

**ULM GRADUATE COUNCIL  
BY-LAWS**

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## 1. History

The University of Louisiana at Monroe's Graduate School was established in 1961 initially to offer master's degrees and since has grown to include several doctoral degrees. The Director of the Graduate School oversees both the Graduate School and the Office of Sponsored Programs and Research. The Graduate School's core responsibilities include graduate admission, graduation, recruitment, marketing, Graduate Council, faculty and student research support, and relationship building with external stakeholders.

The Graduate Council was formed to enable a cadre of faculty with significant experience and achievement in graduate education to assist in the review and implementation of campus graduate studies issues. Working with the Director of the Graduate School, the Graduate Council serves to assess and implement initiatives that foster successful graduate education involving faculty and students.

## 2. Authority

The ULM Graduate Council derives its authority from the faculty and the Vice President for Academic Affairs (VPAA), and the Council works in conjunction with the Director of the Graduate School. The Graduate Council is a free-standing University committee, and its recommendations are advisory to the Graduate School Director and VPAA as appropriate.

## 3. Functions

In practice, much of the day-to-day administration of graduate study is conducted by graduate coordinators, graduate advisors, school directors, program chairs, and college deans responsible for programs housed in their units. Colleges retain the responsibility for functions, such as admitting students, conducting interviews when appropriate, keeping student records, and determining the level of participation in graduate education by individual faculty members.

At the university level, responsibility for administration of the graduate faculty's policies and regulations, resolving questions of interpretation of these rules, and recommending university-wide graduate academic standards is vested in the Graduate School. The Graduate Council serves as an advisory board carrying out the following responsibilities:

- Working with the Director of the Graduate School to develop a strategic vision for graduate education at the University of Louisiana at Monroe;
- Assessing, modifying, and approving graduate policies and procedures;
- Making recommendations on policies for the Graduate School;
- Serving as the final arbitrator for student-related appeals;
- Reviewing and recommending graduate faculty membership based on the credentials of graduate faculty applications;
- Considering other matters affecting graduate education.

#### 4. Membership

The Graduate Council shall consist of voting members representing the graduate faculty of the University of Louisiana at Monroe and non-voting, ex-officio members representing the Graduate School.

**Faculty Membership.** The Vice President for Academic Affairs in consultation with College Deans, other College committees (if applicable), and the Director of the Graduate School, appoints members representing graduate faculty in the College of their appointment. Graduate faculty members of the Graduate Council are typically appointed for three-year terms. Term limits may be longer than three years as based on the discretion of the College Dean and VPAA. The appointment of college representatives is made on a staggered basis to maintain continuity of experience, and terms expire on June 30 of an individual's final term year (as applicable). A rotational matrix is housed in the Graduate School Director's office.

There shall be a maximum of four (4) voting members per college on the Graduate Council. There shall also be one (1) voting member representing the Faculty Senate. The Faculty Senate membership may be filled simultaneously by another member of the Council.

The minimal criteria required to be eligible to qualify as a voting member of the Graduate Council are as follows:

- Must be a full-time faculty member and a member of the graduate faculty.
- Must not hold an administrative title above that of Associate Dean.

In the event an appointed member is absent from the University for an extended period, such as a sabbatical leave, an extended medical leave, or change in employment status, the VPAA, in consultation with the respective College Dean, will appoint a member *pro tem* to serve as the College's representative. Such a member shall have all voting rights of the elected member.

An appointed member of the Graduate Council may be removed from the Council by a vote of two-thirds or more of the voting members whenever it is judged that the interests of the Council will be better served.

**Ex-Officio Members.** Ex-officio, non-voting members of the Graduate Council shall consist of:

- The Director of the Graduate School
- Representative(s) from the Graduate School
- The University Vice President for Academic Affairs or his/her designee (if needed).

The principal purpose of having the above ex-officio members on the Council is to provide a rapid and readily available flow of information to and from academic areas having responsibility for particular aspects of graduate education.

## 5. Leadership

Both the Graduate Council Chair and the Council Secretary will be elected from the Council body at large. To be considered for selection as the Council Chair or Secretary, an individual should have served for at least two complete academic years on the Graduate Council. Regularly scheduled elections will be held in the spring of odd-numbered years, and the Chair and Secretary will assume their respective duties and responsibilities in the fall of odd-numbered years. No term limits will exist for the position of Chair or Secretary.

The Council Chair and/or Secretary may be removed from leadership positions by the Council by a vote of two-thirds or more of the voting members whenever it is judged that the interests of the Council will be served by new leadership.

The Council Chair is the primary individual who conducts Graduate Council meetings and serves as the representative of the Council to ULM's upper administration. In the event of a required absence, the Chair will delegate responsibilities to the Secretary (or some other long-standing Council member). If an extended absence on the Council occurs (such as a sabbatical leave, an extended medical leave, or change in employment status), the Council will select a new Chair, who will serve the remaining portion of the former chairperson.

The Council Secretary is the primary documentarian of Council business. Responsibilities include keeping minutes and sending them to Academic Affairs and the Graduate School, and other applicable duties.

At any time that the Chair or Secretary must be replaced, their replacement will be nominated and voted in by the Council to serve for the remainder of the relevant term.

The Graduate School Director, as an ex-officio member of the Graduate Council, shall manage graduate affairs and implement the decisions of the Council. The Graduate School handles all correspondence relating to Council business and collects signatures as needed on official documents. In addition, the Director of the Graduate School, in conjunction with the Graduate Council and the Office of the Vice President for Academic Affairs, shall aid in developing a strategic vision for graduate program development at ULM, help establish and monitor graduate program policies, monitor compliance with institutional and Board of Regents regulations, monitor compliance with institutional rules and regulations for assistantships, administer central control of assistantships and the tuition fee waiver program, coordinate the preparation of documents for appropriate ULM officials, coordinate the preparation of the Graduate Catalog, and oversee the implementation of the Graduate Catalog policies. In addition to working with the Graduate Council, the Director of the Graduate School will also work closely with the College Deans, Assistant Vice President for Enrollment Management, Registrar, Director of eULM, and others as applicable who have responsibility for aspects of graduate program administration.

## **6. Meetings**

The Graduate Council shall meet monthly during the academic year. Special meetings may be called by the Council Chair or at the request of six (6) voting members. Notice of all meetings shall be given in writing at least five (5) days in advance to all voting and ex-officio members of the Council and posted on the Graduate Council website. Any member of the University community may request in advance and in writing to the Council Chair and the Director of the Graduate School permission to attend a Council meeting regarding a particular agenda item.

The Council shall operate by all pertinent rules contained in “Robert’s Rules of Order, 11<sup>th</sup> Edition.” A quorum of the Graduate Council shall consist of a simple majority of voting members. The vote from a quorum of the membership will constitute a deciding and official vote of the Council. Tie votes will be broken by a vote from the Council Chair. Proxy votes are not permitted. Upon request by any voting member, the Council shall vote by means of secret ballot. If no such request is indicated, the secret ballot method will not be employed, and a hand count will be accepted.

Meetings may be held if less than a simple majority of voting members are present, but no deciding votes may be taken. Business conducted during such a meeting must be approved by a majority of the voting members

Agendas and minutes of Graduate Council meetings shall be provided to all members of the Council, the Deans of the university Colleges, and the VPAA; and they shall be posted on the Graduate Council website. It is expected that representatives from the Council will report back to their respective Colleges and Schools with a summary of Council deliberations and actions for informational purposes.

## **7. By-Laws Amendments**

A suggestion to alter, amend, repeal, or adopt new By-laws is usually initiated by voting members on the Graduate Council. Such an action may be taken at a regular or special meeting for which written notice of this purpose is provided in advance of the meeting. The vote of a majority of the elected members is required to approve any recommended action. The ultimate authority to approve the initial Graduate Council By-laws as well as future changes, however, rests with the Vice President for Academic Affairs.