Faculty Senate Graduate Studies Committee

Summary of functions and responsibilities

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Functions

Basic functions of the Faculty Senate Graduate Studies Committee (GSC) are outlined at http://facsen.wsu.edu/committees/faculty_senate_committees/graduate_studies.html:

1. On a continuous basis, reviews and appraises graduate educational policies, programs, and procedures.
2. Recommends establishment, continuation, modification, and termination of graduate courses and degree programs.
3. Advises the Dean of the Graduate School.
4. Makes policy recommendations regarding the granting of graduate scholarships, assistantships, and fellowships.
5. Consults with the Academic Affairs Committee on those policies and procedures which jointly affect graduate and undergraduate education.

Additional summary detail for these functions is provided below. Much of this summary is based on the Washington State University Graduate School Policies and Procedures Manual 2013-2014 (GSPPM) linkable from http://gradschool.wsu.edu/CurrentStudents/PoliciesAndProcedures/.

While the GSPPM is a useful reference, the GSC is a Faculty Senate Committee, not a Graduate School Committee. As a Faculty Senate committee, our review and conclusions are intended to represent the WSU Faculty and to be independent of the Graduate School Administration, which often reviews for itself the same materials the GSC reviews.

Function 1: On a continuous basis, reviews and appraises graduate educational policies, programs, and procedures.

This function covers a broad set of activities. A common function, however, is to review changes to Graduate Program Bylaws. See GSPPM Ch1 part D (pp. 8-9).

Function 2: Recommends establishment, continuation, modification, and termination of graduate courses and degree programs.

GSPPM Chapter 3 provides a description of graduate programs structure, content, and procedures, and provides the primary source of background for this function of the GSC. In general, proposed programs and courses will have received substantial administrative review prior to GSC review. The Faculty Senate description of the New Program Review Process can be found at http://facsen.wsu.edu/eppm/NewProgramReviewProcess.pdf [currently out of date, working on updating], as well as http://facsen.wsu.edu/eppm/MajorMinors.pdf.
The process for establishing new graduate degree programs is provided GSPPM Ch.3.C. and changes to graduate degree programs require GSC approval. The GSC reviews a new program proposal after the proposal has been through prior review, including review by the Catalog Subcommittee (CSC), which focuses on the administrative details of the program proposal (see [http://facsen.wsu.edu/committees/faculty_senate_committees/catalog_subcommittee.html](http://facsen.wsu.edu/committees/faculty_senate_committees/catalog_subcommittee.html) for a summary of CSC functions). The syllabus contents and other proposal information will have been vetted for required elements by the Catalogue Subcommittee, and so in principle should not require action by the GSC (though any remaining issues found by the GSC should be noted and addressed).

Conditional on CSC approval, the GSC is charged with assessing whether the program provides sufficient value to the WSU Graduate offerings from the perspective of the WSU Faculty Senate as representative of the WSU Faculty.

Criteria for review and approval include but are not necessarily limited to: course rigor, content in relation to existing courses in the unit’s offerings, and learning outcomes for graduate students.

The GSC assessment will likely rely heavily on proposed contents of syllabi and other materials accompanying the proposal and on the rationale statement that is required as part of the proposal. The GSC may also rely on any additional sources of information that the GSC chooses to call upon for the assessment. The GSPPM (3.E.1) provides synopsis of graduate course definitions, content, and rigor that may help in the assessment. The same type of assessment is to be made by the GSC for other proposed changes to graduate programs, as well as for new course proposals and major modifications to existing courses.

Conjoint courses are often of particular concern to the GSC because they require balancing the needs of both undergraduate and graduate student enrollees. The GSC should be satisfied that the course requirements for graduate students are consistent with graduate course standards generally.

**Functions 3-5**

These functions arise on an ad hoc basis and details are context specific.

**Committee member roles and responsibilities**

The Faculty Senate webpage for the Graduate Studies Committee (link provided above) summarizes the composition, tenure, and current membership of the GSC. The committee comprises 14 faculty members, 5 graduate students, and 6 ex officio members. Voting rights are held by the 14 faculty members only, and a quorum of 8 Faculty members is required for votes on action items to be binding. Graduate students and ex officio members do not hold voting rights. They serve in an advisory role as representatives of their constituencies and administrative units, respectively.