To: Graduate Studies Committee

From: Tammy D. Barry
         Vice Provost for Graduate and Professional Education

Date: February 7, 2023

RE: Summary of *Graduate School Policies and Procedures Manual* Changes for the 2023-2024 Academic Year

Major Policy Changes (redlined)

- **Establishing and defining the Faculty of the Graduate School and graduate program faculty**

  Rationale: The current policy of using the program bylaws to define the faculty who can chair or serve on students' graduate advisory committees within the program tends to silo programs from one another and does not promote interdisciplinary collaboration across programs through their students' independent projects. Consistent with many other institutions, rather than define the graduate faculty at the program level, the Graduate School will establish a Faculty of the Graduate School. Once WSU faculty members are appointed to the Faculty of the Graduate School, they can serve in the designated capacity on any student's committee if the committee composition is approved by the designated signature authorities on the student's Program of Study (or Committee Change Form) and meets the minimum requirements of the Graduate School regarding committee composition.

  The "Faculty of the Graduate School" includes three categories based on appointment type of WSU faculty: (1) Graduate Faculty (tenure-track faculty; appointed automatically and permanently), (2) Associate Graduate Faculty (career-track faculty; appointed by nomination, with a renewal process every five years), and (3) Auxiliary Graduate Faculty (adjunct or adjoint faculty; appointed by nomination, with a renewal process every three years). The option for an ad hoc appointment to a specific student's committee will still be available through individual review and approval by the Graduate School.

  The reference "Graduate Faculty" refers to tenure track members of the Faculty of the Graduate School when referring to graduate advisory committee membership. The reference "graduate program faculty" refers to all members of the program who

contribute to graduate education, including those who are not on the Faculty of the Graduate School, and is used throughout the Graduate School Policy and Procedures Manual.

To ease the transition, the Graduate School will automatically create the roster of the Faculty of the Graduate School based on existing program bylaws. Any bylaws revisions received in the 2022/2023 academic year that contain faculty updates will also be included. Non-WSU committee members currently serving on an advisory committee will be maintained until the committee is dissolved or if they are replaced through a change of committee form.

- **Changing program bylaws policy**

  Rationale: Program bylaws will no longer be required to be reviewed by the Graduate Studies Committee (GSC) or presented to the full Faculty Senate as an information item. All programs will be required to have bylaws that are updated as policy change requires. However, the bylaws, which govern the way the program runs itself, do not require external approval beyond the program.

  The specific policies and procedures of individual departments and programs (as described in program bylaws and student handbooks) may be more prescriptive provided that they do not conflict with the Graduate School policies and procedures.

  Although the GSC will not review bylaws, the Graduate School will provide a template for graduate programs to follow when creating or updating their bylaws. Further, the Graduate School will review program bylaws upon request to support the programs.

  It is expected that the program will submit their most current bylaws and program handbook to the Graduate School annually for archival purposes.

Minor Policy Changes (redlined)

- **Defining critical mass of faculty and graduate students within a program**

  Rationale: Rather than use specific numbers that may or may not apply to all programs, a "critical mass" is defined as the minimum number of faculty as well as the minimum number of students (both in a cohort and across the program) needed to sustain a viable graduate program in a given field.

- **Including Professional Health Sciences Committee (PHSC) in new course and course modifications procedures**

Rationale: Several graduate programs are health oriented and submit their proposals to PHSC rather than GSC. This change aligns policy with practice.

- **Extending timeline to complete degree following preliminary exam to four years instead of three years**

  Rationale: This modification allows for the wide variation in time required to complete dissertations after preliminary exams are completed. This policy change will decrease the number of extensions that must be requested for students to complete their degree.

- **Allowing transfer credits to be applied to more than one program if approved by graduate program faculty**

  Rationale: Programs that confer both a masters degree and a doctoral degree may want to allow transfer credits to apply to both degrees. If the Program of Study including the transfer courses is approved by the appropriate signature authorities, the transfer credits may be applied to separate degrees. This policy also includes degrees in other programs/departments.

- **Extending the time from exam to final submission of thesis or dissertation to ten days instead of five days**

  Rationale: Students often require more time to complete their changes in documents than the current timeline allows. The Graduate School is no longer clearing degrees prior to commencement. Rather, consistent with undergraduate commencement participation, we allow students to walk in the graduation ceremony even if the thesis or dissertation has not been fully accepted or the degree is being audited. Walking at graduation is only ceremonial, whereas the degree will not be formally conferred until all requirements are met. This internal policy change extends the time to clear degrees and provides us more flexibility to allow the students more time to submit their final thesis/dissertation. It will not delay the conferment of the degree, nor will it require that final exams be held earlier in the semester.

- **Clarifying that, following the thesis or dissertation public presentation portion, the question-and-answer period with the committee may be either open or closed, as defined by and consistently implemented within the program**

  Rationale: The Graduate School receives inquiries from programs and students about the public nature of the final exam defending a thesis or dissertation. The student's presentation is meant to be a publicly announced and open event; however, the program should decide whether the question-and-answer period will

be closed or open to the public. The program should define this policy in their student handbook and apply it consistently to all students in the given program.

- **Clarifying that the time limit for the public presentation and the question-and-answer period total no longer than 2.5 hours**

  Rationale: The Graduate School has learned that some programs have held the time limit only for the presentation and allowed the question-and-answer period to extend much longer. The intention of the time limit is to have the student's exam (presentation and question-and-answer period) to last no longer than 2.5 hours.

- **Allowing any student failing a first exam to request a second exam without an appeal**

  Rationale: Prior policy stated that a student who failed their first exam may not be allowed to take a second exam if a member of the Graduate Mentor Academy was present and only by appeal. The proposed policy amends this so that students failing a first exam are allowed to request a second exam without appeal.

- **Clarifying that International Teaching Assistant (ITA) Exams must be scheduled prior to an assistantship appointment being processed**

  Rationale: Changes align with International Programs policy.

- **Clarifying that the one-semester grace period for necessary trainings only applies to first-semester students**

  Rationale: This information was missing from the current policies and procedures. This change aligns policy to practice.

- **Clarifying that students who do not complete necessary training in a timely manner are responsible for any late fees accrued due to delays in assistantship processing**

  Rationale: This information was missing from the current policies and procedures. This change aligns policy to practice.

- **Clarifying that University of Idaho Cooperative Courses do not count toward the minimum credit hours**

  Rationale: This information was missing from the current policies and procedures. This change aligns policy to practice.

- **Removing reference to examining time limitations on assistantships during a program review process**

  Rationale: Removal of this sentence aligns policy to practice.

- **Adding a research assistant (RA) to the parenthetical for non-renewal due to poor performance of required duties**

  Rationale: It was inadvertently missing in previous versions. This addition aligns policy to practice.

- **Reducing the notification period of non-renewal of assistantship for the next semester to be 15 days prior to the end of the current assistantship appointment, rather than 30 days**

  Rationale: Programs often do not know until later in the semester whether they will be renewing a student for an assistantship or not. The shorter timeframe allows programs to make this determination. This procedure is only recommended, not required.

- **Adding an additional reason for termination of an assistantship**

  Rationale: If a student withdraws or is administratively withdrawn from courses due to Academic Regulation 72, the student's credit hours will fall below the 10-credit minimum to be appointed to an assistantship. Therefore, the assistantship will be terminated due to insufficient credits. Termination for this reason cannot be appealed. The Attorney General's office advised to add this clarification.

- **Allowing a student's primary name to appear on diploma, rather than requiring it be the official name**

  Rationale: This policy change gives more flexibility to students to have their desired name appear on their diploma/degree

- **Clarifying the degree clearance process**

  Rationale: Due to changes over time, the information was inaccurate in the current policies and procedures. This change aligns policy to practice.

- **Clarifying policies for commencement participation and degree receipt**

  Rationale: Due to changes over time, the information was inaccurate in the current policies and procedures. This change aligns policy to practice.

Other Edits (not impacting policy or procedure; not redlined; appear throughout the document)

- Minor editorial corrections and clarifications were made.
- Redundancy was reduced where possible.