.** Graduate Faculty consist of those faculty members who are appointed to the Graduate Faculty by the DGS by reason of their achievements in scholarship and other creative activities, and their expertise in matters related to graduate education including experience teaching at the graduate level.

**1.6 Rationale for Structure.** Graduate education and scholarship conducted in a university setting are, by their very nature, inseparably linked.

**1.6.(a)** Graduate education involves an exploration of the most advanced knowledge and participation by students in the development of new knowledge.

**1.6.(b)** The original scholarship and original creative activities of the faculty members provide the opportunity for participation by graduate students in the development of new knowledge.

**1.6.(c)** The qualifications of faculty members to provide instruction at the graduate level are based on their own achievements in scholarship and other creative activities.

**1.6.(d)** An important reason for engaging in scholarly activities in a university setting is the opportunity for interaction between faculty members and graduate students which underlies the students' instruction and enriches the intellectual contribution of both faculty members and students.

## 2.0 DEANS/PROGRAM DIRECTORS

**2.1 Duties and Responsibilities of the Deans and Program Directors.** The following is a general overview of the responsibilities that reside at the Dean/Program Director level; more specific duties and responsibilities may be determined by the appropriate administrator, and may vary from program to program. The Dean/Program Director works with the appropriate administrator and program faculty to:

- direct and coordinate the graduate program
- lead marketing and program recruitment efforts
- coordinate procedures for admission or denial of graduate program applicants
- provide graduate student advising
- maintain departmental graduate student records and track all students in the program
- handle graduate student petitions and appeals
- lead graduate program planning and curriculum development
- and coordinate program review and assessment.

## 3.0 GRADUATE FACULTY

**3.1 Membership in the Graduate Faculty.** All University faculty members who have an appropriate terminal degree in the field in which they will perform Graduate Faculty functions shall be deemed qualified for consideration of membership in the Graduate Faculty. Appointments to membership on the Graduate Faculty are made by the DGS upon recommendation of the Graduate Faculty of a program and the Graduate Studies Council.

Members of the Graduate Faculty may teach graduate-level courses, direct master's theses, and/or serve on master's committees. Members are expected to engage actively in the graduate program of the University and to pursue professional activities consistent with that participation.

**3.1.(a) *Ex officio* Membership:** The President of the University, the Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs and the Associate Provost (if not also serving as the Director of Graduate Studies), hold *ex officio* membership on the Graduate Faculty.

**3.1.(b) Adjunct Membership:** Individuals who can fulfill a specific need in a department's graduate program but who are not otherwise eligible for membership in the Graduate Faculty are eligible to be appointed adjunct members of the Graduate Faculty by the DGS.

**3.1.(c)** Members of the Graduate Faculty at the time of adoption of these policies will continue to hold membership in the Graduate Faculty unless they ask to have such membership terminated.

**3.1.(d)** Membership on the Graduate Faculty other than *ex officio* confers full voting rights in the Graduate Faculty.

**3.1.(e)** Actions related to appointments to the Graduate Faculty may be appealed successively to the Graduate Faculty of a degree program, the DGS, and the Graduate Studies Council.

**3.2 Powers of the Graduate Faculty.** The Graduate Faculty is empowered to determine policy on all matters having to do with graduate programs, except as authority is otherwise assigned by the Board of Governors, or as its autonomy is limited by correct academic and administrative relations with other units of the University. Academic responsibility for graduate

standards, for recommending establishment of new graduate programs, and for the graduate degree requirements rests with the Graduate Faculty. The DGS, may, in consultation with academic programs and the Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs, recommend new graduate programs to the Graduate Studies Council.

The Graduate Faculty may delegate its powers to the Graduate Studies Council, reserving these rights:

- to nominate members of the Graduate Studies Council;
- to receive minutes of each Graduate Studies Council meeting and therein or separately information concerning the agenda items to be considered for action at the next Graduate Studies Council meeting;
- to receive an annual written report of Graduate Studies Council activity;
- to refer agenda items and issues to the Graduate Studies Council;
- to review Graduate Studies Council actions; and
- to meet on call but normally at least once each year.

**3.3 Privileges, Duties and Responsibilities of the Graduate Faculty.** The privileges, 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, including thesis and orals 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.

**3.4** All meetings of the Graduate Faculty shall be chaired by the DGS.

## **4.0 GRADUATE STUDIES COUNCIL**

**4.1 Description.** The Fairmont State University Graduate Studies Council consists of the Director of Graduate Studies, Graduate Faculty, At-Large Faculty, Deans of Schools and Colleges with graduate programs, Program Coordinators/Directors, graduate students, and *ex officio* members including the Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs and the Associate Provost for Academic Affairs (if not also serving as the Director of Graduate Studies).

### **4.2 Membership.**

**4.2.(a) Graduate Faculty.** Two graduate faculty will be elected from and by the faculty of each graduate program (M.Ed., M.A.T., M.B.A., M.S.C.J., and M.Arch.) as voting members of Council. The graduate faculty will serve two-year terms overlapping so that one member is elected each year. Graduate faculty may be elected to serve consecutive terms. The faculty member must be a regular member of the Graduate Faculty, and must not hold an administrative title above that of Dean or Program Director.

**4.2.(b) At-Large Faculty.** Two at-large faculty members will be elected by the Graduate Council sitting members as voting members of Council. The at-large faculty will serve two-year terms overlapping so that one member is

elected each year. At-large faculty may be elected to serve consecutive terms.

**4.2.(c) Deans.** The deans of the Schools and Colleges with graduate degree programs will serve continuously as voting members of Council.

**4.2.(d) Program Coordinators/Directors.** The Program Coordinators/Directors will serve continuously as voting members of Council.

**4.2.(e) Graduate Students.** Two graduate students will be elected by the Graduate Council sitting members as voting members of Council. The graduate students will serve one year terms.

**4.2.(f) *Ex Officio*.** The Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs and the Associate Provost for Academic Affairs (if not serving also as the Director of Graduate Studies), will serve continuously as *ex officio* members without voting privileges.

The principal purpose of having the above ex-officio members on the Council is to provide a rapid and readily available flow of information to and from important academic areas having significant responsibility for particular aspects of graduate education.

**4.3 Removal of a Member:** An appointed member of the Graduate Studies Council may be removed from the Council by a vote of two-thirds or more of the voting members whenever it is judged that the interests of the Council will be served thereby.

**4.4 Authority.** The Fairmont State University Graduate Studies Council derives its authority from the Graduate Faculty and the Director of Graduate Studies. The DGS has the responsibility for University-level oversight and administration of all graduate programs, policies, procedures, regulations and certification of students for graduation, provides strategic direction, planning and guidance to assure the integrity of graduate studies and its alignment with the University strategic plan, and represents graduate studies to the West Virginia Higher Education Policy Commission, the Higher Learning Commission, and other specialized accrediting agencies and external constituencies. The Council is a standing committee within the DGS's office and its recommendations are advisory to the DGS.

**4.5 Functions.** In practice, much of the day-to-day administration of graduate study is conducted by Graduate Program Directors, Graduate Faculty and college/school Deans with approved graduate programs. The Graduate Studies Council represents the Graduate Faculty and each specific graduate program by virtue of the following responsibilities.

**4.6 Responsibilities.** The Council reviews, coordinates and serves as an advocate for graduate education at Fairmont State University. The Council initiates and reviews proposals for new graduate programs and policies, evaluates substantive revisions in graduate curricula, coordinates periodic program reviews, establishes the University criteria for Graduate Faculty membership, and considers such other matters affecting graduate education as are brought to the Council by the DGS, a Graduate Faculty member, or a graduate student.

At the University level, 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. Illustrative of the administration of policy, interpretation of rules, and recommendation of graduate academic standards within the scope of the Graduate Studies Council are the following:

- Policy governing new programs at the graduate level, and recommending the institution of specific programs subject to requisite administrative approval;
- Policy for graduate major and minor field curricula and acting on such curricula;
- Policy governing course approval by the DGS;
- Policy for student entrance into graduate degree programs and for retention in such programs;
- Policy related to graduate academic standards as may prove to be necessary;
- Policy governing designation by the DGS of Graduate Faculty members;
- Policy on matters within the Graduate School jurisdiction regarding graduate assistantships;
- Recommendations to the appropriate administrative officers concerning graduate faculty workloads and related matters;
- Maintenance of continuing two-way flow of information and recommendations between the Graduate Studies Council and the Graduate Faculty, the DGS, the Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs, Associate Provost (when not also serving as DGS) and the colleges, schools, departments, and other academic units;
- Maintenance of continuing review and evaluation of graduate programs, standards, and administration;
- Maintenance of continuing self-scrutiny concerning the procedural and substantive effectiveness of the Graduate Studies Council;
- Maintenance of continuing study of effective means of enlisting the services and ideas of 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 DGS, the Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs, the Associate Provost (when not also serving as DGS), a Graduate Faculty member, or a graduate student.

**4.7 Approval of Graduates:** Upon the recommendation and certification of the DGS, the Graduate Studies Council will approve the awarding of the appropriate graduate degree to any and all students who have completed all the requirements for their respective graduate program.

**4.8 Review of Graduate Programs.** At the direction of the DGS, the Graduate Studies Council will conduct periodic reviews of all graduate programs, based on a five-year review cycle, and suggest to the DGS measures to maintain or enhance acceptable levels of academic quality. To this end, the Council may recommend to the DGS a number of appropriate actions following completion of the review process, 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. Reviews are conducted either by a committee of the whole or through the appointment of appropriate subcommittees. Program reviews must also go to the Fairmont State University Board of Governors (BOG) with recommendations from the Academic Affairs Committee of the BOG.

Once approved by the BOG, the reviews are reported to the WVHEPC. Annual Graduate Studies reports are file with WVHEPC by the DGS.

**4.9 Review of Curricula.** The Graduate Studies Council evaluates all proposed new graduate and certificate programs and makes its recommendations to the DGS. 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 Council which makes its recommendations to the DGS. The DGS will have regular meetings with the Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs for the purposes of seeking the advice and counsel of the Provost on matters pertaining to newly proposed graduate degree or certificate programs, major curricula modifications and graduate studies policy issues. It is essential that the DGS have a clear and comprehensive appreciation of the impact that significant changes in graduate studies may have on faculty and fiscal resources of the undergraduate programs.

**4.10 Jurisdiction.** The Graduate Studies Council is responsible for the review and evaluation of proposals for the establishment of new graduate degrees and majors. Changes in the curricula of accredited professional programs, such as those contained within the Schools of Education, Health and Human Performance and Business, are evaluated by the Graduate Studies Council which recognizes that the final authority over these programs rests with the appropriate accrediting agency. Evaluation of individual new graduate courses, course deletions, prerequisites, and graduate course credit hour determination are under the jurisdiction of the Graduate Studies Council which makes its recommendations to the DGS, working in consultation with the Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs.

**4.11 Council Meetings.** The Graduate Studies Council shall meet monthly during the academic year. Special meetings may be called by the DGS. 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. A majority vote of those members present will constitute a deciding and official vote of the Council. Tie votes will be regarded as a failure of the motion. Proxy votes are not permitted. Upon request by any voting member, the Council shall vote by means of secret ballot. If no such request is indicated, the secret ballot method will not be employed. Electronic voting is permissible if the majority of the voting members concur.

Meetings may be held if less than a majority of the voting members is present, but no deciding votes may be taken. Business conducted during such a meeting must be approved by a majority of the voting members.

Any member of the University community may request, in advance, permission from the DGS to attend a Council meeting.

The Council shall operate by all pertinent rules contained in Robert's Rules of Order, except as otherwise provided in this Plan of Governance.

**4.12 Communications.** 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 DGS provide the Faculty Senate with an oral or written summary of Council deliberations and actions.

## **5.0 POWER TO AMEND**

Suggestions to alter, amend, or repeal this Plan of Governance are usually initiated by the voting members of the Graduate Studies Council. Such an action may be taken at a regular or special meeting for which written notice of the purpose shall be given. The vote of a majority of the voting members is required to approve any recommended action.

### **Fairmont State University Graduate Studies Plan of Governance**

**Approved as revised [September 8, 2015]**