

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

**1.0 DEFINITIONS**

**1.1 Research and Graduate Studies.** The Office of Research and Graduate Studies is the agency of Fairmont State University charged with organizing and supervising all graduate programs and facilitating, coordinating and encouraging research associated with graduate programs throughout the University.

**1.2 Vice President for Research and Graduate Studies.** The VP for Research and Graduate Studies, 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 Vice President for Research and Graduate Studies reports directly to the President of Fairmont State University.

**1.3 Graduate Program Directors.** Graduate Program Directors are 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 liaison with 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 in the determination of policies regarding graduate programs and research 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 consists of those faculty members of Fairmont State University who are appointed to the Graduate Faculty by the VP for Research and Graduate Studies, subject to the policies and criteria determined by the Graduate Studies Council, by reason of their achievements in research and other creative activities, and their expertise in matters related to graduate education.

**1.6 Rationale for Structure.** Graduate education and research 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 the student in the development of new knowledge.

**1.6.(b)** The original research 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 research and creative activities.

**1.6.(d)** One important reason for conducting research in a university setting, as opposed to some other setting, is the opportunity for the interaction between faculty members and graduate students which underlies the students' instruction and enriches the research of both faculty members and students.

## 2.0 GRADUATE PROGRAM DIRECTORS

**2.1 Duties and Responsibilities of the Program Directors.** The following is a general overview of the Program Director's position; more specific duties and responsibilities may be determined by the appropriate administrator, and may vary from program to program. The 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 initial 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
- 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 membership in the Graduate Faculty. Appointments to membership on the Graduate Faculty are made by the VP for Research and Graduate Studies 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 Vice President for Research and Graduate Studies, the Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs, the Associate Provost, and the Deans of colleges and schools, 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 VP for Research and Graduate Studies.

**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 VP for Research and Graduate Studies, 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 research and 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 Vice President for Research and Graduate Studies may, in consultation with academic programs, recommend a new graduate program 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 research to its completion;
- Serving on graduate committees, including thesis committees;
- Remaining current and actively productive in terms of scholarly research 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 VP for Research and Graduate Studies.

## **4.0 GRADUATE STUDIES COUNCIL**

**4.1 Description.** The Fairmont State University Graduate Studies Council consists of Graduate Faculty, a Graduate Student representative, and *ex officio* members including a representative from the Fairmont State University Faculty Senate, the Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs, the Vice President for Research and Graduate Studies, and the Associate Provost.

**4.2 Authority.** The Fairmont State University Graduate Studies Council derives its authority from the Graduate Faculty, and the Vice President for Research and Graduate Studies. It works closely with the VP for Research and Graduate Studies. The Council is a standing committee within the Vice President's office and its recommendations are advisory to the Vice President for Research and Graduate Studies.

**4.3 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 VP for Research and Graduate Studies retains the responsibility for such functions as admitting students, conducting interviews when appropriate, maintaining student records, certifying students for graduation, and determining the level of participation in graduate education by individual faculty members.

**4.4 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 Vice President for Research and Graduate Studies, 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 policy matters within the jurisdiction of the Graduate Studies Council are the following:

- Establishing policy governing new programs at the graduate level, and recommending the institution of specific programs subject to requisite administrative approval.
- Establishing policy for graduate major and minor field curricula and acting on such curricula.
- Establishing policy governing course approval by the VP for Research and Graduate Studies.
- Establishing overall policies for student entrance into graduate degree programs and for retention in such programs.
- Establishing such other overall policies related to graduate academic standards as may prove to be necessary.
- Establishing policy governing designation by the VP for Research and Graduate Studies of Graduate Faculty members.
- Establishing policy on matters within the Graduate School jurisdiction regarding graduate assistantships.
- Establishing policy for facilitating, encouraging and coordinating the research effort of the campus and developing that effort toward the highest level of excellence.
- Making recommendations to the appropriate administrative officers concerning graduate faculty workloads and related matters.
- Maintaining a continuing two-way flow of information and recommendations between the Graduate Studies Council and the VP for Research and Graduate Studies, the Graduate Faculty, and the colleges, schools, departments, and other academic units.
- Maintaining a continuing review and evaluation of graduate programs, standards, and administration.
- Maintaining a continuing self-scrutiny concerning the procedural and substantive effectiveness of the Graduate Studies Council.
- Maintaining a 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.
- Considering such other matters affecting graduate education as are brought to the council by the VP for Research and Graduate Studies, a Graduate Faculty member, or a graduate student.

**4.5 Review of Graduate Programs.** At the direction of the VP for Research and Graduate Studies, the Graduate Studies Council will conduct periodic reviews of all graduate programs

and suggest to the VP measures to maintain or enhance acceptable levels of academic quality. To this end, the Council may recommend to the Vice President for Research and Graduate Studies 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.

**4.6 Review of Curricula.** The Graduate Studies Council evaluates all proposed new graduate and certificate programs and makes its recommendations to the Vice President for Research and Graduate Studies. 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 Vice President for Research and Graduate Studies.

**4.7 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, Nursing, and Business, are not evaluated by the Graduate Studies Council. Evaluation of individual new graduate courses, course deletions, prerequisites, and graduate course credit hour determination are under the jurisdiction of the Graduate Studies Council.

**4.8 Membership.** The Graduate Studies Council shall consist of voting members representing the Graduate Faculty of Fairmont State University and nonvoting, *ex officio* members including a representative from the Fairmont State University Faculty Senate, the Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs, the Vice President for Research and Graduate Studies, and the Associate Provost.

**4.9 Eligibility.** The minimal criteria required to be eligible to qualify as a voting member of the University Graduate Studies Council is as follows:

- Must be a regular member of the Graduate Faculty
- Must not hold an administrative title above that of Department Chairperson
- Must be active in advising graduate students as a Chair or member of the Graduate Faculty

**4.10 Appointment.** Eligible Graduate Faculty members will be appointed for service on the Graduate Studies Council by the VP for Research and Graduate Studies. The President of the Fairmont State University Faculty Senate will designate the Senate representative to the Council.

**4.11 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.

**4.12 Ex Officio Members.** *Ex officio*, nonvoting members of the University Graduate Studies Council shall consist of: the Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs or his/her designee, the Vice President for Research and Graduate Studies or his/her designee, and the Associate Provost or his/her designee.

The principle 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.

**4.13 Council Meetings.** The Graduate Studies Council shall meet monthly during the academic year. Special meetings may be called by the VP for Research and Graduate Studies. 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.

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 VP for Research and Graduate Studies 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.

**4.14 Communications.** Agendas and minutes of Graduate Studies Council meetings shall be provided to all members of the Council, the Deans of the University colleges/schools and all Graduate Faculty.

It is expected that, for information purposes, the representative from the Faculty Senate serving on the Graduate Studies Council will regularly, in cooperation with the VP for Research and Graduate Studies, 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. The ultimate authority to approve the Plan of Governance as well as future changes, however, rests with the Vice President for Research and Graduate Studies. All Governance plans and any modifications must have the final approval of the Board of Governors of Fairmont State.

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

**Approved October 4, 2005.**