

BY-LAWS OF THE GRADUATE COUNCIL AND ASSEMBLY

The University of Texas at El Paso

Approved Nov. 2014

- I. **Graduate Program Authorization.** The University of Texas at El Paso is authorized to offer graduate degrees and to have a Graduate School under provisions of Regents' Rules and Regulations Series 40311.

- II. **Graduate School Administration.** The Graduate School will be supervised by a dean reporting to the Provost and appointed by the President of UTEP after consultation with an appropriate faculty committee. This person will be a member of the Graduate Faculty. Final authority in all matters rests with the President of the University. The Dean of the Graduate School will advise the President of the University, through the Provost, on all matters of planning, policy, development, and administration relating to graduate studies and research. The Dean of the Graduate School will be involved in external and internal reviews of graduate programs. The Dean of the Graduate School has the authority and responsibility to submit matters of major policy to the Graduate Assembly of UTEP.

- III. **Graduate Faculty of the University of Texas at El Paso.** UTEP will have a Graduate Faculty composed of persons qualified by their scholarly or creative works and effectiveness in the teaching of graduate students.
 - A. **Regular Graduate Faculty.** Tenured or tenure-track faculty members who are appointed or who have appointments in a department or comparable unit conducting a doctoral or master's program will be participants in such a program, will become regular members of the Graduate Assembly, and are considered Graduate Faculty. The general qualifications for membership in the Graduate Faculty are appropriate educational qualifications, demonstrated research performance or creative works, and satisfactory graduate teaching. Faculty members who hold positions within an academic unit that does not have a graduate program, but who participate in joint graduate programs, will likewise become regular members of the Graduate Faculty with the following privileges and responsibilities:
 1. They may direct doctoral dissertations and chair doctoral committees.
 2. They may serve on doctoral committees.

3. They may direct master's theses and chair master's thesis committees.
4. They may serve on master's committees.
5. They may teach graduate courses.
6. They will be members of their graduate program committees with full voting privileges, although the committee of the whole may appoint a subcommittee to execute its duties.
7. They may be elected to the Graduate Council.
8. They will have full voting privileges on matters before the Graduate Assembly.

B. Temporary Graduate Faculty. Nontenured and nontenure-track faculty may take on various graduate responsibilities depending on the type and approval by other stake-holders. Temporary Graduate Faculty members do not have voting privileges in the Graduate Assembly. Nontenure-track faculty, adjunct faculty, part-time faculty, visiting scholars, UTEP professional staff members, and post-doctoral fellows may be appointed, usually on a one-academic-year basis. Such appointment requires approval from the Program Graduate Committee, the Chair or Director, the Academic Dean, and the Dean of the Graduate School. Such an appointee must be qualified for membership, by virtue of academic background and experience, and must satisfy other appropriate criteria, such as scholarly achievement, research proficiency, or artistic recognition relevant to the specific course assignment or research committee appointment. It is advisable that schools and colleges set expectations or standards for Temporary Graduate Faculty membership, especially Type III membership. Type III Temporary Graduate Faculty applications and exceptional cases will be submitted to the Graduate Council for approval. These will include long-term temporary Graduate Faculty applications. Annually, the Graduate School will provide a report to the Graduate Assembly of Temporary Graduate Faculty, their type, and the program to which they were assigned.

Type I Temporary Graduate Faculty may be assigned to teach graduate courses.

Type II Temporary Graduate Faculty may be assigned to serve as members of, but not chair, thesis and dissertation committees. This category also includes faculty to serve on thesis and dissertation committees from outside the university.

Type III Temporary Graduate Faculty may be assigned to chair

dissertations or theses for the duration of the committee and continued employment with the university. This category also allows for university faculty who are not Regular Graduate Faculty members to serve as program directors, at the discretion of the appropriate Dean, Chair, and Graduate Faculty within the program on an annual basis. Approval of Type III Temporary Graduate Faculty requires all stakeholders involved: Graduate Faculty in the program, relevant Chairs and Deans (plural for interdisciplinary programs), Dean of the Graduate School, and Graduate Council. Candidates for this category will fill out an application and provide a curriculum vitae, letters of support from relevant stakeholders, and any other supporting materials deemed relevant.

C. **Emeritus Graduate Faculty**

Faculty who were Regular Graduate Faculty Members but who retire and transition to Emeritus status will continue to enjoy the following privileges:

1. They may teach graduate courses.
2. They may chair master's thesis committees that were already underway prior to the faculty member's retirement from the university.
3. They may chair doctoral committees that were initiated prior to the faculty member's retirement from the university.
4. They may co-chair or serve on master's thesis committees initiated after the faculty member's retirement.
5. They may co-chair or serve on doctoral committees initiated after the faculty member's retirement.

IV. **Graduate Bodies.** The Graduate Faculty of UTEP will exercise its legislative functions through a Graduate Assembly. This body will be the final faculty authority for recommending policies concerned with academic aspects of graduate programs and policies, such as setting minimum standards for admission and retention of students.

A. **Graduate Assembly Composition and Operations.** The Graduate Assembly will consist of all regular members of the Graduate Faculty (with vote) and ex officio members (without vote). Ex officio members will include the President, the Provost, the Dean of the Graduate School, and other Deans of Colleges and Schools who have not previously been approved as members of the Assembly.

Meetings of the Graduate Assembly will be called by the Chair upon

recommendation of the Graduate Council, the Dean of the Graduate School, or by petition of 10 members of the Assembly.

The Graduate Assembly will elect a chair from among its voting membership to serve a two-year term. The Assembly may create such standing or ad hoc committees as are necessary as long as they do not duplicate committees already under the auspices of the Faculty Senate. The Graduate Assembly will establish such procedures as are necessary to fulfill its function. Questions of duplication or jurisdiction of committees will be addressed by a joint meeting of the Graduate Council and the Executive Committee of the Faculty Senate.

B. Graduate Council Composition and Operations. The Graduate Council will be elected to serve as the administrative arm of the Graduate Assembly and will oversee the creation and revision of graduate academic programs and courses, as well as policies concerning graduate studies. The Graduate Faculty originates and governs the graduate curriculum. It is each Council member's duty to deliberate on graduate studies proposals and to communicate to the faculty and Dean of his/her respective college all actions and information presented to the Graduate Council.

1. The Council will be comprised of the Chair of the Graduate Assembly, two faculty members from each college, and four at-large. In order to better coordinate faculty governance of graduate education, the remaining voting member will be the President of the Faculty Senate.
2. The Dean of the Graduate School will be an ex officio member with no vote.
3. One graduate student from the Student Government Association may serve as a nonvoting student representative to the Graduate Council.
4. Members of the Graduate Council, excluding the Chair of the Graduate Assembly and the Chair of the Faculty Senate, will serve three-year terms. The terms will be staggered so that approximately 1/3 of the Council will be elected each year.
5. To be eligible for the Council, a member must have a total of three years' experience as a graduate faculty member at UTEP or other universities. It is recommended that Council members be tenured, although some circumstances may warrant the participation of nontenured tenure-track faculty.
6. Members of the Council will not serve consecutively for more than two terms.

7. The Dean of the Graduate School will be responsible for conducting the elections. Only members of a particular college may vote for the representative of that college. Consistent with the limitations stated in these by-laws, candidates obtaining the largest pluralities will be elected to the Council.
8. To appear on the ballot, a member must be nominated by five members of the Graduate Faculty. For a college representative, the nominating members must be from the college. Self-nominations are permissible for the position of Chair and other seats.
9. The elections will take place before May 1, and terms will begin the following September 1.
10. A quorum of simple majority is required of voting Council members for business to be conducted, and meetings will be run using Robert's Rules of Order.
11. A Council member may designate an alternate to attend a small number of Council meetings in her/his place. This alternate must be a regular member of the Graduate Faculty and be seated upon a majority vote of the other Council members. Council members who know in advance that they will be absent regularly should resign from the Council and be replaced through election or college appointment.

C. **Chair of Graduate Assembly and Council.** The Chair of the Graduate Assembly will automatically be the Chair of the Graduate Council. To better coordinate faculty governance of graduate education, the Chair of the Graduate Assembly will also automatically serve as a voting member of the Faculty Senate Executive Committee. The Chair of the Graduate Assembly will represent the Graduate Faculty at all appropriate academic functions. The Council will elect a Secretary and Vice Chair from its voting membership. The Council may create standing or ad hoc committees as are necessary. The Graduate Council will establish such procedures as are necessary to fulfill its functions.

D. **Graduate Council Meetings.** The Graduate Council will hold regularly scheduled open meetings. Agendas for all meetings will be distributed to all members of the Graduate Council one week prior to any meeting. Additional meetings of the Council may be called by the Dean of the Graduate School or by the Chair of the Graduate Council.

E. **Graduate Council Reporting.** Each August the Chair of the Graduate Council will present a summary of the actions of the Council to the Graduate Assembly. This summation will include action items, will be

posted via the Graduate School webpage, and will be presented at a meeting of the Faculty Senate early in the next academic year.

- F. On a timely basis, the Graduate Council will consider the Faculty Senate's granting of degrees to include graduate degrees. Graduate degree candidates will be also approved by Dean of the Graduate School.
 - G. The Graduate Council will annually review the data on exceptions to degree plans provided by the Dean of the Graduate School. This information will be distributed to the academic deans, department chairs/program directors, and Program Committees on Graduate Studies.
- V. **Program Committees on Graduate Studies.** UTEP will establish a Program Committee on Graduate Studies in any academic area in which an approved graduate program is offered. The committee will consist of all members of the Graduate Faculty in the program, with a minimum of three members. A committee may include members from related disciplines. Members of the Graduate Faculty who are retired or on modified service may serve as members of the committee but without votes. Each committee will select its Chair.
- A. **Duties of Program Committees on Graduate Studies.** The Program Committees on Graduate Studies will be charged with the overall responsibility for the operation of graduate programs, including the following:
 1. Identifying core faculty for program evaluation and the initiation of Temporary Graduate faculty participation in the program or Regular Graduate Faculty members from outside the department or program
 2. Overseeing graduate degree programs
 3. Overseeing graduate course offerings
 4. Overseeing graduate catalog listings and updates
 5. Reviewing graduate course objectives
 6. Overseeing admissions guidelines, procedures, and practices
 7. Monitoring independent study courses and their appropriate use in a degree program

This monitoring should include evaluation of the syllabus, learning objectives, outcomes, and assessment.

8. Recommending the admission to candidacy for doctoral students
9. Ensuring that policies and procedures for fulfilling doctoral degree requirements are provided in a handbook (paper or electronic version) to all students in the program

The handbook and any revisions must be approved by the Program Committee on Graduate Studies and reviewed for comment by the relevant department chair/program director and academic dean. The Dean of the Graduate School will review it for conformity with existing university policies and procedures and will provide final approval. Handbooks will be available in the relevant department/program offices, academic Dean's offices, and the Graduate School.

10. Reviewing and evaluating data on exceptions to degree plans provided by the Dean of the Graduate School
11. Reviewing conflicts among graduate advisors, faculty members, or students involving degree program compliance
12. Improving the quality of graduate student services, such as advising and mentoring

VI. Graduate Program Directors. Each Program Director will be appointed by the Program Committee on Graduate Studies with the approval of all relevant department chairs, academic deans, and the Dean of the Graduate School. The term of office of the Program Director will be determined by the Program Committee on Graduate Studies. There are a variety of organizational models for the administration and advising in graduate programs at UTEP. "Program Director," as identified here, refers to the Graduate Faculty member of the highest authority in a program. Note that point B (below) allows for other staff to assist in the duties outlined in point A (below).

- A. **Program Director Position Requirements:** Program Directors will do the following:
 1. Represent the Graduate School and the Program Committee on Graduate Studies in all matters pertaining to the advising of graduate students taking major work in that academic discipline
 2. Advise each graduate student on registration, adds, drops, section changes, and special examinations
 3. Maintain a record of each student's work for previous degrees

along with copies of registrations and grades in work at UTEP

4. Refer students to the Graduate School for exceptions
5. Inform students and prospective students about their status, progress, or other graduate study matters, and refer students in appropriate instances to other faculty members for advice
6. Perform additional duties assigned by the relevant Dean responsible for the program, such as participating in program review

- B. **Program Support Personnel.** Programs may have non-faculty support personnel, such as advisors and other persons who support Program Directors and the Program Committee on Graduate Studies in managing degree programs, including advising, record-keeping, and clerical work.

VII. **Graduate Program Modifications.** It is a duty of the Graduate Council to deliberate on modifications to graduate programs and to ascertain whether new courses and program modifications are reasonable and contribute to the university. This includes avoiding redundancies that waste resources and preventing conflicts of interest between programs and departments. The Council will create a policy and related forms to expedite this duty. Those proposing new programs or otherwise modifying existing programs are expected to contact other programs that may possess an overlapping academic focus to avoid redundancies and to provide coordination of shared faculty. Examples include contacting programs with similar courses, faculty who would potentially teach courses, and any others who might need to be aware of the program modification (e.g., courses that are part of multiple degree programs).

- A. **New Courses** -- existing programs. A program wishing to incorporate a new course into an existing program must submit, through its Program Committee for Graduate Studies, a proposal that includes a cover letter, a catalog description, a sample syllabus, and justification for the course to the Graduate Council. Prior to submission, those responsible for proposing the new course must contact other programs that may already have a similar course (for notification and consultation). The proposal should identify faculty members qualified to teach the proposed new course or specify whether the program requires new faculty lines or hires.
- B. **New Degree Tracks or Concentrations** -- existing degree programs. Changes in the elective options under existing degree programs must be approved by the relevant Program Committee for Graduate Studies. The proposal should then be forwarded to the Graduate Council through the appropriate internal college channels. The Graduate Council will review all new elective options on the basis of the following standards:

1. The adequacy of library and other institutional resources for implementing the courses required in the elective option
2. The availability of qualified faculty to administer the proposed option without compromising the ability to offer existing graduate and undergraduate degree programs

Those current faculty members affected should be notified of the proposed changes.

3. The justification for offering such a degree option based upon the availability of employment opportunities for graduates and/or other appropriate rationale for the adoption of the option
4. Assurance that the degree option will neither compete with other existing programs nor create coordination problems for faculty or courses in other programs

C. **Changes in Degree Requirements.** The Program Committee for Graduate Studies will submit for Graduate Council review any changes to degree requirements of existing programs.

D. **Course Deletions.** The Program Committee for Graduate Studies will notify the Graduate Council of their intention to delete any graduate course. Other programs that have included the course in their program should also be notified by those proposing the course deletion.

E. **Undergraduate Courses for Graduate Credit.** The Program Committee for Graduate Studies will submit for Graduate Council approval any undergraduate courses which are to be used for credit toward its graduate program(s). In situations where a program does not own the courses included in its program, which is often the case of multidisciplinary or interdisciplinary degrees, the Program Director will approach these other programs for permission to list their courses for graduate credit.

F. **Graduate Courses for Undergraduate Credit.** The Program Committee for Graduate Studies will submit for Graduate Council review those graduate courses suitable for upper division undergraduate credit substitution. These proposals also require approval of the Faculty Senate.

VIII. **New Graduate Degrees and Certificates.** Proposals for new graduate degree programs and certificates will be forwarded through the Academic Dean and the Dean of the Graduate School to the Graduate Council. The Council will consider all relevant criteria and may recommend revisions to strengthen the proposal as

necessary before making a recommendation to the UTEP administration.

- IX. **Review of Existing Graduate Programs.** All graduate programs will be reviewed periodically. The Graduate Council will assign one of its members to work with the Graduate School to review existing programs. Upon completion of the external review, the assigned member will provide a brief written and oral summary of the program review to the Council at the earliest opportunity. To the extent possible, reviews will coincide and will be integrated with reviews of the program's own review for other purposes such as accreditation, preparation of new degree proposals, or the implementation of legislative, Coordinating Board, or System mandates. Collaborative efforts will be pursued by the Dean of the Graduate School, the Dean of the Academic College, and UTEP administration to conduct reviews of any existing undergraduate programs in the same area as the graduate activities being reviewed. At the discretion of the Graduate Council, or upon recommendation of the Dean of the Graduate School and in consultation with the appropriate Academic Dean, a program's graduate activities may be evaluated more frequently.
- X. **Operating Procedures.** Documentation related to the Graduate Council flows in two directions. Proposals discussed in sections VII and VIII move toward the Council; however, documentation also moves from the Council to academic colleges and programs when Council members share information with their Deans and Program Directors.
- A. **Flow of Documentation.** The flow of information between a program and the Graduate Council will be from the Program Committee on Graduate Studies, through the Department Chair or Program Director, the Academic Dean, the Dean of the Graduate School, and then to the Graduate Council. Recommendations from the Graduate Council or the Graduate Assembly will be submitted through the Dean of the Graduate School to the President of the University and such other persons or bodies as required by the Regents' Rules. The above channels will be utilized for new courses, degree requirements, options, and new degree programs. It is understood that the word "through" in the above statement means that all documents will be forwarded successively with recommendations made by the person(s) at each level.
- B. **Council Initiated Policies.** The Council may also initiate proposals, such as changes in Graduate Council by-laws or other policy related proposals. In these cases, action starts at the Council, and Council members then consult their Deans and the faculty of their College. The Chair of the Council should also consult with the Provost and deans of schools and colleges.

- XI. **By-Law Revisions.** Revisions and changes to these by-laws will be initiated by the Graduate Council. Voting will be permitted by email ballot, and decisions will be by two thirds of those voting. Changes will take effect upon the approval by the necessary majority of the voting Graduate Assembly and any additional approval required by the UT System Board of Regents.