

# GRADUATE FACULTY AND GRADUATE COUNCIL

## Graduate School Staff

### Graduate Council Membership and Bylaws

The Graduate Council, comprised of members elected by the graduate faculty within each college or school providing graduate programs, meets quarterly to review new program proposals, promote quality in graduate programs, develop University-wide policies related to graduate students, and develops policies on financial support for graduate students. The Graduate Council serves in an advisory capacity to the Executive Vice President and Provost, in the Office of Academic Affairs.

The current membership of the Graduate Council, as well as upcoming meeting dates and past Minutes of Graduate Council meetings, can be found here.

I. Description and Mission- Composed primarily of Graduate Faculty members from every graduate-degree-granting college of The University of Alabama, the Graduate Council provides evaluations and recommendations on all aspects of graduate education to the Graduate School and the Office of Academic Affairs, and through the Provost and President to the Board of Trustees. Members represent the entire Graduate Faculty, not merely those of the program, department, division, school, or college with which they may normally be affiliated; hence, the primary concern of Council members shall be the general welfare and advancement of graduate education at The University of Alabama as a whole.

#### II. Membership

The Council consists of the dean of the Graduate School or a representative designated by the dean, who chairs the Council but does not vote except to break a tie; the Provost, the dean of University Libraries, a representative from the Office of Teaching Innovation and Digital Education, and a Graduate Faculty member appointed by the Faculty Senate, all ex officio members without voting privileges; and 40 voting members appointed or elected as specified below:

A. 2 student representatives, 1 each from the Graduate Student Association and African American Graduate Student Association, chosen internally by their constituencies in whatever way they deem best;

B. 6 Graduate Faculty representatives appointed by the dean of the Graduate School;

C. 32 faculty representatives elected by and from within the ranks of the Graduate Faculty of the following nine graduate-degree-granting schools and colleges:

1. College of Arts & Sciences
2. College of Communication & Information Sciences
3. College of Community Health Sciences
4. Culverhouse College of Business
5. College of Education
6. College of Engineering
7. College of Human Environmental Sciences
8. Capstone College of Nursing
9. School of Social Work

D. The number of elected Council positions assigned to each of these nine schools and colleges is to be reallocated every year according to the following cumulative procedures:

1. Each school or college shall receive 1 Council member provided that at least one member of the Graduate Faculty resides therein;
2. Each school or college shall receive 1 additional Council member for each full 10% of the university's Graduate Faculty that resides therein;
3. Each school or college shall receive 1 Council member provided that at least one graduate student in good standing is actively pursuing a graduate degree therein;
4. Each school or college shall receive 1 additional Council member for each full 10% of the university graduate student population in good standing that resides therein;
  - i. If any of the 32 elected faculty position remains unassigned as a result of the procedures for proportionate representation outlined above (because, for example, the numbers of Graduate Faculty or graduate students in good standing do not divide evenly into full 10% increments across the schools and colleges), then they shall be divided amongst the schools and colleges specified above by the dean of the Graduate School, who shall
    - ii. Allocate one additional member to each school or college with more than 5% but less than 10% of the total number of the university's full Graduate Faculty residing therein;
    - iii. Allocate one additional member to each school or college with more than 5% but less than 10% of the total number of the university graduate student population in good standing residing therein;
    - iv. Allocate any remaining members as deemed appropriate in light of the most recent three-year trends in graduate student enrollment at The University of Alabama.

E. The number of representatives allocated to each school or college should be communicated to the unit's coordinator of Graduate Council elections early in the Spring semester, so that elections can be planned accordingly.

F. Each of the nine schools and colleges listed above should select a number of alternates to the Council equal to one-half of the number of members allocated according to the above cumulative procedures (always rounding up, so that, for example, a school or college with three members should also have two alternates).

#### III. Term of Membership

Members and alternates shall ordinarily service three-year terms, beginning in the Fall semester after their appointment or election. No member shall be elected to more than two consecutive full terms ( a member could, however, be elected to two full terms, then appointed to serve through the process outlined in II.B above, then elected again). Any member who misses more than two consecutive Graduate Council meetings, without arranging an appropriate

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proxy for their absences, shall be considered to have vacated their position (see V.B.).

### IV. Vacancy and Election Procedures

Each school or college shall determine its own process for the election of its Council members, and for the replacement of any of its members necessitated by a vacancy. Replacement members shall serve out the remainder of the full term of their predecessor.

### V. Meetings of the Graduate Council

A. The dean of the Graduate School shall call meetings of the Graduate Council as often as required to transact the business of the school, and in no case fewer than four times in each academic year. The dean shall call an additional meeting if requested to do so in writing by at least 10 members of the Council.

B. A quorum for actions at a Council meeting shall be a majority of its members. Absentee ballots shall not be permitted. In the event that a member anticipates being absent, they should notify their programmatic, departmental, divisional, or decanal supervisor so that an alternate member from the same school or college can attend in their place. In the event that an alternate is unavailable, and with at least one week's notice to the dean of the Graduate School, the head of the regular member's school or college may appoint a Graduate Faculty member who is not currently serving on the Graduate Council and whose appointment resides in the same academic unit as the regular member to act in person at the meeting as that member's voting proxy.

C. The agenda for each meeting, along with pertinent information on items that the Council will discuss and the minutes of the prior meeting, shall normally be distributed to all Council members at least one week prior to the meeting. Items may be placed on the agenda by the dean of the Graduate School, by the chair of any standing or ad hoc committee, or by a two-thirds vote of members present and voting at the meeting. Agendas and minutes shall be publicly posted by the Graduate School, so that all graduate faculty can access the information.

### VI. Committees of the Graduate Council

A. Standing committees of the Graduate Council shall be appointed annually by the dean of the Graduate School from among that year's membership of the Council. Each committee shall include at least one member from four or more of the schools and colleges specified in II.C above. The dean of the Graduate School or a representative designated by the dean shall serve in an ex officio capacity on all committees but shall not vote except to break a tie. The dean shall appoint a member of each committee to serve as chair, and that chair shall be empowered to schedule meetings and apportion workloads among committee members. The following standing committees act on the matters indicated and on others, as charged by the dean of the Graduate School:

1. Admissions and Recruitment Committee – reviews applications received from departments, divisions, schools, or colleges for changes to admissions requirements or procedures, including applications for new or changes to existing AMP programs
2. Fellowships and Scholarships Committee – reviews all departmental nominations for fellowships and scholarships awarded by the Graduate School (these include Graduate Council Fellowships, National Alumni Association Fellowships, McNair Fellowships, and the David A. Francko Fellowship) and assigns awards to individual students, as well as advising on related policy such as the timing of

fellowship cycles, number of awards, or other changes that enhance the competitiveness of these awards.

3. Policy Committee – makes recommendations concerning academic policies that govern graduate education, the graduate faculty, and the implementation of Council decisions within the Graduate School; individual exceptions to existing policies are not the purview of this committee and should be decided on a case-by-case basis by the dean of the Graduate School; a list of repeated exceptions should be forwarded to this committee for annual review and, if a majority of the committee deems it necessary, new policy recommendations will be drafted
4. Graduate Curriculum Committee – reviews proposals from departments, divisions, schools, or colleges for new graduate degrees and certificate programs and for changes to existing programs; makes recommendations concerning such applications to the Council, which serves in an advisory capacity to the Provost for new program approval
5. Teaching, Research, and Service Awards Committee – oversees the process for awarding all "Outstanding Student" awards made by the Graduate School each year and assigns awards to individual students

B. The Council may create, by a majority vote, or the dean of the Graduate School may appoint, other ad hoc committees as they deem necessary to conduct the business of the Graduate School. Any ad hoc committee operating continuously for more than one year shall be considered for conversion to a standing committee, subject to an affirmative vote of two-thirds of the members of the Graduate Council in attendance at the meeting in which the vote occurs.

### VII. Revision to the Bylaws of the Graduate Council

Changes to these bylaws can be effected only by a vote of two-thirds of the members of the Graduate Council in attendance at the meeting in which the vote occurs.

## Qualifications of the Graduate Faculty

### Graduate Faculty

The purpose of the graduate faculty of The University of Alabama is to set standards for graduate work and to provide graduate instruction.

There are three categories of members: Full, Associate, and Affiliate. It is the responsibility of the graduate faculty in each division to elect its representative(s) to the Graduate Council, which acts for the faculty in matters relating to graduate work.

Only members of the graduate faculty may teach courses numbered 500 or above. Only Full and Associate members of the graduate faculty may chair thesis and examining committees. Dissertation committees must be chaired by Full members of the graduate faculty. Committees for final projects of professional-practice doctorates may be chaired by Full or Associate members, or by Affiliate members of the Graduate Faculty who meet all of the following qualifications:

- a. hold an appropriate doctoral degree; and
- b. have the appropriate professional qualifications; and
- c. hold the rank of at least assistant professor in a full-time position at The University of Alabama

#### Criteria for Full and Associate Members

The dean of each academic division has the responsibility of nominating members to serve on the graduate faculty. These nominees must meet the following criteria:

1. They must hold the PhD or other terminal degree, and must hold the rank of at least assistant professor in a full-time position.
2. Full and Associate members must demonstrate ability and continuing interest in the graduate program and in research or creative activity. Full members must show a strong, continuing record of productive research, publication, creative activity, and scholarly activity appropriate to the discipline. These broad requirements are best interpreted by each department and college in accordance with their written guidelines ("Standards for Graduate Faculty Status"). These guidelines of each academic unit address expectations regarding currency in the field and standards of successful mentorship within the context of their discipline. College/department criteria should also delineate the different expectations for Full versus Associate membership.
3. They must be recommended by the Full and Associate members of the departmental graduate faculty, department chairperson, and dean of the academic division, in accordance with the department's or college's Standards for Graduate Faculty Status. These nominations will then be acted upon by the dean of the Graduate School.

#### **Criteria for Affiliate Members**

Affiliate membership may be extended to well-qualified individuals, who do not satisfy the above criteria, to perform specific functions for specific time periods, not to exceed three calendar years. Minimum standards for Affiliate membership and the role Affiliate members may fill in a department's graduate program shall be outlined in the department's Standards for Graduate Faculty Status. Nominees must be recommended by the departmental graduate faculty, department chairperson, and dean of the academic division. Nominations should address how the individual's qualifications meet the expectations of their role as Affiliate graduate faculty. These nominations will then be acted upon by the dean of the Graduate School.

#### **Graduate Faculty Appointment Process**

For Full and Associate membership: the department chair (or their designee) sends the dean of the college an appointment request for Full or Associate graduate faculty status. The department attaches the individual's current curriculum vitae to the request. The dean of the college (or their designee) reviews the request and, if approved, forwards the request to the dean of the Graduate School (or their designee). The Graduate School reviews the request and responds to the college, the department, and the graduate faculty nominee.

For Affiliate membership: the department chair (or their designee) sends the Graduate School an appointment request for Affiliate graduate faculty status. The department attaches the individual's current curriculum vitae to the request. The dean of the Graduate School or their designee) reviews the request and responds to the college, the department, and the graduate faculty nominee.

In all cases where the membership qualifications are not clear from the nominee's curriculum vitae, the nomination must include a paragraph of justification to demonstrate that the nominee meets the department's or college's Standards for Graduate Faculty Status at the requested level (Full, Associate, or Affiliate).

#### **Graduate Faculty Appointment of Faculty or Staff in Administrative Roles**

Faculty or staff members currently on administrative appointments, or returning to the faculty from such appointments, are eligible for Full or Associate membership on the graduate faculty. They should show, at a minimum, promise of satisfying the appropriate departmental and University membership criteria. The individual's record of teaching,

research, and graduate mentorship before becoming an administrator should be considered.

#### **Graduate Faculty Appointment of Retired Faculty**

After a graduate faculty member retires, the graduate faculty member may need to continue to serve as a chair or member of students' thesis or dissertation committees and/or to perform other specific functions. For this reason, members of the graduate faculty are automatically permitted to retain the graduate faculty status that they hold upon retirement, for up to three years after retirement. After that point, retired graduate faculty members may be appointed as Affiliate members of the graduate faculty, with terms of one to three years, for as long as needed, for this purpose and/or to perform other specific functions. The nomination and appointment procedures for these Affiliate appointments are the same as those adopted by the academic unit and the University.

#### **Graduate Faculty Appointment in Multiple Departments**

To accommodate the full breadth of UA's expertise as well as to facilitate the establishment of interdepartmental and/or interdisciplinary student committees, it is permissible that individuals be appointed as Full or Associate graduate faculty in multiple departments, to teach graduate courses and/or serve on graduate thesis/dissertation committees. The appointment process follows the regular Graduate Faculty Appointment Procedure, with the department chair initiating the request for an appointment. The type of appointment will depend on each department's criteria and their regular appointment procedures. In cases in which the faculty member has no contractual effort assigned in the department in which the Full or Associate appointment is requested, the chair's request for an appointment must include confirmation that the request is supported by the chair(s) of the faculty member's home department(s).

Secondary graduate faculty appointments are initiated by the secondary department and with the approval of the home department.

#### **Graduate Faculty Appointment in UA System**

UA has several graduate programs that operate jointly with the University of Alabama-Huntsville and/or the University of Alabama-Birmingham. For these programs, faculty or research staff who have been approved for graduate faculty status at their home institution may be nominated as joint graduate faculty at The University of Alabama. In order that our joint graduate programs may operate seamlessly, these faculty shall exercise all the rights and privileges of a UA member of the graduate faculty at the corresponding level (e.g., Full joint graduate faculty members may direct doctoral committees at UA). The nomination process for joint graduate faculty shall follow the same procedures as outlined above for UA faculty and staff.

#### **Terms of Appointment**

Once appointed, Full and Associate graduate faculty membership is continuous as long as the graduate faculty member continues to meet the department's written standards for professional currency and graduate mentorship ("Standards for Graduate Faculty Status").

#### **Review of Graduate Faculty Membership**

During the normal course of annual review, Department Chairs will affirm that Full or Associate graduate faculty members continue to meet the department's written standards for professional currency and graduate mentorship ("Standards for Graduate Faculty Status").

#### **Revocation of Graduate Faculty Status**

A member of the graduate faculty of the University of Alabama may have their graduate faculty status changed or revoked if they fail to meet the department's Standards for Graduate Faculty Status. Specific criteria

related to the change or revocation of graduate faculty status shall be outlined by each department or college in their Standards for Graduate Faculty Status, and shall be based on two general criteria:

1. Professional currency and/or research productivity, as defined by the department. Generally, a department would provide one or two years of warning to a faculty member before proceeding with revocation of graduate faculty status.
2. Record of successful graduate mentorship.

Revocation may occur when a faculty member fails to fulfill the responsibilities of a member of the Graduate Faculty to teach graduate student(s) effectively, in a civil, professionally appropriate manner, to do scholarly research and creative work of high quality or remain active in the practice of the profession, and to direct the research/professional development of graduate student(s) so that they progress toward graduation in a timely manner appropriate to the field. Failure to teach graduate students effectively and/or to direct the research and professional development of graduate student(s) also includes any acts listed in the Faculty Handbook "Code of Conduct and Standards of Behavior."

The department chair or graduate program director may initiate the review process at the unit level. The unit may recommend revocation of graduate faculty status by a two-thirds majority vote of the Full and Associate graduate faculty members in the department, or a two-thirds majority vote by an elected committee of the unit, or another process agreed upon within the college, depending on the unit's particular governance policies. This recommendation shall be forwarded to the college dean, who shall issue a recommendation to the Graduate School. The recommendation will then be acted upon by the dean of the Graduate School.

In exceptional cases, revocation of graduate faculty status may also be initiated by the Dean of the college, the Dean of the Graduate School, the Provost, or the President.

Faculty may request to be reinstated to the Graduate Faculty at such time as the issues related to the earlier revocation have been resolved. The process is the same as for initial appointment to the Graduate Faculty.

#### **Graduate Faculty Database**

A current list of all members of the Graduate Faculty is available online. It includes each faculty member's name, department, appointment type, other graduate role and, if applicable, end-of-appointment date.