

**SOUTHERN CONNECTICUT  
STATE UNIVERSITY**

**Graduate Council  
Rules of Order**

**Revised October 6, 2008**

**SOUTHERN CONNECTICUT STATE UNIVERSITY  
GRADUATE COUNCIL  
RULES OF ORDER**

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# **SOUTHERN CONNECTICUT STATE UNIVERSITY GRADUATE COUNCIL RULES OF ORDER**

## **I. Function and Authority**

- A. The Graduate Council is an elected representative body of the graduate faculty. The Council is charged with the responsibility for developing and maintaining University policies that establish the minimum acceptable standards for graduate programs of study offered at Southern Connecticut State University. These policies encompass the areas of minimum acceptable academic qualifications for admission as a graduate student and the acceptable level of academic performance for continued matriculation.
- B. The Graduate Council, through its activities, encourages the various graduate and professional degree granting units to maintain a high level of quality and performance by both faculty and students and holds primary responsibility for the general direction of and long range planning of graduate education at Southern Connecticut State University.
- C. The actions of the Graduate Council are subject to the statutory rights, responsibilities and jurisdiction of the Board of Trustees, the Board of Governors and the University's faculty bargaining agent. The President or his/her designee has the responsibility for the review of all actions by the Graduate Council and the right to disapprove actions that infringe upon the implementation of approved Board policies.

## **II. Membership of the Graduate Faculty**

### A. Definition and Role

- (1) To be a member of the Graduate Faculty, a member of the instructional faculty of Southern Connecticut State University shall (a) be employed as a full-time faculty member; (b) hold the rank of at least assistant professor; (c) have either earned the

terminal degree appropriate to his/her discipline from a regionally accredited institution of higher education or been granted the rank of full professor; and (d) have published research or engaged in public scholarly or creative activities within the last five years.

- (2) At Southern Connecticut State University, only members of the Graduate Faculty shall direct graduate theses. If there are compelling reasons, all instructional faculty members, whether designated Graduate Faculty or not, may teach graduate courses, serve on thesis committees, or be otherwise involved in graduate programs.

## B. Procedures

1. Each department/program shall submit the names of its faculty members who will have a recurring role within that graduate program and who meet the criteria outlined in II.A.1 to the Procedures Committee of the Graduate Council to be added to the list of Graduate Faculty. The Procedures Committee returns names that do not meet the criteria listed in II.A.1. for resubmission under article II.B.2.
2. Each department/program may petition on behalf of its faculty members who do not meet the criteria outlined in II.A.1 by providing compelling reasons for granting those individuals Graduate Faculty membership. The Procedures Committee shall render judgment on the petition. If the Procedures Committee denies the petition, the department may appeal the decision to the Provost. The decision of the Provost shall be final.
3. Faculty members not recommended for Graduate Faculty membership by their department may petition the Procedures Committee for consideration. The Procedures Committee shall render judgment on the petition after consultation with the department chair and graduate coordinator. If the Procedures

Committee denies the petition, the faculty members may appeal the decision to the Provost. The decision of the Provost shall be final.

### C. Procedure for Removal

1. A department/program may recommend to the Procedures Committee that its Graduate Faculty members forfeit said membership if they fail to maintain an on-going record of published research or engagement in public scholarly or creative activities.
2. Any faculty member whose department has recommended forfeiture of Graduate Faculty status may appeal the decision to the Procedures Committee. The Procedures Committee shall render judgment on the petition. If the Procedures Committee denies the petition, the faculty member may appeal the decision to the Provost. The decision of the Provost shall be final.
3. Prior to the publication of each graduate catalog, the Dean of Graduate Studies, in consultation with all department chairpersons and graduate coordinators, shall verify Graduate Faculty membership in the voting unit. The name of any faculty member not verified shall be removed from the catalog.

### D. The Graduate Council

1. The Graduate Council shall be composed of Graduate Faculty members elected from department/free-standing voting units and the Dean of the School of Graduate Studies who serves ex-officio in a non-voting capacity.
2. Only members of the Graduate Faculty may be elected as members of the Graduate Council.
3. Graduate Faculty members will be elected to serve for a term of three years commencing in the September following election. One-third of the members will be elected each year. If the

member can no longer serve, the voting unit shall elect a new member to fill the unexpired term.

4. The Faculty Senate, Library Services, Graduate Student Affairs Committee and University Curriculum Forum shall have observer status on the Council. Each unit shall determine its own representative.

#### E. Procedures Related to Voting Units

1. The basic voting unit for selection of Graduate Council members shall be the academic department. Each department that has a graduate program shall have at least one representative on the Graduate Council. A free-standing graduate program may also have an elected representative.
2. Members of the Graduate Council shall be elected by the Graduate Faculty of their respective department/free-standing graduate program.
3. Departments and free-standing programs may have more than one representative to the Council based upon the total number of graduate course credit semester hours generated during the current academic year (Fall and Spring semesters) as determined by the formula set forth in the *Policies and Procedures Manual* of the Procedures Committee.
4. The Procedures Committee of the Graduate Council, in conjunction with the Dean of the Graduate School, shall review the Fall and Spring semester statistics of hours generated by each department/free-standing program prior to the March meeting of the Council to determine, based upon the Election Procedures found in the *Policies and Procedures Manual* of the Procedures Committee, whether adjustments should be made to current apportionments.
5. The Procedures Committee shall present its report regarding apportionments at the March meeting of the Graduate Council for review by departments and free-standing programs.

6. At the April meeting of the Graduate Council, the Procedures Committee, after having discussed possible discrepancies in the course credit data with affected departments/free-standing programs, shall present its final recommendation for apportionment of the voting units for the following academic year. The Council shall vote on this recommendation.
7. All reapportionments shall take effect at the beginning of the next academic year.

### **III. Officers**

- A. The Officers of the Graduate Council shall be Chairperson, Vice Chairperson, and Secretary and shall serve one-year terms.
  1. Chairperson
    - a. Election - The Chairperson shall be elected by majority vote of the Council at the meeting in May of each year. The Chairperson may be re-elected for one additional term, but shall serve no more than two consecutive terms. The Chairperson shall take office at the end of the last official meeting of the academic year in which he/she is elected. Only current Councilors who have served a minimum of one year on the Council and who will be Council members in the following academic year are eligible to be elected as Chairperson.
    - b. Duties of the Chairperson shall include but not be limited to:
      - (1) presiding at all Council meetings;
      - (2) keeping membership informed of Council activities;
      - (3) formulating the agenda for meetings in consultation with the Executive Committee and the Graduate School Dean;

- (4) acting as official liaison between the Graduate Council and the Graduate School in all matters pertaining to Graduate Studies;
- (5) calling regular and special meetings;
- (6) making committee appointments; and
- (7) conducting meetings of the Executive Committee prior to each regular meeting of the Graduate Council.

## 2. Vice Chairperson

- a. Election - The Vice Chairperson shall be elected by majority vote of the Council at the May meeting of each year following the election of the Chairperson. The Vice Chairperson may be re-elected for one additional term, but shall serve no more than two consecutive terms. The Vice Chairperson shall take office at the same time the Chairperson takes office.
- b. Duties of the Vice Chairperson shall include but not be limited to:
  - (1) presiding (pro-tem) at Council meetings in the absence of the Chairperson;
  - (2) assisting the Chairperson in carrying out his or her responsibilities; and
  - (3) serving as chairperson of the Academic Standards Committee.

## 3. Secretary

- a. Election - The Secretary shall be elected by majority vote of the Council following the election of the Vice Chairperson at the May meeting of each year. The Secretary may be re-elected for one additional term, but shall serve no more than two consecutive terms. The Secretary shall take office at the same time the Chairperson takes office.

- b. Duties of the Secretary shall include but not be limited to:
- (1) recording official minutes of Graduate Council meetings;
  - (2) coordinating official correspondence of the Council; and
  - (3) presiding (pro-tem) at Council meetings in the absence of the Chairperson and Vice Chairperson.

#### B. Vacancies in Office

A vacancy in any office shall be filled by a special election at the next meeting of the Graduate Council.

#### C. Removal of Officers

1. A motion to remove from office any Council officer shall be introduced by a written petition clearly stating the grounds for removal of the officer and bearing the signatures of not less than 30% of the Graduate Council membership.
2. A motion to remove from office any Council officer may be introduced at any regular meeting of the Council, but may not be voted upon until the next regular meeting. A motion to remove shall require the affirmative votes of two-thirds of the Graduate Council membership on a roll call vote.

### IV. Meetings

#### A. Graduate Council Meetings

1. Regular meetings of the Graduate Council shall be held on the first Monday of each month when classes are in session, beginning in October and ending in May. There will be no meeting of the Graduate Council in January. An annual schedule of meetings in agreement with the official academic

calendar shall be published on or before October first of each year.

2. Special meetings may be called by the Chairperson of the Council as deemed necessary. Special meetings of the Council also shall be called by the Chairperson at the request of at least one-third of the Council members. The call to such meetings must be issued at least one week in advance and must clearly state the purpose of and justification for the meeting.
3. A majority of the voting membership of the Graduate Council shall constitute a quorum.
4. Each Councilor shall be entitled to one vote and a simple majority of the voting membership is required to pass any motion with the exception of a motion to remove an officer. Absentee ballots are not permitted. Any Councilor may request a secret ballot. Such a request shall be honored, with the exception of a motion related to removal of an officer (III.C.2).
5. The usual order of business shall be:
  - a. Call to Order
  - b. Disposition of Minutes
  - c. Announcements
  - d. Reports of Committees
  - e. Old Business
  - f. New Business
  - g. Adjournment
6. All meetings of the Graduate Council shall be open to any member of the University community.

7. With the consent of the Council, visitors may be afforded the privilege of the floor at the discretion of the chairperson.
8. Any member of the University community may request time on the agenda by presenting a written request to the Chairperson of the Council at least three weeks before the scheduled meeting time identifying the topic and the amount of time requested.
9. Minutes of all meetings shall be recorded by the Secretary of the Graduate Council, reviewed by the Executive Committee, and sent to all Councilors, the Registrar, the Faculty Senate President, Department Chairpersons, Deans, Vice Presidents, Provost, and the President.

#### B. Annual Graduate Faculty Meeting

There shall be a scheduled meeting of the Graduate Faculty at least once each year at which time the Chairperson of the Council as well as the Council Committees shall report to the faculty on activities of the Council and respond to comments and questions from the faculty. This meeting shall be held during the month of May.

#### C. Special Meetings of the Graduate Faculty

A minimum of 25% of the members of the Graduate Faculty may petition in writing the Chairperson of the Council for a special meeting of the Graduate Faculty on a specific issue or proposal. Normally, such a meeting must be scheduled within 30 days of receipt of the petition.

### V. Graduate Council Committees

There shall be the following Standing Committees of the Graduate Council: the Executive Committee, Curriculum Committee, Procedures Committee, and Academic Standards Committee. Each member of the Graduate Council shall serve on a minimum of one Standing Committee. The Chairperson of the Graduate Council appoints members of standing committees with representation from

each academic school when possible. Adjustments to the membership shall be made by the Chairperson of the Graduate Council as needed.

## A. Standing Committees

### 1. Executive Committee

- a. Membership: Chairperson of the Council, Vice Chairperson of the Council, Secretary, Dean of Graduate Studies (Ex officio), and Chairpersons of all Standing Committees.
- b. Duties: Coordinate the activities of the Council and act for the Council in matters of exigency.

### 2. Curriculum Committee

- a. Membership: Council members are appointed annually by the Council Chairperson.
- b. Committee Chairperson: The members of the Committee shall elect a Chairperson at the first Committee meeting of the year.
- c. Duties:
  - (1) Recommend to the Graduate Council operating procedures for the submission of new and revised courses, concentrations/specializations, certifications, dual degrees, and programs.
  - (2) Review proposals for new and revised courses, concentrations/specializations, certifications, dual degrees, and programs and present recommendations to the Council.
  - (3) Recommend curricular ideas and innovations to the Graduate Council.

- (4) Formulate and maintain a *Policies and Procedures Manual*.

### 3. Procedures Committee

- a. Membership: Council members are appointed annually by the Council Chairperson.
- b. Committee Chairperson: The members of the Committee shall elect a Chairperson at the first Committee meeting of the year.
- c. Duties:
  - (1) Make recommendations to the Council for equitable membership among the voting units according to parameters established by the Council.
  - (2) Recommend criteria and changes in criteria for the qualifications, application, and appointment of Graduate Faculty.
  - (3) Review applications and make recommendations for new members of the Graduate Faculty to the Graduate Council.
  - (4) Make recommendations to the Council on all matters pertaining to the Rules of Order of the Council or, if appropriate, any standing rules the Council or a Committee of the Council may seek to adopt that will affect the organization and business of the Council.
  - (5) Make recommendations to the Council pertaining to formal interaction with other University committees, organizations and units.

- (6) Present a slate of nominees and conduct both the annual election of officers and any special elections in the event of a vacancy in office.
- (7) Advise the Council on all matters pertaining to elections, recall, and referendum matters, coordinating with the Faculty Senate in any referendum that is required.
- (8) Formulate and maintain a *Policies and Procedures Manual*.
- (9) Notify through its Chairperson, each voting unit of Councilor vacancies or changes for the following academic year as specified in the *Policies and Procedures Manual* of the Procedures Committee.

#### 4. Academic Standards Committee

- a. Membership: Council members are appointed annually by the Council Chairperson.
- b. Committee Chairperson: The Vice Chairperson of the Graduate Council will serve as Chairperson of the Academic Standards Committee.
- c. Duties:
  - (1) Recommend the minimum academic standards for graduate programs.
  - (2) Recommend procedures for enforcing the implementation of the minimum academic standards.
  - (3) Review existing courses, concentrations / specializations, certifications, dual degrees and programs on a rotating schedule and present recommendations to the Council.

- (4) Formulate and maintain a *Policies and Procedures Manual*.

## B. Ad Hoc and Special Committees

The Council may direct the Chairperson to establish ad hoc or special committees to perform specific tasks. The Chairperson and members of such committees will be appointed by the Council Chairperson (ad hoc committee) or on a voluntary basis (special committee). An ad hoc or special committee will cease to exist when its duties are completed.

## C. General Duties of Committees (Excluding the Executive Committee)

1. Standing Committees will present a report at each meeting of the Council and provide a written summary to the Secretary for the minutes when appropriate. When a written report or summary is presented, a copy will be appended to the minutes.
2. Ad hoc or other special committees established by the Council will present an oral report when appropriate at a meeting of the Council. A written summary of the final committee report will be forwarded to the Secretary for the minutes upon completion of the charge to the committee.
3. At the May meeting of the Graduate Council each Standing Committee will present an oral report summarizing the committee's activities of the academic year. A final written report will be submitted to the Dean of Graduate Studies. The report will:
  - a. Summarize the activities of the Committee;
  - b. Evaluate the degree of progress made;
  - c. Identify areas of strength and weakness; and
  - d. Present an agenda in priority order for the following year.

4. The report provided to the Graduate Dean will be disseminated to members of the Graduate Council with the October agenda.
5. At the October meeting of the Graduate Council, Standing Committee chairs shall present a copy of the annual report for the previous academic year and briefly summarize their goals and objectives for the current academic year.

## **VI. Graduate Faculty Initiatives and Referenda**

### A. General

Members of the Graduate Faculty are encouraged to bring matters to the Council through their elected representatives. The Council shall consider such proposals and may take appropriate action. In addition, Graduate Faculty may develop and present initiatives and referenda as needed.

### B. Faculty Initiatives

#### 1. Faculty Initiatives

1. The Graduate Council shall be bound to consider for enactment:
  - a. Written Proposals which have been signed by no less than 25% of the total Graduate Faculty.
  - b. Proposals recommended by a majority vote of the Graduate Faculty at the annual Graduate Faculty Meeting.
2. Graduate Faculty initiatives will generally be brought before the Graduate Council at the next scheduled meeting and must be addressed no later than the following regularly scheduled meeting. A special meeting will be called in a case when this procedure cannot be followed.

### C. Faculty Referenda

1. Any Graduate Faculty member may petition the Graduate Council to conduct a Graduate Faculty referendum with respect to any action taken by the Council. Signatures of at least 25% of the Graduate Faculty are required to initiate a referendum.
2. The Procedures Committee, in coordination with the Faculty Senate, shall conduct the referendum.
3. A majority vote of the total Graduate Faculty in favor of the referendum is required to rescind any Council action.
4. Graduate Faculty referenda will generally be brought before the Graduate Council at the next scheduled meeting and must be addressed no later than the following regularly scheduled meeting. A special meeting will be called in a case when this procedure cannot be followed.

## **VII. Changes in the Rules of Order**

- A. Changes in the Rules of Order may be proposed at a regular or special meeting of the Graduate Council, provided:
  1. Council members have received written notice of each of the proposed changes at least one week prior to the meeting.
  2. A two-thirds majority of the total Council membership approves the changes.
- B. Changes become effective on approval by the Faculty Senate and University President or his/her designee.