Russian Studies Bylaws

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CHAPTER 1: NAME

PART I – Full Name

Sec. 1- The unit's full name is Russian Studies.

PART II – Short Name

Sec. 1- The unit's short name is RST.

CHAPTER 2: PURPOSE

PART I – Declarations

Sec. 1- To teach about Russia, the countries of the former Soviet Union and its people, including those in the United States, through outreach, courses, conferences, scholarly lectures, forums, films, cultural and other events.

Sec. 2- To create awareness of the local community from Russia and countries of the former Soviet Union in West Michigan.

Sec. 3- To educate about U.S. economic, political, and cultural relations with Russia and countries of the former Soviet Union.

Sec. 4- To enhance students’ education and benefit students in a wide variety of majors and professional programs,

Sec. 5- To encourage student participation with Russian and international student organizations on campus, the West Michigan community from Russia and countries of the former Soviet Union and its institutions, and groups dealing with international relations such as the Institute for Global Education and the World Affairs Council,

Sec. 6- To encourage student participation on the Russian Studies Program’s Advisory Committee and on faculty- and student-directed research projects,

Sec. 7- To encourage study abroad, either in Grand Valley State University’s programs or in other appropriate programs in Russia and countries of the former Soviet Union,
Sec. 8- To pursue new agreements with institutions in Russia and countries of the former Soviet Union, and

Sec. 9- To encourage faculty and staff visits and exchanges with institutions in Russia and countries of the former Soviet Union.

PART II – Organization

The RST Program will be administered by a Coordinator. An Advisory Committee, as described in the next Chapter, will counsel the Coordinator, elect an Executive Committee, and assist the RST Program in fulfilling its declared activities.

CHAPTER 3: ADVISORY COMMITTEE: MEMBERSHIP

PART I – General Requirements of Membership

Sec. 1- Membership is open to full-time and retired faculty, and full-time staff, with an academic or professional interest in promoting the declared goals of the RST Program.

Sec. 2- All full-time Visiting Faculty and Visiting Staff are eligible for membership and committees provided they have signed an academic-year contract with the university.

Sec. 3- Membership shall be granted to student groups that have interest in promoting the declared goals of the RST program. Student groups are invited to attend meetings, but only faculty vote on academic-related issues.

(A) Each approved student organization shall elect one representative to the Advisory Committee.

(B) Membership under this section is subject to all provisions found in these Bylaws.

PART II – Membership on the Advisory Committee

Sec. 1 - The Coordinator shall offer membership to faculty or staff with an academic or professional interest in the declared goals of the RST Program.

Sec. 2- Once a prospective member has accepted this offer, and the Executive Committee has indicated its support, the Coordinator shall thank the new member, advising him or her of the duties and powers of membership, and providing a copy of the current program By Laws.

PART III – Former Coordinators

For continuity, the previous Coordinator shall be asked to continue as a regular member of the Advisory Committee for at least one two-year term.
CHAPTER 4: ADVISORY COMMITTEE: DUTIES AND POWERS

Sec. 1- The Advisory Committee shall assist the Coordinator and Executive Committee in carrying out the duties necessary to maintain and strengthen the program in accordance with the Statement of Purpose in these Bylaws, including

(A) Student recruitment and advising
(B) Curriculum development
(C) Outreach within the university community and beyond the university
(D) Program development and implementation
(E) Promotion of study abroad
(F) Event planning and implementation
(G) Program assessment
(H) Serving in an advisory capacity to the Director of Area Studies and the Dean
(I) Electing and recommending the RST Coordinator to the Director of Area Studies for appointment. The Dean will be the appointing officer.

Sec. 2- Members of the Advisory Committee also communicate with the Coordinator and other Advisory Committee members on a regular basis,

Sec. 3- Attend meetings of the Advisory Committee,

Sec. 4- Make substantive contributions to at least one (1) RST Program event annually,

Sec. 5- Vote and determine matters before the Advisory Committee, and

Sec. 6- Promote the declared goals of the RST Program on and off campus.

Sec. 7- In addition to the Coordinator, two members of the Advisory Committee will be recommended by the Director of Area Studies to serve as representatives of Russian Studies to the Area Studies Unit.

CHAPTER 5: ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETINGS

PART I – Meetings

Sec. 1- At least two (2) meetings of the Advisory Committee shall be held every year at Grand Valley State University, one (1) in the fall and one (1) in the winter semester. The specific day and time are to be determined by the Executive Committee.

Sec. 2- Special meetings may be held at the discretion of the Coordinator or upon the written request of two members of the Executive Committee.
PART II – Notice of Meetings

The Coordinator shall give notice of all meetings by e-mailing members of the Advisory Committee at least two (2) weeks in advance of stated meetings, and at least five (5) days notice shall be given for special meetings of the Advisory Committee. The time and place of all meetings and the purpose of special meetings shall be stated in the notice.

PART III – Quorum

Sec. 1- Two fifths (2/5) of the members of the Advisory Committee shall constitute a quorum to do business; a lesser number shall adjourn.

PART IV – Order of Business

Sec. 1- The order of business at each meeting of the Advisory Committee shall be:

(A) Roll call
(B) Approval of the agenda
(C) Approval of minutes of the last meeting
(D) Report of Coordinator
(E) Reports and recommendations of Executive Committee
(F) Reports and recommendations of Specialized Committees
(G) Old business
(H) New business
(I) Adjournment

PART V – Origin of Matters

Matters for Advisory or Executive Committee attention may originate from the Coordinator, any member of the Advisory or Executive Committees, the Director or the Area Studies Unit at large.

PART VI – Rules of Order

Sec. 1- All business of the Russian Studies Program should be conducted in accordance with Robert’s Rules of Order, unless modified by majority vote of the Advisory Committee.

Sec. 2- A parliamentarian from among the members of the Advisory Committee may be appointed by the Executive Committee and confirmed by the Advisory Committee at the second Advisory Committee meeting of the academic year.

Sec. 3- The previous year’s parliamentarian would exercise this role in an official capacity during the first Advisory Committee meeting of the academic year.
CHAPTER 6: EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE: MEMBERSHIP AND ELECTIONS

PART I – Membership Provisions and Requirements

Sec. 1- All members of the Executive Committee must be members of the Advisory Committee.

Sec. 2- The Coordinator is a voting member of the Executive Committee and serves as its chair.

Sec. 3- The Executive Committee is composed of five (5) voting members, including the Coordinator.

Sec. 4- The Director of Area Studies is an ex-officio member of the Executive Committee.

PART II – Election of Coordinator

Sec. 1- The Coordinator shall be elected for a three-year renewable term by the Advisory Committee.

Sec. 2- Any permanent faculty member of the Advisory Committee may be nominated for the post of Coordinator.

Sec. 3- The election of the Coordinator shall take place at the first regular meeting of the Winter Semester prior to the beginning of the Coordinator's term of office.

Sec. 4- The nominee with the majority of the votes shall be the Coordinator Elect, and his or her nomination shall be submitted to the Director of Area Studies for approval.

Sec. 5- In the event that the Coordinator must step down unexpectedly, an Interim Coordinator must be elected immediately by the members of the Executive Committee and approved by the Director of Area Studies to serve until the first Advisory Committee meeting of the Winter Semester.

PART III – Election of Executive Committee

Sec. 1- The Executive Committee serves for two (2) years or until the next first fall semester regular meeting of the Advisory Committee.

Sec. 2- Upon the expiration of Executive Committee member terms, the Coordinator will solicit nominations for the Executive Committee at the first regular meeting of the Advisory Committee in the fall semester or via email prior to that meeting.

Sec. 3- Upon completion of the nomination process, the Advisory Committee will cast votes.

Sec. 4- Each Advisory Committee member shall have a number of votes that is equivalent to the number of Executive Committee members to be elected (4). Each Advisory Committee member shall distribute the totality of his/her votes among the nominees.
Sec. 5- The Coordinator will declare the four (4) nominees with the most votes the winners.

Sec. 6- In the event that an Executive Committee member must step down unexpectedly, the Director of Area Studies will select an interim replacement until an election can be held during the next regular meeting of the Advisory Committee.

CHAPTER 7: EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE: DUTIES AND POWERS

Sec. 1- The Executive Committee will exercise all the powers specified in these Bylaws unless otherwise specified by these Bylaws.

Sec. 2- The Executive Committee will work with the Coordinator to negotiate on behalf of the Advisory Committee and the Russian Studies Program.

Sec. 3- The Executive Committee may establish Task Forces to study and make reports on special matters of the RST Program. The Task Forces shall report their findings and make their recommendations to the Advisory Committee.

Sec. 4 - All material and substantive decisions of the Executive Committee shall be ratified by a simple majority vote by the Advisory Committee, either in a meeting or by e-mail, before entering into effect or becoming binding on the Russian Studies Program.

Sec. 5- The Executive Committee shall meet regularly during the fall and winter semesters, as determined by its members, and its meeting schedule will be announced in advance to all Advisory Committee members.

Sec. 6- Other meetings may be called by the Coordinator or by two (2) members of the Executive Committee.

Sec. 7- The Executive Committee meetings are open to all Advisory Committee members.

Sec. 8- Three (3) members of the Executive Committee shall constitute a quorum.

Sec. 9- The Executive Committee works with the Coordinator on RST programming and submitting budgets.

Sec. 10- The Coordinator reports regularly to the Executive Committee on program finances.

Sec. 11- The Executive Committee will report the state of finances (including expenses and balances) to the Advisory Committee at every Advisory Committee meeting.
CHAPTER 8: COORDINATOR: POWERS, DUTIES, AND REVIEW

PART I – Powers and Duties

Sec. 1 - The Coordinator oversees the RST program by leading RST program planning and development.

Sec. 2 - The Coordinator convenes and leads meetings of the Executive and Advisory Committees and may ask committee members for assistance in taking meeting minutes.

Sec. 3 - The Coordinator shall carry out the duties necessary to maintain and strengthen the program in accordance with the Statement of Purpose in these Bylaws, including

(A) Leading RST program assessment and self-study
(B) Attending meetings of Coordinators and the Area Studies unit
(C) Recruiting and advising students, along with the members of the Advisory Committee
(D) Working with the Records Office in auditing degree progression
(E) Overseeing the RST program budget
(F) Working with the Padnos International Center on developing institutional relationships with Russia and countries of the Former Soviet Union.
(G) Serving on personnel committees representing Russian Studies.
(H) Recruiting faculty to the program
(I) Participating in developing common practices across the programs for the purpose of contributing to the smooth functioning of the Area Studies unit.

Sec. 4 - The Coordinator will receive some form of compensation for administrative duties from the Brooks College of Interdisciplinary Studies.

PART II – Renewal of Coordinator’s Term

Sec. 1 - The renewal review, carried out by the Executive Committee and the Director of Area Studies, starts in the fall semester of the second year of the Coordinator’s term.

Sec. 2 - The procedure for review must be consistent with the University’s Administrative Manual.

Sec. 3 - The criteria for review shall be consistent with the declared goals of the RST Program.

Sec. 4 - The results of the review shall be reported to the Advisory Committee for further action.
CHAPTER 9: RECALL OF MEMBER AND TERMINATION OF MEMBERSHIP

PART I – Recall of Member and Termination of Membership

Sec. 1- Members of the Executive or Advisory Committees, may be deprived of membership or office for malfeasance, misfeasance, or nonfeasance (failing to fulfill the duties and powers of membership as specified in these Bylaws).

Sec. 2- Membership of the Executive or Advisory Committees shall be suspended if a member has become inactive or non-participatory for three (3) consecutive semesters.
Sec. 3- A member of the Executive or Advisory Committee, shall be recalled from the Executive Committee by two-thirds majority of all Advisory Committee members present at a duly convoked Advisory Committee meeting.

Sec. 4- Recalled members of the Executive Committee will be replaced by another member of the Advisory Committee selected by a majority of the Executive Committee at the next regular meeting of the Advisory Committee.

Sec. 5- Recalling the Coordinator requires a two-thirds majority vote of all Advisory Committee members present at a duly convoked Advisory Committee meeting as well as prior consultation with the Director of Area Studies. The Director of Area Studies may then appoint an Interim Coordinator until the Advisory Committee elects a replacement Coordinator and submits that person’s name for approval to the Director of Area Studies.

CHAPTER 9: AMENDMENTS AND PROCEDURE

Sec. 1- Any proposed amendment to the Bylaws must be presented, for discussion or amendment, only at a regular Advisory Committee meeting.

Sec. 2- After discussion, the Advisory Committee will proceed to vote on the matter.

Sec. 3- Passage of the amendment requires a two-thirds majority vote of all members present at a duly convened Advisory Committee meeting.

Sec. 4- Amendments to these bylaws may be proposed only by Advisory Committee members.

Sec. 5- Any proposed amendment to the Bylaws must be announced to the members of the Advisory Committee via e-mail or mail, and at a regular meeting of the Advisory Committee one month in advance of the Advisory Committee meeting at which it is discussed.