

## **Masters of Science in Agriculture Program Bylaws**

**Washington State University**

**Administrative Home: College of Agriculture, Human, and Natural Resource Sciences**

**Last Revised – by Faculty** \_\_\_\_\_

**Faculty Senate Approval Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

### **I. Objectives**

- A. Degree offered: Master of Science in Agriculture
- B. Discipline: Agriculture
- C. Mission of the Program: To enhance the career trajectory of agricultural professionals, practitioners, and educators by improving their ability to apply new and emerging scientific findings and technologies to the advancement and expansion of their disciplines through:
  - 1. Successful completion of high quality courses designed to support expertise expansion in targeted areas or disciplines;
  - 2. Participation in an immersion-based, high quality research experience;
  - 3. Opportunities to disseminate knowledge through participation in and/or development of extension programs or media.

The degree program is primarily designed to support the educational advancement of place bound, time bound students in an online course delivery format; however, students on campus also may access the program. The overall goal of the program is to prepare Master's level graduates for professional, practitioner, and educator opportunities in agriculture, so that they may provide leadership and disseminate knowledge to an increasingly complex society.

- D. Objectives:
  - 1. To prepare students to become experts in professional fields related to agriculture.
  - 2. To prepare students to become outstanding educators and practitioners in agricultural disciplines.
  - 3. To prepare students to become outstanding leaders and team players in collaborative and interdisciplinary application of their expertise to address local, regional, national and/or global problems associated with agriculture.
  - 4. To enhance the visibility and impact of graduate programs in agricultural sciences.
  - 5. To provide students with an experiential-based research opportunity designed to translate content provided in course work to reality.
  - 6. To provide student with a pathway for manifesting their career objectives.
  - 7. To transition students to higher level of understanding of agriculture-based disciplines through graduate education.
- E. Learning Outcomes:
  - 1. To enable students to become experts in their professional agricultural fields.
    - a. Expand breadth of knowledge and expertise in agriculture disciplines and closely related fields.

- b. Increase depth of knowledge and expertise in agriculture disciplines.
  - c. Enhance the ability of students to adapt to emerging changes in technology, the economy, and communication that have a dramatic impact on the agricultural industry.
2. To enable students to become outstanding educators and practitioners in agricultural disciplines, the program will foster the development of excellent communication and teaching skills, as well as a comprehensive understanding of research approaches used to address agricultural issues. The successful student will embody the following:
- a. Mastery of research skills and techniques as demonstrated by the major advisor, advisory committee, and faculty at large through confirmation that the student has successfully completed all phases of an independent research project. The student will:
    - i. Demonstrate an ability to critically assess and comprehend societal problems, stakeholder concerns and scientific questions that formulate major issues to be addressed through applied and/or basic research.
    - ii. Demonstrate scientific literacy by independently accessing, interpreting and summarizing literature and other sources of knowledge on the research topic.
    - iii. Develop research objectives and hypotheses through the use of logic and critical thinking.
    - iv. Propose and execute experimental protocol to test stated hypotheses.
    - v. Collect, summarize and interpret experimental data.
    - vi. Apply standard rules of ethics to their scientific endeavors.
  - b. Mastery of communication skills for conveying research concepts, findings, and implications to their scientific colleagues, as well as stakeholder groups. Successful students will demonstrate their mastery of effective:
    - i. Oral communication of research concepts, findings and implications to scientific and non-scientific groups through preparing and delivering seminars or public presentations.
    - ii. Written communication of research concepts, findings and implications to scientific and non-scientific groups through thesis preparation, authoring scientific journal articles, authoring extension bulletins, etc.
    - iii. Delivery of education programs to students and stakeholders about research concepts, findings and their implications to agriculture.
3. To prepare students to become outstanding leaders and team players in collaborative and interdisciplinary application of their science to the local, regional, national and global problems and issues at large, the program will foster within students the ability to effectively work within a team construct or community as positive leaders and team players. The program will foster the following within successful students:
- a. Effective leadership skills.
  - b. Commitment to integrity and ethical behavior.
  - c. Appreciation and respect for diversity.
  - d. Appreciation for global cultures, traditions, and perspectives.
4. By enhancing the visibility and impact of the graduate programs in agricultural disciplines, the program will:

- a. Increase the number and diversity of high quality applicants and students in the program.
- b. Strengthen the college's role in distance delivery by expanding access beyond Washington State boundaries.
- c. Place more WSU graduates in lead teaching and industry positions.

## **II. Membership**

A. Graduate Faculty within the Master of Science in Agriculture Program may be WSU tenured and tenure track faculty, WSU non-tenure track faculty, or WSU adjunct faculty, subject to the limitations and definitions in this document. All Graduate Faculty must be "Initial Program Faculty" (listed in Section XI of this document) or subsequently approved as Graduate Faculty through the process outlined in section B below.

### **1. WSU Campus Participation**

- a. The Master of Science in Agriculture Program is offered through the Pullman campus of Washington State University and principally at a distance through the Center for Distance and Professional Education as approved and authorized by the Higher Education Coordinating Board (HECB) of Washington State.
- b. Approved tenured and tenure track Master of Science Graduate Faculty at all regional campuses, agricultural extension sites, and other affiliated university sites may participate equally in the Master of Science in Agriculture Program as supporting faculty with full program rights and responsibilities. As such they are entitled to act as chair, co-chair, or member of graduate student committees; teach graduate courses; supervise research; and act as a Master of Science in Agriculture Program Curriculum Committee member.

### **2. Graduate Faculty Participation**

- a. Graduate Faculty participation in Master of Science in Agriculture Program is independent and separate from academic department, school, or college affiliations.
- b. All active members of the Graduate Faculty of the Masters of Science in Agriculture Program are eligible to vote on program issues.

### **3. Disciplinary Expertise**

Graduate Faculty within the Master of Science in Agriculture Program are expected to have a MS, PhD or equivalent degree in a field related to agriculture, agricultural education, agricultural technology or related fields. In addition, they must have demonstrated disciplinary expertise in a field related to agriculture, interest and experience in mentoring and teaching of graduate students in this field, and relevant professional accomplishments.

### **4. Active Research Appropriate to Master of Science in Agriculture Program**

Graduate Faculty must be actively involved in research, extension and/or graduate level teaching related to agriculture, agricultural education, agricultural technology or related fields as evidenced by recent external grant or contract support, related peer-reviewed publications within the last 5 years, graduate student mentoring within the last 5 years,

teaching of relevant graduate level courses, or other relevant professional accomplishments.

5. Non-Tenure Track Graduate Faculty

a. Internal to WSU

Non-tenure track Graduate Faculty internal to WSU includes research, clinical, and affiliate faculty. This category of Graduate Faculty also includes USDA-ARS researchers. These researchers are classified as WSU adjunct faculty but may function in the same roles as WSU tenured and tenure-track faculty. USDA-ARS faculties are entitled to act as chair, co-chair, or a member of graduate student committees; teach graduate courses; supervise research; and act as a student committee member. Other non-tenure track faculty internal to WSU (research, senior instructors, instructors, clinical, affiliate) may be active Master of Science in Agriculture Graduate Faculty and are entitled to act as co-chair or member of graduate student committees; teach graduate courses; and supervise research. When serving as co-chair of a student committee they must work with a tenured, tenure-track or USDA-ARS faculty member who also is an active member of the Master of Science in Agriculture Graduate Faculty.

b. External to WSU

Professionals who are not WSU faculty may be granted Graduate Faculty participation within the Master of Science in Agriculture Program if they are first officially approved as adjunct faculty for WSU. Adjunct faculty who are approved as active Graduate Faculty are entitled to act as a member of graduate student committees; teach graduate courses; and supervise research. They may not serve as student committee chair or co-chair or on the Master of Science in Agriculture Program Steering Committee.

6. Individual Committee Member Internal to WSU

Individuals not officially participating as Graduate Faculty within the Master of Science in Agriculture Program (for example, a faculty member from another WSU department or program) may serve on graduate committees as long as they are a member of the Graduate Faculty in their own program or discipline and their committee appointment is approved by the Steering Committee of Master of Science in Agriculture Program.

7. External Individual Committee Members

Individuals not officially participating as Graduate Faculty within any graduate program at WSU (for example, a faculty member from another university or research entity) may be approved to serve as a thesis/dissertation committee member for an individual student on a case-by-case basis. The committee chair for that student should forward the name and a curriculum vitae of the desired committee member to the Master of Science in Agriculture Program Director or the Associate Dean for distribution to the Steering Committee. With approval of the Steering Committee, the nomination (with accompanying CV or other documentation of expertise) is forwarded to the Dean of the Graduate School for final approval.

## B. Application for Membership

1. Initial Graduate Faculty within the Master of Science in Agriculture Program are listed in Section XI of this document and have been approved by the Master of Science in Agriculture Steering Committee and Dean of the Graduate School.
2. Candidates for Graduate Faculty participation within the Master of Science in Agriculture Program should be nominated by an existing Master of Science in Agriculture Graduate Faculty member or may self-nominate. The nomination should include a letter of nomination and curriculum vitae for the nominee. The Director of the Master of Science in Agriculture Program or the Associate Dean will circulate application materials to all active Graduate Faculty prior to voting. Acceptance as Graduate Faculty requires a positive vote from a majority of faculty who respond to the vote, as well as from a majority of the members of the Master of Science in Agriculture Steering Committee.
3. In addition to a commitment to maintain the highest standards of mentoring for graduate students, anticipated contributions or qualifications for all successful Graduate Faculty applicants include one or more of the following:
  - a. History or reasonable expectation of an active research program that can plausibly be relied upon as the source of continuing support (financial, infrastructure, mentoring) of a Master of Science in Agriculture graduate student.
  - b. History of or willingness to participate as appropriate in administrative, teaching, and other functions of the Master of Science in Agriculture Program. This may include serving on graduate program steering or curriculum committees; serving as a thesis committee member or chair; or providing graduate level instruction.
  - c. History of publication of peer-reviewed manuscripts and/or Tier I extension publications in a discipline related to agriculture.

## C. Continuation of Active Membership

1. Graduate Faculty appointments to the Master of Science in Agriculture Program will be reviewed for continuation of active membership by the Master of Science in Agriculture Program Steering Committee every 3 years with one-third of the membership reviewed each year. They will be evaluated for contributions to graduate instruction, research, and teaching. Contributions to the program shall be a requirement for continued active membership. Contribution may take the form of:
  - a. Committee chair, co-chair or member for graduate students
  - b. Teaching or co-teaching a graduate course
  - c. Supervising research for graduate students
  - d. Serving on the Master of Science in Agriculture Program Steering or Curriculum Committees
2. Faculty who do not make any of the contributions as stated in C.1 above to the Master of Science in Agriculture Program for three consecutive years will be designated as inactive Graduate Faculty. Inactive Graduate Faculty do not have voting rights. Initiation of any of these activities described in C.1 above will result in restoration of active Graduate Faculty designation.



D. Discontinuation of Membership

Upon request of an active Graduate Faculty member, that individual's membership will be discontinued. If that individual's situation should change, they may reapply for Graduate Faculty participation at any time.

E. Membership Appeal Process

Faculty appeal of any membership decision in the Master of Science in Agriculture Program must be made in writing to the Director of the Master of Science in Agriculture Program or the Associate Dean within 30 calendar days of the decision. The appeal is determined by a majority vote of all Master of Science in Agriculture Graduate Faculty (see Section IX for definition of quorum). Final written appeal may be made to the Dean of the Graduate School within 30 calendar days of the Master of Science in Agriculture Graduate Faculty vote.

### **III. Administration**

Administration of the program will be overseen by the Academic Program Coordinator of the Master of Science in Agriculture Program, who reports to the Associate Dean of Academic Programs in the College of Agriculture, Human, and Natural Resource Sciences (CAHNRS). A Steering Committee composed of Chairs and Directors of participating departments, schools or centers (i.e. Dept. of Crop and Soil Sciences, Dept. of Horticulture and Landscape Architecture, School of Economic Sciences, Dept. of Plant Pathology, Dept. of Entomology, Dept. of Animal Sciences, Dept. of Food Science and the Research and Extension Centers in Mt. Vernon, Puyallup, Prosser and Wenatchee) will collectively serve as the guiding voice of the program. Based on consensus, the Associate Dean of Academic Programs will implement the recommendations made by the Steering Committee. A subset of faculty from participating departments may be called upon to serve on the Master of Science in Agriculture Program Curriculum Committee to address course content, development, and delivery issues.

### **IV. Graduate Program Director**

- A. A Director of Master of Science in Agriculture Program may be nominated by Graduate Faculty or a member of the Steering Committee. Based on majority vote of members of the Steering Committee, the Associate Dean will appoint this person as Director. If a suitable candidate is not identified, the Steering Committee will serve as the collective voice of the Master of Science in Agriculture program, as described in III above, and the Associate Dean will assume the responsibilities of the Director.
- B. The Director shall serve a term of 4 years and is eligible for re-election if nominated to continue in this position in accordance with the terms of the initial appointment and with final approval of the Master of Science in Agriculture Program Steering Committee as described in IV.A. above.

- C. The Director may be removed from office by a majority vote of the Master of Science in Agriculture Program Steering Committee and with the approval of the Associate Dean.
- D. Duties of the Director of the Master of Science in Agriculture Program
  - 1. Serve as the liaison between the Graduate Faculty and the Steering Committee.
  - 2. Engage with Steering Committee and Graduate Faculty on policy development.
  - 3. Implement policies as directed by the Steering Committee.
  - 4. Represent the Master of Science program at campus and off-campus events, and recruitment activities.
  - 5. Participate in Steering Committee meetings.
  - 6. Call and preside at meetings of the Graduate Faculty.
  - 7. Coordinate curriculum development, delivery and assessment activities for the Master of Science in Agriculture Program with the Steering Committee and Graduate Faculty.
  - 8. Create and implement a recruitment and retention plan for the Master of Science in Agriculture Program.
  - 9. With support from the Academic Program Coordinator for the Master of Science in Agriculture Program:
    - a. Coordinate all program administrative activities with the Graduate School.
    - b. Submit course or curriculum change or approval forms.
    - c. Submit bylaws change or approval forms.
    - d. Update and review for accuracy all publications related to the Master of Science in Agriculture Program including web pages, catalog copy, and recruitment materials.
    - e. Develop and update a SharePoint site on the CAHNRS website for Graduate Faculty and students enrolled in the program. (<https://sharepoint.cahnrs.wsu.edu/ap/CAHNRS-AP/MSAg/default.aspx>)
    - f. Review and make final recommendations concerning acceptance or rejection to the program based on recommendations of the Master of Science in Agriculture Program Steering Committee for submittal to the Graduate School.
    - g. Review and make final decisions concerning program of study approval based on the recommendation of the Chairs/Directors on the Master of Science in Agriculture Program Steering Committee whose expertise align with the student's research area of interest, and submit these documents to the Graduate School.

## **V. Committees**

- A. Master of Science in Agriculture Program Steering Committee  
Based on consensus, provides policy and program decisions that are implemented by the Director of the Master of Science in Agriculture Program if one has been appointed or the

Associate Dean of Academic Programs. The Academic Program Coordinator shall record and distribute minutes of each meeting to the Graduate Faculty and maintain an electronic copy in SharePoint site.

1. The Master of Science in Agriculture Program Steering Committee shall be composed of the 11 Chairs and Directors of departments, schools or centers participating in the Master of Science in Agriculture Program (see section III above).
2. Each Master of Science in Agriculture Program Steering Committee member will seek input and consider viewpoints of participating Graduate Faculty from their department, program or centers during the decision making process.
3. Members of the Master of Science in Agriculture Program Steering Committee will serve for the duration of their appointment as chair or director of a participating department, school or center.
4. Areas in which the Master of Science in Agriculture Program Steering Committee shall provide oversight:
  - a. Review, develop and update long-range goals for the Master of Science in Agriculture Program and develop action plans and timelines for attaining these goals. These goals shall be presented and reviewed at least once annually during a meeting with all Graduate Faculty.
  - b. Serve as a sounding board for the Director or Associate Dean concerning new ideas, changes, etc., in academic or administrative issues recommended by the Graduate Faculty.
  - c. Provide guidance and adjustments to more effectively administer the program.
  - d. Identify members for service on other committees related to the Master of Science in Agriculture Program.
  - e. Assist with curriculum development and assessment processes for the Master of Science in Agriculture Program.
  - f. Review all student applications and, in conjunction with the Director, Associated Dean and/or the Academic Coordinator, after consultation with appropriate Graduate Faculty, and in a timely manner, determine the disposition of applications as to acceptance or rejection.
  - g. Participate in reviewing and approving programs of study for students engaged in research activities associated with their disciplines.

B. Master of Science in Agriculture Program Curriculum Committee

Coordinate curriculum review, program of study review, and recruitment and retention activities for the Master of Science in Agriculture Program as requested by the Master of Science in Agriculture Program Steering Committee and/or the Director or Associate Dean.

1. The Master of Science in Agriculture Program Curriculum Committee consists of one member (7-11) from each participating department, school or center. The departmental and center representative may be the same person if that person is located at a Research & Extension Center. Participants are selected by the Chair or Director of each participating department, school or center.



2. Members of the Master of Science in Agriculture Program Curriculum Committee shall serve 3-year terms. At the end of each term, contributions shall be reviewed by their Chair and/or Director. Based on successful performance and level of contribution to the Master of Science in Agriculture Program, members may be reappointed.
  3. Based on the recommendation of the Master of Science in Agriculture Program Steering Committee, the Director or Associate Dean shall call and preside over meetings. The Academic Program Coordinator shall take minutes, which will be posted on the SharePoint site.
  4. Recruitment:
    - a. Work with the Director or Associate Dean and/or Academic Coordinator to develop and maintain recruitment materials as needed.
    - b. Participate in recruitment efforts as requested.
- C. Other Committees
- Other ad hoc committees may be appointed by the Master of Science in Agriculture Program Steering Committee, Associate Dean and/or Director. Addition of new, or changes to the existing, standing committees must be approved by amendment of bylaws.

## **VI. Graduate Student Committees**

- A. The graduate committee of each student shall have a minimum of three members. A majority of members of each committee shall be active Master of Science in Agriculture Graduate Faculty members.
- B. The initial selection, or subsequent changes, of a graduate student's committee shall be determined jointly by the student and the student's advisor. A major advisor shall be identified among committee members based on mutual agreement between the student and the committee if an advisor has not been identified prior to the first committee meeting.
- C. Committee meetings will be held as needed, but at least once per year.
- D. A program of study with a course enrollment timeline and a research objective and brief overview shall be submitted for review by the Master of Science in Agriculture Program Steering Committee within six months of a student's acceptance into the program. An array of science-based, graduate level courses must be included in the program of study to gain approval by the Director or Associate Dean and members of the Master of Science in Agriculture Program Steering Committee. Continual enrollment is recommended to ensure timely graduation.
- E. As specified in the Graduate School's Policies and Procedures, the performance of each graduate student shall be reviewed annually.

## **VII. Student Representatives**

At the discretion of the Master of Science in Agriculture Steering Committee, Director or Associate Dean and/or the Graduate Faculty, student representation may be added or deleted from any committee structure. In accordance with the Policies and Procedures of the Graduate School at WSU, graduate students are not permitted to serve on the committees of other graduate students.

## **VIII. Graduate Faculty Meetings**

- A. The Master of Science in Agriculture Program Steering Committee and/or the Director of Associate Dean shall call Graduate Faculty meetings as needed and at least once per academic year with a minimum of one week notice. All attempts shall be made to provide a written agenda in advance.
- B. Other meetings may be called at the discretion of the Director, Associate Dean or the Master of Science in Agriculture Program Steering Committee.
- C. A special meeting of Master of Science in Agriculture Graduate Faculty may be called by petition of 5 or more Graduate Faculty members.
- D. Efforts will be made to communicate items of interest, including notification of a faculty meeting, via e-mail. All public documents will be made available to the Master of Science in Agriculture Program Steering Committee Members and Graduate Faculty through the SharePoint site, which will be maintained by the Academic Program Coordinator.
- E. Faculty not present on the Pullman campus at the time of a general Master of Science in Agriculture Graduate Faculty meeting may participate by telephone conference call or other electronic means.

## **IX. Quorum**

- A. For all general graduate faculty meetings and votes unless otherwise indicated, a quorum shall be defined as a minimum of 50 percent of the Program membership.
- B. For programmatic committees to conduct a business meeting, a quorum shall be defined as a minimum of 50 percent of the committee membership.
- C. Unless otherwise indicated, a simple majority of the total number of ballots cast are required to pass a motion.

- D. In the event of a tie vote in which the entire graduate faculty is eligible to vote, the Master of Science in Agriculture Program Director or Associate Dean will decide the outcome of the vote. For tie votes that occur within programmatic committees, the Director or committee chair will decide the outcome of the vote.

## **X. Amendments to Program Bylaws**

- A. The Program Bylaws document shall be reviewed every fifth year by the Master of Science in Agriculture Program Steering Committee and annually by the Director or Associate Dean.
- B. Amendments to the Bylaws may originate from any eligible Master of Science in Agriculture Graduate Faculty member. Proposed amendments must be forwarded to the Master of Science in Agriculture Steering Committee and Director or Associate Dean. After discussion, amendments shall be forwarded to the Graduate Faculty electronically at least 2 weeks prior to the faculty meeting at which the amendments will be discussed. After discussion, a minimum 2 week period will follow the faculty meeting prior to vote. Votes on amendments may occur at a faculty meeting or electronically. Amendments to the Master of Science in Agriculture Program Bylaws require a positive vote from the majority of all active Master of Science in Agriculture Graduate Faculty and consensus based approval by the Master of Science in Agriculture Program Steering Committee.
- C. All amendments and revisions must be submitted to the Graduate Studies Committee and Faculty Senate for review and final approval.

## **XI. List of Initial Graduate Faculty Participants**

- A. List of initial Master of Science in Agriculture Program Graduate Faculty Participants:

**Dr. Margaret Benson**, Professor/Chair

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- C. With assistance from the Academic Program Coordinator, the Director of the Master of Science in Agriculture Program or the Associate Dean is responsible for submitting an updated list of active and inactive Graduate Faculty participants to the Dean of the Graduate School for approval on an annual basis.