

Wichita State University

Graduate School

Revision to Graduate Faculty Structure and Process to Identify Members

Graduate faculty are standard bearers of quality and drivers of research and innovation at any university. Graduate faculty develop curricula, teach graduate courses, guide student research, participate in graduate program administration and governance, and determine criteria for graduate faculty membership, all of which is guided by the premise that graduate education must be rigorous, relevant, and state-of-the-art. As such, in addition to holding the terminal degree in the discipline, graduate faculty should have a record of research, scholarship or achievement appropriate for the graduate program. Our current graduate faculty structure is designed to promote these ideals through program-specific metrics that must be met for each graduate faculty class. However, this ‘bean counting’ model has outlived its usefulness, and we should now embrace the view that the University’s holistic procedures for hiring, reviewing, and tenuring faculty are sufficient to identify qualified members of the graduate faculty.

This proposal has two elements; both of which are tied to simplifying the graduate faculty structure and process to identify members, meaning the earlier connection between grantsmanship and dissertation chair status has been eliminated. Note that this document is simply a high-level summary of the proposal to frame the discussion going forward. Prior to a final vote being called, all faculty will have access to red-lined version detailing each specific change to the bylaws so that people will know exactly what they are voting on. Changes to the bylaws require a two-thirds vote of the GF-1 and GF-2 faculty.

Graduate Faculty. The first element of this proposal is to eliminate the distinction between GF-1 and GF-2 faculty. The two categories will be combined into a single category now simply called “Graduate Faculty.” As such, all tenure stream faculty will have full access to the rights, privileges, and responsibilities of graduate faculty status. Graduate faculty will teach graduate courses, serve on master’s and doctoral committees, and chair culminating experience committees. That is, the current distinction made in chairing master’s thesis vs. doctoral dissertation committees will be eliminated. Graduate faculty status will be automatically provided to all tenure stream faculty that—unless removed for extenuating circumstances (i.e., scientific misconduct)—would be maintained till separation from the University. These simplifications are based on the belief that the university’s procedures for hiring and reviewing faculty is sufficient to safeguard that individuals are qualified to be graduate faculty, making a separate review redundant. Programs and colleges would be able to create procedures to identify non-tenure track faculty for Graduate Faculty status as well (e.g., clinical faculty).

A corollary is that the Doctoral Subcouncil would be dissolved. Its primary function is to approve GF-2 membership, which would now be moot. A second important Subcouncil role is to discuss important research issues. Going forward, those discussions will be within the reinvigorated Research Council. The composition of the two committees is largely identical and are currently chaired by the same person (the Dean of the Graduate School and Associate Vice President of Research & Technology Transfer), making having both bodies redundant.

Summary: This aspect of the proposal simplifies our current bureaucracy without compromising graduate faculty standards. In fact, it replaces the current process with *meaningful holistic reviews*. That is, graduate faculty status becomes a default right and privilege of all tenure track faculty. Further, the distinction between GF-1 and GF-2 faculty is eliminated, thus now providing probationary tenure track faculty full dissertation advisor status.

Affiliate Graduate Faculty. Non-tenure track faculty interact with the graduate programs and students in many different ways. Our current structure attempts to define those different interactions from the beginning. However, predefining these interactions is problematic and leads to artificial distinctions between the GF-3 and GF-4 categories. This proposal eliminates the distinction between the two categories, and collapses them into a single “Affiliate Graduate Faculty” status. Affiliates will be awarded specific privileges as warranted, which would most commonly be either teaching graduate courses or serving on a thesis/dissertation committee, but could also include things like program review, program administration, etc. Exact requirements for affiliate faculty are not defined because the roles vary immensely. However, the nominee must obviously meet reasonable standards necessary for success in the role as deemed by the department chair, college dean, and dean of the Graduate School, which is the same approval process used now.

Summary: The second aspect of the proposal create a single Affiliate Graduate Faculty class where privileges are approved as warranted on a case-by-case basis. Instead of trying to predefine all possible graduate faculty classes, this *simpler* a la carte structure will *more accurately* reflect each person’s graduate school engagement.

Proposed Graduate Faculty Structure

Graduate Faculty

Eligibility:

- Terminal degree in the discipline or alternately qualified by substantial professional achievement
- Tenure track or tenured faculty member

Duties and Responsibilities:

- Teach graduate courses
- Serve on master’s and doctoral committees
- Chair master’s thesis, doctoral dissertation, or other terminal project committees
- Mentor graduate students

Duration of membership:

- Ongoing till separation from the University

Affiliate Graduate Faculty

Eligibility:

- Demonstrated departmental need
- Earned graduate degree or qualified by education and/or professional achievement

Possible Duties and Responsibilities (to be defined specifically on a case-by-case basis):

- Teach graduate courses
- Serve on master’s and doctoral committees
- Other duties as needed

Duration of membership:

- Appointment length suggested by chair of department and approved by the Dean of the Graduate School