

# Graduate Council Restructuring Proposal

## Rationale

The Graduate Council structure precedes the Faculty Senate and the current structure of academic colleges. This proposal moves the Graduate Council from being an isolated body into the structure of the Faculty Senate in order to integrate the work of the Graduate Council within the standard structure for academic decision-making that is part of the shared governance process between the Faculty Senate and university administration. This initiative will make the Graduate Council a standing committee under the Faculty Senate Academic Affairs Council.

There are consistent complaints and concerns across campus that the Graduate Council operates in isolation and that only the 15 members of the Council are engaged in decision-making that impacts all graduate faculty and graduate and professional students and postdoctoral associates. This is a complaint we have heard from graduate faculty, from academic departments, from academic colleges, and from the university administration. The primary source of this complaint is that the structure of the Graduate Council has no direct lines of communication to constituents or to other decision makers to seek input or share ongoing concerns and issues before the Council. The concerns related to this structural limitation have increased significantly over the last several years, with no way to address it under the current structure. Thus, we are requesting a structural/organization change.

## Scope of Graduate Council

The graduate faculty, including leaders of the Graduate College and other administrators, bring (1) graduate-level curricular proposals and (2) ideas related to academic policy affecting graduate programs to the Graduate Council for consideration. In addition, the Council will review graduate faculty nominations and make recommendations to the graduate dean regarding graduate faculty membership and graduate lecturer status.

## Membership

Graduate Council membership will continue to be proportional to the number of graduate faculty in the various disciplines at the university.

## Changes to Process and Structure

If approved, this change will dissolve the current Graduate Council's Constitution and Bylaws. Instead, the Graduate Council will be part of the Faculty Senate's Bylaws. Also, the current Graduate College Handbook would be abridged such that it includes only academic policies affecting the current students and faculty in graduate-level academic programs. Graduate admissions and financial support for graduate students are examples of content that would be removed from the Graduate College Handbook. Recommendations to policy related to graduate programs would follow the standard Faculty Senate approval process: They would be initiated and approved by the Graduate Council, then they would pass through the Academic Affairs Council, to the Faculty Senate Executive Board, and then to the Senate for approval. This would allow all graduate faculty, and all departments and colleges to participate in review and debate regarding such policies. The membership of the Graduate Council would shift from its historical

four disciplinary divisions to the structure of the academic colleges. This will provide a clear reporting structure by clarifying who the Graduate Council members are elected to represent and will increase the connection between the college's faculty caucus and Graduate Council members. The number of non-voting graduate students and postdoctoral scholars on the Graduate Council is decreased, but their respective representation is transferred to those groups giving them complete control of who represents their interests at the Graduate Council. They can decide how those representatives are identified (election, appointment, responsibilities for reporting back, etc.) rather than having the Graduate Council be responsible for open elections of these members with no direct reporting line back to the bodies they represent.

## Advantages

By placing the Graduate Council within the Faculty Senate structure, we will be increasing the transparency of Graduate Council issues and proposed policy changes. As these changes work their way through the Faculty Senate processes, every department and college will have the opportunity to discuss proposed changes and bring the voice of all ISU faculty to the table before the senate votes on any graduate policy. This structural change will also elevate the work of the Graduate Council and the issues related to graduate and professional students and postdoctoral associates by placing these issues on the agenda of the provost, Dean's Cabinet, Chair's Council, etc. by making them part of the normal academic conversations related to Faculty Senate business. By changing the representation structure to the academic colleges, all faculty and colleges will have a direct representation process (and thus reporting and feedback loop) to the elected representatives of the Graduate Council.

## Transition Recommendation

If the proposed restructuring process is approved, the Faculty Senate will work with the graduate dean and the current members of the Graduate Council to allow elected members and non-voting graduate students and postdoctoral scholars to continue to complete elected terms, if possible, while also integrating the requirements that all colleges be represented and appropriate one-third turnover each year can be established.

## Approval Process

Our goal is to have this restructuring approved this academic year.

1. **Required:** Approval of the Graduate Council to consider moving Graduate Council into the Faculty Senate structure.
2. **Recommended:** Campus wide town halls to discuss proposal and seek input from Graduate Faculty
3. **Recommended:** Discussion and feedback with university DOGEs
4. **Recommended:** Comes back to Graduate Council for revisions based on feedback from stakeholders.

5. **Required:** Campus-wide vote of the Graduate Faculty
6. **Required:** Approval of Changes to the Faculty Senate Bylaws by the Faculty Senate
7. **Required:** Approval of the Provost and President

Our plan is to have steps 1-4 accomplished during the Fall 2023 semester and complete steps 5 and 6 during the Spring 2024 semester.

# **Proposed Language to Integrate the Graduate Council into the Faculty Senate Structure Under the Academic Affairs Council**

## **Charge**

The Graduate Council represents the university's graduate faculty; serves in an advisory capacity to the Graduate College dean; approves graduate courses, curricula, and programs; and acts on academic policies that affect graduate and professional programs and postdoctoral associates throughout the university. Curricular issues and policy changes approved by the Council will be forwarded to the appropriate Faculty Senate committee or council as part of the normal academic shared governance approval process. The Graduate Council reviews requests related to graduate faculty membership and makes recommendations to the Graduate College dean regarding those requests.

## **Membership**

### **Voting**

The voting members of the Graduate Council are a representative elected body of the Graduate Faculty. All Graduate Faculty who are members of the General Faculty are eligible to serve except those serving as a department chair or those whose title contains the term president, provost, dean, or director. Each academic college will be allocated at least one member. Additional members will be allocated to an academic college based on the number of Graduate Faculty eligible to serve. An additional member will be allocated to an academic college for each 200 Graduate Faculty members. The number of Graduate Council members will be calculated each year ending in zero or five.

### **Non-Voting**

Non-voting, ex officio members include the Graduate College dean, one graduate student selected by the Graduate and Professional Student Senate, and one postdoctoral associate selected by the Graduate College dean or their designee. The Graduate College dean may arrange for Graduate College personnel to assist with the business and logistics of the Graduate Council.

### **Leadership**

A Chair and Vice-Chair will be elected by the Graduate Council each academic year. The Chair will represent the Graduate Council as a voting member of the Faculty Senate Academic Affairs Council.

## **Term of Office**

The voting members of the Graduate Council will be elected for a three-year term. Members may be elected for a maximum of two consecutive terms. Approximately one-third of the voting members will be elected each spring for terms starting at the beginning of the next academic year. Non-voting members are based on their position or are selected by other representative bodies to serve and may serve continuously or until replaced the representative body who appointed them.

## **Committees**

### **Graduate Curriculum and Catalog Committee**

The Graduate Curriculum and Catalog Committee will review and make recommendations to the Graduate Council regarding any graduate program and curricular changes, as well as catalog changes related to graduate courses. This is a subset of the Graduate Council consisting of one member from each academic college plus a chair. The Chair of Graduate Curriculum and Catalog Committee is appointed by the Graduate College dean in consultation with the Chair of the Graduate Council. The remaining members will consist of one Graduate Council member from each college. These members will be appointed by the Graduate College dean in consultation with Chair of the Graduate Council and Chair of the Graduate Curriculum and Catalog Committee. Terms will be based on their Graduate Council terms. The Graduate College dean will appoint a faculty or staff member to represent the Graduate College.

### **Graduate Faculty Membership Committee**

The Graduate Faculty Membership Committee reviews nominations for graduate faculty membership and graduate lecturer status and recommends outcomes for membership requests to the Graduate College dean. The committee will consist of three members of Graduate Council. This committee will be chaired by the Vice-Chair of Graduate Council. The other two members will be appointed by the Graduate College dean in consultation with the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Graduate Council.

### **Ad hoc Committees**

The Chair of the Graduate Council may appoint other committees from the members of the Graduate Council as needed to conduct the business of the Council.