Graduate Council Charter

April 2010

Preamble
The Faculty and the Graduate Council of the University of Hawai‘i at Hilo, in an effort to promote high quality student learning at the graduate level and to provide an opportunity whereby graduate faculty and students shall participate in determining the direction of graduate education in the University, hereby adopts this Charter.

Article I
Authority
Section 1. The official name of the policy and governance body for graduate and post-baccalaureate professional education is the University of Hawai‘i at Hilo (UH Hilo) Graduate Council.
Section 2. This Charter becomes effective upon written authorization of the UH Hilo Chancellor, and endorsement by the University of Hawai‘i Board of Regents. It replaces all previous references to the UH Hilo Graduate Council established prior to [date] in any UH Hilo documents.
Section 3. The Graduate Council is advisory to the administration on all graduate matters and reports directly to the Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs (VCAA) and to the Interim Vice Chancellor for Research (VCR).

Article II
Composition
Section 1. Voting members of the Graduate Council include a faculty member from UH Hilo designated as the Chair, one faculty member each from a representative sample of six graduate programs (usually the Chair of the graduate program), four additional faculty members from major academic units (colleges, and, within CAS, divisions) not otherwise represented on the Council, a faculty member appointed by the UH Hilo Faculty Congress to represent the Congress, and one currently enrolled graduate student in good standing, elected from the UH Hilo Graduate Student Council. Faculty representatives are appointed by the VCR upon recommendation from the Graduate Council Chair and serve for three-year terms. The Faculty Congress representative and the student representative each serve for a one year term. The VCAA or designee, VCR/Coordinator of Graduate Education, Registrar, a Librarian and an Admissions Office representative serve as ex-officio, non-voting members.
Section 2. To be eligible to serve on the Graduate Council or vote on graduate issues faculty members must be tenured or tenure track and not on leave from the University. Faculty members are selected to serve staggered, 3-year terms with one-third (1/3) of the members appointed each year.
Section 3. Should a member of the UH Hilo Graduate Council go on leave or otherwise be unable to engage in Council business, the VCR may appoint a temporary replacement from that faculty member’s constituency to serve on a semester-by-semester basis.
Article III

Function

Section 1. Acting within the policies of the Graduate Council Charter, UH Hilo, the University of Hawai‘i system, and the Board of Regents, the UH Hilo Graduate Council is the policy-recommending and governance body dealing with matters that affect UH Hilo graduate students and graduate programs.

Section 2. The Graduate Council cooperates with the Faculty Congress in all matters that lie within the province of both bodies. All graduate curricular issues are reviewed by the Graduate Council and proceed directly to the university-wide curricular body and then to the VCAA for final approval. All graduate academic policy issues are reviewed by the Graduate Council and proceed directly to the Faculty Congress for recommendation and then to the VCAA or VCR for final approval. In general: all curriculum and policy related to an individual graduate program (e.g., curriculum, admission standards that exceed those established by the Graduate Division) are referred to the VCAA; all policies related to graduate study in general at UH Hilo (e.g., minimum admission standards, standards for serving as a primary academic advisor for a graduate student; graduate research training programs and graduate assistantships) are referred to the VCR; the application of graduate policies to individual students (e.g., determining whether a particular faculty member meets the criteria to chair that student’s thesis committee, granting modification to academic requirements) is the responsibility of the VCR, through the Graduate Division.

Article IV

Chair, Vice Chair and Secretary

Section 1. The VCR appoints a faculty member to chair the Graduate Council. The Chair convenes and presides over all Graduate Council meetings and performs those duties and responsibilities normally associated with the position. The Chair votes only in the case of a tie.

Section 2. Each year the Council elects a member to serve as Vice Chair who presides over meetings in the Chair’s absence. The Vice Chair maintains voting privileges unless acting as Chair, and in that role only votes in the case of a tie.

Section 3. The VCR appoints a staff person to serve as a Secretary of the Graduate Council. This typically is a secretary in the Graduate Division, upon the staffing of the Division, or until that time is a staff member in the office of the VCR. The secretary assists in preparing materials for the meetings, records and distributes the minutes of the meeting, and maintains the Council’s website.

Articles V

Meetings and Procedures

Section 1. Meetings of the Council are open to any person.

Section 2. At least four meetings each academic semester shall be called by the Chair. Additional meetings may be called if needed, including during the summer. Additional
meetings shall be called if a petition bearing the signatures of at least one-third (1/3) of Council members is received by the Chair.  

Section 3. Members may vote by proxy or in absentia. 
Section 4. A quorum for voting on motions shall consist of a minimum of one-half of voting members. 

Section 5. The Council follows Robert’s Rules of Order in the conduct of meetings.

Article VI  
Program Authority 

Section 1. University requirements, as adopted by the VCAA or VCR under the recommendation of the Graduate Council, form the minimum requirements for all graduate programs. The university graduate programs formulate requirements for graduate degrees within the framework set by the UH Hilo Graduate Council, University policy, and policies of the Board of Regents. These include admission, retention, and degree completion requirements. 

Section 2. Each graduate program is responsible for continual evaluation, adjustment, and improvement of existing graduate programs. According to UH Hilo policy, graduate program chairs and College Deans make proposals regarding curriculum modifications of graduate programs to the Graduate Council. If positively recommended by the Council and the university-wide curriculum committee, program modifications will take effect only after approval by the Chancellor or designee. 

Section 3. According to UH Hilo policy, faculty members and College Deans make proposals regarding new graduate programs to the Graduate Council. If approved by the Council and UH Hilo Congress, new programs will take effect only after approval by the President of the University of Hawai‘i system, and when necessary, by the Board of Regents.

Article VII  
Committees 

Section 1. The Graduate Council will organize standing committees to include: 

a. Program Committee: which will evaluate proposals for new graduate programs and for significant modifications of current graduate programs. The committee also will review current programs on a regular basis (for new programs within one year of the graduation of its first students, for established programs every seven years) and will review certification of graduate instructional personnel. The Program Committee will make recommendations to the Council for consideration. 

b. Curriculum Committee: which will evaluate proposals for new courses and for modifications of courses currently offered, and for minor program modifications. 

c. Admissions Committee: which will evaluate criteria used by graduate programs in their admissions process and also evaluate requests by graduate programs for individual exceptions to minimal admissions standards set by the University.

Section 2. The Graduate Council will establish other standing or ad hoc committees as needed.

Article VIII
Amendments

Section 1. Proposed amendments may be initiated by a two-thirds (2/3) vote of the Graduate Council or by petition of one-third (1/3) of the current tenure-track faculty.

Section 2. Proposed amendments to the Graduate Council charter are distributed by the Graduate Council Secretary to the University faculty at least seven (7) days prior to a meeting of the UH Hilo Congress. An amendment is approved by a two-thirds (2/3) vote of the UH Hilo Congress. The amendment takes effect when it is approved by the Chancellor.

Article IX

By-laws

Section 1. Proposed amendments may be initiated by a two-thirds (2/3) vote of the Graduate Council or by petition of one-third (1/3) of the current tenure-track faculty.

Section 2. By-laws to this charter become effective when they are approved by two-thirds (2/3) vote of the UH Hilo Congress and by the Chancellor.