

## **POLICY ON GRADUATE FACULTY GROUPS FOR MASTER'S DEGREE PROGRAMS**

### **I. POLICY**

Graduate education is an important and integral part of the educational experience at California State University, Fresno. The quality of graduate education is dependent upon the quality and expertise of the faculty delivering the graduate curriculum. To assure the quality of graduate education at the master's level, each graduate program shall be required to have a designated group of full-time faculty members to support the graduate program, and to serve as the consultative body for the graduate program. They are called members of graduate faculty groups.

Graduate faculty groups serve as the organizational means for ensuring distinct governance, consultation and faculty leadership for graduate programs. Graduate faculty groups may include full-time faculty members from different academic departments and units as well as faculty members from other institutions for approved inter-institutional programs.

It is the responsibility of the graduate faculty groups to make recommendations to the department or academic unit regarding:

- a. Program curricula, admissions and exit requirements
- b. Program resources and assessment
- c. The promotion of the values of scholarship and professionalism in the field
- d. Courses of action on all graduate program matters.

Members of the graduate group may serve on or chair graduate committees and thesis committees unless otherwise restricted by this policy. The group may be consulted about the justification for new faculty positions and the position description for any faculty searches. In addition, graduate groups may provide guidance to the Dean of the Division of Graduate Studies. Those faculty members who are not members of a graduate group may teach graduate courses and serve as readers on thesis, project and examination committees in accordance with established departmental guidelines. See additional Policy on requirements for Doctoral Faculty Groups.

### **II. ORGANIZATION**

1. In order to assure that the faculty members comprising a graduate group attain a critical mass in order to carry out the responsibilities of the group. The graduate group shall contain no fewer than five (5) full-time tenured or tenure-track faculty members with the appropriate terminal degree.<sup>1 2</sup>
2. The Dean of the Division of Graduate Studies will identify the graduate faculty groups that do not maintain the minimum of five (5) full-time members.
3. Graduate groups are self-governing faculty bodies and, as such, should establish by-laws and may have committees as established through their bylaws.

---

<sup>1</sup> See Procedures for Submitting Proposals for New Degree Major Programs, CSU Office of the Chancellor, August 12, 1997.

<sup>2</sup> As regards participation of faculty in the Faculty Early Retirement Program (FERP), see Section IV below.

4. The Graduate Program Coordinator / Director may serve as chair of the group and is responsible for providing administrative oversight of the program.<sup>3</sup>
5. Changes in membership in the graduate group are reviewed annually by the graduate program coordinator, the department chair, and the college/school dean. Any changes in the membership of the group shall be reported to the Dean of the Division of Graduate Studies on the appropriate form.
6. Existing members of the group who no longer meet the criteria stated in Section III may be removed from the group in accordance with the adopted bylaws of the Program's Graduate Faculty Group.
7. It is the responsibility of the department to establish written guidelines to determine who may be assigned to teach graduate courses.

### **III. CRITERIA FOR MEMBERSHIP IN A MASTER'S GRADUATE FACULTY GROUP**

1. Appointment to graduate group membership is based upon the faculty member's scholarly/professional interests in and contributions to the discipline or field; their request for such appointment; their eligibility as determined by written departmental or program criteria; and in accordance with university standards as noted below.
2. Minimum criteria for appointment for a graduate group are as follows:
  - a. A faculty member participating in a graduate group shall be full-time tenured or tenure-track;<sup>4</sup>
  - b. A faculty member participating in a graduate group shall be willing to serve and assume the responsibilities of the graduate faculty group, including serving on and/or chairing theses, projects, and/or examination committees;
  - c. A faculty member participating in a graduate group shall show evidence of on-going scholarly activity appropriate to the graduate program; and
  - d. A faculty member participating in a graduate group shall have been recommended in accordance with the bylaws of the program and have approval of the department chair and college/school dean.
3. Only members of the faculty graduate group are allowed to chair a thesis, project, or examination committee. In order for a member to chair a thesis, project, or examination committee, he/she must have previously served as a second or third member of such a committee.

---

<sup>3</sup> See APM 122.

<sup>4</sup> For tenured faculty participating in the Faculty Early Retirement Program, see Section IV.

4. In order to maintain membership in the faculty graduate group, during the preceding four (4) years a member shall
  - a. be full-time tenured or tenure-track;<sup>5</sup>
  - b. be willing to serve and assume the responsibilities of the graduate faculty group, including serving on and/or chairing theses, projects, and/or examination committees;
  - c. have taught at least one (1) graduate-level course or chaired one (1) thesis or supervised one(1) graduate student project or chaired one (1) comprehensive examination committee.
  - d. show evidence of on-going scholarly activity appropriate to the graduate program; and
  - e. have been recommended in accordance with the bylaws of the program and have approval of the department chair and college/school dean.
5. It is the responsibility of the faculty member and his/her department chair and graduate program coordinator to provide adequate evidence of the faculty member's eligibility for appointment to the graduate group at the master's level.
6. The department chair may be appointed to the graduate group according to the bylaws of the graduate faculty group.
7. Those who are not members of the graduate faculty group, such as lecturers, clinical faculty, visiting scholars, artists-in-residence, MPP administrators with retreat rights, participants in the Faculty Early Retirement Program (except as provided in Section IV below), and adjunct faculty may provide graduate instruction and/or guest lectures or serve as second or third readers on thesis committees based upon departmental recommendations and evidence of appropriate expertise and academic preparation.
8. Professors Emeriti, retired professors or those participating in the Faculty Early retirement program (FERP) may continue their membership in a graduate faculty group under certain circumstances and in accordance with established criteria found in section IV below. Graduate faculty members whose status has been terminated due to retirement or who are in FERP status, may complete outstanding examining committee, thesis committee and advising assignments if they wish to do so, but they may not accept new assignments to chair such committees. Note: As noted above, it is not necessary to be a member of a graduate faculty group to teach graduate courses or serve as a reader on thesis/project committees.

---

<sup>5</sup> For tenured faculty participating in the Faculty Early Retirement Program, see Section IV.

#### IV. PARTICIPANTS IN THE FACULTY EARLY RETIREMENT PROGRAM

Graduate faculty groups are required to maintain a minimum of five (5) full-time tenured or tenure track faculty members. While participants in the Faculty Early Retirement Program (FERP) are tenured faculty members,<sup>6</sup> many participants in this program are not available every semester or at other appropriate times to perform the responsibilities of membership in the graduate faculty group. Therefore, FERP participants are not normally counted toward the five (5) full-time tenured and tenure track members required for the maintenance of a graduate faculty group.

1. Since participants in FERP are defined as tenured faculty members, departments may invite these faculty members to participate in their graduate programs.
2. In order to participate in ongoing graduate work such as mentoring, theses and projects, participants in FERP who work one paid semester only must be appointed to an adjunct faculty position during the semester when they are otherwise in inactive employment status.<sup>7 8</sup>
3. In instances where
  - a. there are not five (5) full-time tenured or tenure track faculty members as members of the graduate faculty group;
  - b. the most recent program review justifies continuation of the graduate program; and
  - c. the department wishes to use FERP participants as part of the graduate faculty group,

the department must file a Request to Utilize FERP Faculty Form with the University Graduate Committee at the beginning of the academic year. The request must demonstrate

- a. active commitment on the part of each FERP participant requesting being counted as a member of the graduate faculty group;
- b. a commitment from the department chair to hiring new tenured or tenure track faculty including a timetable
- c. a continuing commitment from the college/school dean regarding the replacement of tenured and tenure track faculty to meet the requirement of five (5) full-time tenured or tenure track faculty members.

---

Recommended by the Academic Senate  
Approved by the President

April 2003  
**May 5, 2003**

---

<sup>6</sup> See CBA Article 29

<sup>7</sup> See campus Policy on Adjunct Faculty (APM)

<sup>8</sup> This commitment is particularly important where service on a thesis committee or project is involved.