

# **Graduate Council Charter**

**January 2013**

## **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 adopt 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 **October 2012** 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 and Economic Development (VCRED)/Coordinator of Graduate Education.

## **Article II**

### **Composition**

#### **Section 1.**

The following are to be voting members on the Graduate Council:

- a. One representative from each academic unit (defined as a college, school, or division). In cases where a unit has a graduate program(s), the member will represent both the unit and their program(s).<sup>1,2</sup>
- b. One representative (liaison) from Faculty Congress. This person may or may not simultaneously act as the representative of their academic unit.
- c. One Graduate Student representative.
- d. One representative from the Library.
- e. One representative from the Office of the Registrar
- f. One representative from the Office of Admissions
- g. Graduate Council Chair (to vote only in the case of a tie)

The following are to be ex-officio (non-voting) members on the Graduate Council:

- h. Vice Chancellor of Research and Economic Development
- i. Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs
- j. Clerical assistant (Secretary), provided by the Office of the VCRED
- k. Additional, ad-hoc members as deemed relevant to Graduate Council activities

Footnotes:

- 1: Representation for interdisciplinary programs is to be provided by the representative of the primary department in which the program resides.
- 2: An academic unit with multiple graduate programs in similar disciplines shall have only one representative.

**Section 2.** To be eligible to serve on the Graduate Council or to vote on graduate issues, a faculty member must be tenured or tenure-track and not on leave from the University. Graduate Council members who do not represent graduate programs are selected to serve staggered, 3-year terms, meaning that one-third (1/3) of these members will be newly 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 member is required to send a designee. The designee must be from the same academic unit and should be competent to represent the current program and policy issues.

### **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 within two meetings assuming receipt of all materials and timely response from unit to inquiries 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 within two weeks assuming receipt of all materials and timely response from unit to inquiries and proceed directly to the Faculty Congress for recommendation and then to the VCAA or VCRED 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 VCRED; 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 VCRED, through the Graduate Division.

## **Article IV**

### **Chair, Vice Chair and Secretary**

**Section 1.** The VCRED 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 VCRED 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 VCRED. The secretary assists in preparing materials for the meetings, records and distributes the minutes of the meeting, and maintains the Council's website.

## **Article 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, absentia, or electronically

**Section 4.** A quorum for voting on motions shall consist of a minimum of one-half (1/2) 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 and/or VCRED 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 UHH Chancellor, 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 as requested by the programs. 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.

The Program and Curriculum committees will meet together as needed when new programs are proposed to facilitate more comprehensive reviews by both committees.

**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 approved by the VCRED and/or VCAA and 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 Faculty Congress. The amendment takes effect when it is approved by the Chancellor.