Proposal Submitted by the Graduate Council to Establish Standard Expectations for Regular Faculty Engaged in Graduate Education

September, 2009

2.19 Qualifications of Regular Faculty Engaged in Graduate Education.

In accordance with the university’s mission, vision and core values, the faculty and administration are committed to high academic standards. Furthermore, the GVSU community affirms: 1) that achieving and maintaining academic rigor and quality is as important to graduate programs as it is to undergraduate programs, and 2) that policies and procedures that ensure appropriate rigor and quality are essential. Central to the quality of any educational program is a qualified faculty that is committed to the educational ideals of the institution and higher education in general. Two factors are necessary to achieve quality educational programs. First, it is incumbent on the University, Colleges, and departments to hire qualified faculty and second, faculty should pursue common goals and standards regarding graduate education. Thus, this policy outlines Expectations of Regular Faculty Engaged in Graduate Education to enhance the quality of graduate education at GVSU.

1. Rationale and Philosophy

Expectations of undergraduate and graduate students are fundamentally different. In particular, graduate students are expected to work at a higher intellectual level in a more demanding and rigorous educational environment. To ensure that graduate programs maintain these fundamental distinctions requires that the faculty acknowledges such distinctions conceptually and through action, and that the University, Colleges, and departments employ faculty qualified to participate in graduate education.

Grand Valley State University faculty members engaged in both graduate and graduate professional education must not only remain current with knowledge of their disciplines, but must be active in advancing their fields through scholarly activity and appropriate service. A faculty involved in developing the current knowledge, methods, and techniques of their disciplines provides educational opportunities commensurate with best practices for graduate education. In general, active and productive scholarship and performance require a record of sustained effort in one’s discipline as evidenced by professional presentations, peer-reviewed publications, creative endeavors and performances, active and sustained professional contributions
to the disciplines, or other professional activity. Faculty should also demonstrate excellent mentorship and pedagogical skills including the ability to teach graduate courses, direct graduate student research, design graduate curriculum, and serve on master’s and doctoral committees.

2. Expectations for Regular Faculty Engaged in Graduate Education.

A. Levels of Faculty Involvement.

Regular Faculty may be involved with graduate education at several different levels representing their interest and/or other commitments or assignments. GVSU faculty may also choose not to be involved with graduate education.

1. Regular Faculty Fully Engaged in Graduate Education.

Regular faculty fully engaged in graduate education may teach graduate courses and supervise or serve on theses, dissertations and research project committees. They are also eligible to serve as a member of Graduate Council.

Regular faculty members engaged at this level must be a member of the regular (tenure track) faculty at GVSU, with a rank of Assistant Professor or higher, or be designated as Research Faculty. They must possess an earned doctorate or other appropriate terminal degree for their discipline. Alternatively, and in highly limited circumstances, a faculty member may qualify for standing based on demonstrated exceptional scholarly or creative achievement.

Regular faculty members must present evidence of continuing scholarly or creative activity during the period prior to application for, or renewal of, this level of standing. Evidence of scholarly or creative activities should include but are not limited to significant contributions or activities in one or more of the following: publication in discipline-respected peer-reviewed journals; publication of scholarly books or book chapters; publication in discipline-respected periodicals; invited and/or competitively selected presentations of scholarly work at regional, state, national or international meetings; academic or professional consultation; application for or receipt of an external research, scholarly, or creative activity grant; leadership (officer) positions in regional, national, or international professional organizations; scholarship-based clinical practice; exhibits, presentation, or performance of scholarly, creative, or artistic work at professionally recognized events. A school or academic unit may approve additional areas or categories for evidence of continuing scholarly or creative activity if these additional areas or categories are clearly specified and communicated to all interested parties, including all faculty members in the school or academic unit. These additional activities must be documented and communicated to the Office of Graduate Studies.

Regular faculty making initial application should provide evidence of active involvement in graduate education (teaching, advising, or mentoring graduate
students) during the three years prior to their application. The three-year requirement may be shortened, or waived as appropriate, if the applicant has not taught graduate students during the most recent three years. A faculty member seeking renewal of their status must provide evidence they have been actively involved in graduate education (teaching, advising, or mentoring graduate students) over the five years preceding their application for renewal.

2. Regular Faculty Members Partially Engaged in Graduate Education.

Regular faculty members partially engaged in graduate education participate through teaching graduate courses in areas of their expertise as defined by and related to the topic and field of their highest degree. They may also serve on graduate committees, but may not serve as chair of a graduate committee. These faculty must have an earned doctorate or hold at least a master’s degree with at least five years of qualifying experience and be approved by the faculty of the appropriate department, program, or school.

Regular faculty members partially engaged in graduate education must have current or expected departmental responsibilities in the graduate program during the term of their standing. Examples of departmental responsibilities include but are not limited to teaching, program development, and serving on committees, all within the graduate program.

Regular faculty partially engaged in graduate education must present evidence of scholarly or creative activity or equivalent professional accomplishments within the last three years. Evidence of scholarly and creative activities must include notable contributions or activities noted under 2.A.1.

3 Procedure for Regular Faculty to request Standing to be Fully Engaged or Partially engaged in Graduate Education.

A. Procedure.

Faculty members must provide evidence that they qualify for one of the levels described above. Standing will be determined based on the strength of the evidence presented in the application. The application should be submitted to the unit head who will forward the materials to the College Dean for review and approval. If approved, the entire approved application will be sent to the Graduate Dean or designee within three weeks of the beginning of the appropriate semester. The Graduate Dean will assess the qualifications of faculty seeking graduate standing and identify exceptions to the standards and policies.

1. Materials to Request Standing Should Include:

a. a completed application form (form ~ pdf or link);
b. a statement of previous experience teaching, advising, or mentoring graduate students;

c. a short narrative indicating the reason a faculty member is requesting standing to participate in graduate education including current or anticipated responsibilities within the graduate program;

d. a short narrative that summarizes one’s record of scholarship/performances, instruction, and professional service;

e. a current curriculum vitae;

f. any additional information that provides evidence of scholarship/performances, teaching and professional service.


Faculty meeting the qualifications and with approval from the appropriate college dean will be authorized to be fully engaged in graduate education for a period of five years. Faculty requesting to be partially engaged will be authorized for a three year period.

3. Revocation of Authorization

The appropriate college dean or the Provost may revoke authorization to engage in graduate education at any time for reasonable cause.