University Graduate Council Bylaws

I. Vision
Columbus State University provides world-class graduate education to meet student and community needs.

II. Mission
The Graduate School provides a framework for supporting excellence in graduate research, scholarship, training, and mentorship in accordance with Columbus State University's mission and consistent with the mission of the Board of Regents of the University System of Georgia. The Graduate School is administered by a Graduate School Director who is assisted by a representative body, the Graduate Council. The Graduate Council promotes academic excellence in graduate education by supporting communication between existing graduate programs, fostering creation of new graduate offerings, and upholding high standards of performance by graduate faculty and graduate students.

III. Charge
The Graduate Council makes recommendations on all matters related to graduate studies to the Graduate School Director who reports to the Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs (Provost/VPAA). These recommendations include: (1) standards for admission to graduate programs and requirements for granting graduate degrees; (2) approval of new graduate programs; (3) approval of new graduate courses; (4) policies and procedures governing graduate programs; (5) policies governing graduate research; (6) duties and responsibilities of graduate assistants regarding teaching and research; (7) graduate faculty appointments; (8) development of partnerships with the community aimed at recruiting candidates for graduate programs, and (9) graduate recruitment in general.

Other responsibilities of the Graduate Council include (1) fostering communication among graduate programs; (2) discussing issues of common concern to graduate programs across campus; and (3) maintaining by-laws for the Graduate Council.

Specialized accrediting agencies require that governance in graduate matters be handled at the college level.

IV. Calendar and Agenda
The Graduate Council normally meets on the second Friday of each month during the academic year and maintains minutes, which are posted on the Graduate School web site to inform the graduate faculty of active policy discussions and recent decisions. Meetings are conducted in accordance with Robert's Rules of Order and require a quorum which consists of a simple majority of Graduate Council members to take any action. Any member of the graduate faculty may propose an agenda item for a Graduate Council meeting. The agenda for the Graduate
Council meeting is developed by the Graduate Council chair in consultation with the Graduate School Director, chair-elect and secretary.

V. Council Member Absence
In the event that an Assembly member cannot attend a meeting, that member may send (1) a representative (non-voting) to attend in his/her place, and/or (2) comments to the chair to be shared at the meeting. There will be no proxy voting, and if an executive session is called, the non-voting representative will be excused.

VI. Composition and Membership
Officers
The Graduate Council officers shall include a chair, a chair-elect, and a secretary. The Chair and Chair-elect must be from different colleges. Each spring the Graduate Council shall elect a secretary and a chair-elect. The previous chair-elect shall become chair, a voting member. The secretary shall be responsible for the maintenance of accurate records of the Council’s deliberations, the transmission of recommendations and the distribution of minutes to members of the Graduate Faculty.

Membership of the Graduate Council
Every college shall be represented on the Graduate Council. No college shall have more than three voting representatives on the Graduate Council. The dean of each college shall appoint members each spring. The Provost/VPAA shall appoint the Director of Graduate School to serve as an ex officio non-voting member of the Graduate Council. The number of voting members from each college will be based on the proportion of students enrolled in graduate programs across campus so that every academic college will have at least one voting member and no academic college will have more than three voting members.

The past Chair of the Graduate Council will serve the year following the year they served as chair. [Approved by GC - 9/9/2011]

The voting membership of the Graduate Council includes appointees from each of four academic colleges: Letters and Sciences, the Arts, Business and Computer Science, and Education and Health Profession.

VII. Columbus State University Recognizes Three Categories of Graduate Faculty
Full Graduate Faculty, Associate Graduate Faculty, and Provisional Graduate Faculty. Appointment to the Graduate Faculty is a prerequisite for teaching any course in which students earn graduate credit as defined by the university catalog. Nominations based on the following criteria shall be submitted by the appropriate department chair through the dean to the Graduate Council, to the VPAA.

Full Graduate Faculty are faculty members employed at Columbus State University, recommended by the College Dean, and approved by the Graduate Council. Full Graduate Faculty must meet the following criteria:

- hold full-time appointment at the rank of assistant professor or higher at the university;
- hold an earned doctorate degree in the teaching discipline or a related discipline;
• have a record of effective teaching at the university level; and
• have documented evidence of recent (within last 5 years), ongoing and productive scholarly/research achievement and professional achievement that include but are not limited to publication in refereed scholarly journals, presentations at regional, national and international conferences and/or national and international recognition by peers.

Appointment to Full Graduate Faculty is a prerequisite for serving as a thesis or dissertation chair. **Appointment term: Five-year renewable term**

**Associate Graduate Faculty** are faculty employed at Columbus State University and/or emeriti professors. Associate Graduate Faculty are recommended by the College Dean, and approved by the Graduate Council. Faculty and emeriti professors must meet the following criteria:

• hold full-time appointment at the rank of assistant professor or higher, lecturer, or emeriti professor at the university;
• hold an earned doctorate degree in the teaching discipline or a related discipline;
• have a record of effective teaching at the university level; and
• have documented evidence of recent (within last 5 years), ongoing and productive scholarly/research achievement and professional achievement that include but are not limited to publication in refereed scholarly journals, presentations at regional, national and international conferences and/or national and international recognition by peers, or **demonstrated competencies and achievements of related work or professional experience**.

Appointment to Associate Graduate Faculty is a prerequisite for serving on a thesis and dissertation committee. Associate Graduate Faculty may not serve as a dissertation chair. **Appointment term: Three-year renewable term**

**Provisional Graduate Faculty** are qualified part-time faculty without sufficient evidence of scholarly activities. Provisional Graduate Faculty are recommended by the Department Chair and College Dean and approved by the Graduate Council. Provisional Graduate Faculty must meet the following criteria:

• hold a part-time appointment as adjunct professor at the university;
• hold an earned doctorate degree in the teaching discipline or a related discipline; and
• demonstrate related work or professional experience, including diplomas, certificates, or licensure and certifications, that contribute to effective teaching and a positive impact on student learning outcomes.

Provisional graduate faculty may not serve on thesis or dissertation committees unless approved by the Dean. **Appointment term: One-year term**

*Justification for Exception* – The dean of each college will justify qualifications for related field and post-doctorate experience for each teaching assignment through:
• approved related field with supporting documentation
• provisional faculty member’s academic credentials and prior teaching experience matching the specific graduate course competencies
• a minimum of 18 semester hours of post-doctorate graduate coursework specifically related to the course(s) in which the faculty member will be teaching
• high-level noncredit academic experience (e.g., provisional faculty member provides artifacts for documentation of high-level noncredit experience to be kept on file in the Provost’s office)
• high-level experience and/or related discipline as defined by the Dean of the college
• acceptance of the above in lieu of an earned doctorate degree or terminal degree in the teaching discipline or related discipline

VIII. Procedures for Submitting Nominations to or Deletions from the Graduate Faculty
(A) The department chair initiates a faculty member's nomination for Full, Associate, or Provisional status by preparing a nomination packet consisting of (1) a cover sheet entitled "Nomination to Membership in the Graduate Faculty of Columbus State University", (2) a letter of recommendation addressing the nominee's qualifications for membership vis-à-vis the criteria, (3) any supporting letters from departmental colleagues, and (4) a current copy of the nominee's vita. The department chair forwards the nomination packet to the college dean.

(B) The dean evaluates the contents of the nomination packet, makes his/her recommendation on the cover sheet, and forwards the nomination packet to the Director of the Graduate School.

(C) The Director of the Graduate School duplicates and distributes copies of the nomination packet to each Graduate Council member for review and evaluation. The Director reports the Council's recommendation on the cover sheet, and forwards the nomination packet to the Provost/VPAA.

(D) The Provost/VPAA evaluates the contents of the nomination packet, and approves or denies appointment.

(E) The Graduate School Director notifies the nominees in writing of the final decision regarding appointment or denial to the Graduate Faculty. Copies of this notification are sent to the nominee's department chair, college dean, and chair of the Graduate Council.

The department chair or college dean may recommend that a faculty member's status on the Graduate Faculty be terminated. This recommendation, a cover sheet entitled "Termination of Membership in the Graduate Faculty at Columbus State University," and a written explanation of the chair's or dean's reasons for termination must be forwarded for review and recommendations as outlined above in steps A through E. Final approval or denial of the recommendation rests with the Provost/VPAA.

Graduate faculty status shall be awarded and recognized according to BOR standards, SACS requirements, and any special provisions required by specialized accreditations within the faculty
member’s discipline. The SACS liaison and the Office of the Provost/VPAA for Academic Affairs shall maintain oversight of graduate faculty appointments.

**IX. Term of Membership and Time of Elections**
Each member shall serve a three-year term of office beginning Fall Semester after the Graduate Council election held each Spring Semester.

**X. Vacancies During Term**
If a position on the Graduate Council falls vacant during the term of a member, a replacement shall be nominated by the dean of the college of the member. The replacement member shall be from the same college of the former member and shall serve until the expiration of the term of the former member. The Graduate Council shall determine when a position falls vacant.

**XI. Committees of the Graduate Council**
Standing committees of the Graduate Council shall be appointed annually by the Chair of the Graduate Council from the membership of the Council. The Director of Graduate School is an ex-officio member of all committees but votes only to break a tie. The Chair of the Graduate Council shall appoint a member of each committee to serve as chair. The following standing committees of the Council act on the matters indicated and on others, as charged by the Director of the Graduate School:

The Program Committee shall review (a) program prospectus forms, (b) proposals from colleges for new degree programs and changes to existing programs, and (c) review proposals from colleges for new graduate courses and for changes in existing graduate courses. The Committee shall make recommendations to the Graduate Council concerning the approval or revision of new graduate programs, and the Graduate Council shall in turn make recommendations to the Provost/VPAA.

The Appointment Committee shall consider applications for appointment to the Graduate Faculty. The Committee shall make recommendations to the Graduate Council concerning the graduate status applications, and the Graduate Council shall in turn make recommendations to the Provost/VPAA.

The Graduate Council, the Chair of the Graduate Council or the Director of Graduate School for the University may appoint such other, ad hoc committees as they deem necessary to conduct the business of the Graduate School.

**XII. Meetings**
The Graduate Council may hold meetings for the discussion of, or action on, matters and issues outlined in Section II and Section III in this document. Meetings of the Graduate Faculty may be called by: (1) the President or designee; (2) the Provost/VPAA or designee; (3) the Director of Graduate School for the University; (4) the Chair of the Graduate Council; or (5) a petition signed by 25 percent of the Full Graduate Faculty which has been submitted to the President, or a designee. The meeting must be held within ten working days of receipt of the petition during the academic year. Members of the Graduate Council shall receive written notification of meetings which shall include the date, time, place and agenda of the meeting.
XIII. Adoption of and Amendments to Bylaws
These bylaws shall be adopted by a vote of two-thirds majority of the Graduate Council. Voting will be by written ballot (or email).

Proposed amendments to the bylaws shall be debated and voted by the Graduate Council. Any proposed amendment must be circulated in writing to each member of the Graduate Council at least two scheduled academic weeks prior to the meeting at which the amendment will be considered. After the proposed amendment has been discussed at a meeting, a vote consisting of a two thirds majority of the Graduate Council members will suffice for the amendment to pass and be presented to the provost/VPAA for approval.

[Approved: 11/13/09]
[Revised: 11/13/09]
[Revised DRAFT: 10/01/12]