Charge to the Faculty Senate
Formal Request for Faculty Senate Action

Charge Initiated by: __Dr. Wes Durham__________________________________________

Date Charge submitted: __September 27, 2012____________________________________

Name of Faculty Senate Representatives:
1. __Paul Parkison__________________________________________________________
2. __Steve Williams__________________________________________________________

Complete the following items and submit this form to either your Faculty Senate representative or the Faculty Senate chair for consideration by the Faculty Senate.

Directions: *Items 1 – 4 to be completed by initiator.*

1. **Action Requested:** State specifically what action the initiating faculty wants the committee to take. For example, update data; research relevant new data from this or another institution or institutions; update an outmoded policy; propose a solution or a revision of the handbook; write a report, etc. What is the desired outcome?

   The director of Graduate Studies is respectfully requesting the Faculty Senate endorse and recommend to the provost the attached proposal for graduate studies reform. This proposal calls for: (a) a fair and equitable university-wide teaching load policy for those teaching graduate courses at USI, (b) a restructuring and refocusing of how administrative tasks are conducted within graduate studies campus-wide, and (c) a revamping of the graduate faculty and graduate course application processes. This proposed reform has been vetted and periodically revised over the last several months by the University Graduate Council (the faculty body that oversees graduate education on the USI campus). The members of the University Graduate Council have unanimously endorsed this proposal. The proposed reform also addresses the charge related to graduate teaching load inequities that was reviewed by the Faculty Affairs Committee during the 2011-2012 academic year. This proposed reform was designed and authored in the spirit of creating an equitable, pro-faculty infrastructure that will allow for continued growth and improvement in graduate education on the USI campus.

2. **Current Policy:** Include a copy of the current policy and/or practice (if applicable) and reference where it is located.

   Please see the attached document for details on the current practices within graduate studies. Many policies and procedures related to graduate education are in need of reform.

   See attached: 120927 Senate Grad Council Proposal
3. Background: Provide explanation of background and context for the proposed charge. What problem, issue, or experience prompts the proposal of the charge? Whenever possible, provide examples of the experiences impacted by the issue.

Please see the attached document for a narrative relating to the need for reform and the ways in which the proposed reform addresses the current limitations of graduate studies processes and procedures.

4. Potential resources: What necessary information can you provide and what resources can you suggest to help the Faculty Senate or committee fully address the charge?

Item 5 to be completed by Senate secretary or Chair:

5. Senate Comments: List any pertinent comments or suggestions raised in the Senate’s discussion of this charge. Also if this or a very similar charge has been proposed within the last 3 years and addressed by a committee, provide the result.

Action taken by the Faculty Senate:

The charge was taken up by the Faculty Senate at the October 12, 2012 meeting. Dr. Wes Durham, Interim Director of Graduate Studies, presented the rationale for the charge for the Senate’s consideration.

The Senate voted unanimously to endorse the recommendation of the Graduate Council to:
(a) a fair and equitable university-wide teaching load policy for those teaching graduate courses at USI,
(b) a restructuring and refocusing of how administrative tasks are conducted within graduate studies campus-wide,
(c) a revamping of the graduate faculty, and
(d) graduate course application processes.
(A) University-Wide Graduate Teaching Policy for Fall and Spring Semesters

Rationale for the policy
The University of Southern Indiana currently does not have a consistent, campus-wide policy in respect to how graduate-level courses are counted toward teaching load. The absence of a policy creates two dilemmas for USI. First, the absence of a campus-wide policy creates inequity among faculty who teach graduate courses. In certain colleges, teaching a graduate course (or multiple graduate courses) results in a three-hour teaching load reduction for faculty. However, in other colleges, graduate instruction is calculated similarly to undergraduate instruction with no course load reduction for participating faculty members. With the heightened expectations for faculty scholarship (particularly among members of the graduate faculty) along with the additional requisite work of graduate instruction, graduate instruction should facilitate reduced teaching loads for faculty. Second, the absence of a consistent policy regarding graduate education and teaching load was noted in the most recent Higher Learning Commission visit. A consistent, campus-wide policy dealing with graduate education and faculty teaching load places USI in a better position for the next accreditation visit from the Higher Learning Commission.

Proposed university-wide policy on graduate teaching load: Fall/spring semesters
Regular members of the graduate faculty teaching a stand-alone three-credit hour (or more) graduate course (or multiple graduate classes) during the academic year (fall/spring semesters) will receive three hours of assigned time for that semester. Three hours of assigned time is the maximum for any given semester regardless of how many graduate courses an individual faculty member teaches during a specific term. Exceptions may be made in cases where full-time faculty have administrative assignments that conflict with this policy or in cases that conflict with departmental or programmatic accreditation standards. Those cases of exception will be determined by the department chair of the faculty member’s home department in conjunction with the dean of that college.

Rationale for the exclusion of a summer policy
Because summer compensation is being reviewed more extensively by a number of units on USI’s campus, summer compensation for graduate teaching has been excluded from the policy.
(B) Current Graduate Council, Policies, and Procedures

Constituency of the Graduate Council

The Graduate Council at USI is currently composed of the director of Graduate Studies, eleven graduate program directors, and four elected faculty (one from each academic college) as voting members and the provost, registrar, and director of the David L. Rice Library as ex officio members. As USI continues to develop new graduate programs, the constituency of this particular group will grow beyond its current nineteen member headcount. Many of the limitations related to graduate education, policies, and procedures could be correlated with the relative size of the Graduate Council related to the work this body attempts to accomplish.

Current responsibilities of Graduate Council according to the USI faculty handbook

According to the USI Faculty Handbook, the Graduate Council is charged with accomplishing the following five tasks:

1. Develops the policies for graduate standards.
2. Reviews and approves recommendations regarding new academic courses and programs.
3. Serves as the legislative and administrative body for graduate programs at the university.
4. Makes recommendations to the provost and director of Graduate Studies concerning those proposed for membership in graduate faculty.
5. Serves as the long-range planning committee for graduate studies at the university.

Responsibilities that Graduate Council is currently fulfilling. Of the five charges listed, the Graduate Council currently addresses only course/program reviews and approvals (charge #2) and graduate faculty recommendations (charge #4) in any extensive manner. Beyond those two functions, the Graduate Council has not been addressing, in an explicit way, charges #1, #3, or #5. Consequently, Graduate Council is currently operating largely as a secretarial body that processes course and faculty applications.

Responsibilities that Graduate Council minimally addresses or does not address. Currently, the Graduate Council does not regularly or thoroughly engage in establishing or reviewing graduate policies or long-range planning. It could be argued that Graduate Council does, in a minimal way, serve as an administrative body but only in terms of processing graduate faculty and graduate course applications.

Discussion of graduate faculty approval process

In general, the approval of graduate faculty is a perfunctory process. Prior to reaching the Graduate Council, graduate faculty applications go through the process indicated in the faculty handbook and appropriate signatures and recommendations are obtained. In these initial processes, the degree of oversight and scrutiny of the graduate faculty applications vary by college. Once the applications proceed to the Graduate Council, they are then discussed and approved unanimously.

While no one on the Graduate Council wants to approve faculty absent of a fair and rigorous process, certain elements are in place that create this perfunctory process. First, the Graduate Council is too large to operate as a curriculum or faculty vetting committee. With sixteen voting members, discussion over each application tends to be relatively surface-level, as not all sixteen members can speak openly to the credentials of the applicant or to concerns that he/she might have with that applicant. The size of this group clearly represents a limitation to thorough and rigorous vetting of faculty applications. Second, members of the Graduate Council unanimously approve faculty to graduate faculty status because that represents the history of how graduate faculty applications have been handled by the group. This history creates an expectation of unanimous approval. As the graduate faculty approval process is currently constituted, it would
be difficult for any one member of the Graduate Council to vote “no” on a faculty application. Third, due to the varied nature of the graduate programs at USI (especially programmatic/disciplinary expectations regarding the nature of scholarship), it is extremely difficult for a member of Graduate Council outside of an applicant’s academic area to critique or knowledgeably vet the application. For instance, the nature of scholarship in liberal arts and sciences graduate programs looks different than it does in the professional graduate programs. Finally, the last limitation to rigor in the graduate faculty application process is that when a faculty application arrives at Graduate Council, the group understands that a colleague at the table needs that individual to be approved in order to offer courses in their program. It becomes very difficult to critique and/or reject a particular applicant when that decision adversely affects a colleague’s program.

Discussion of graduate course approval process

The approval process for graduate courses shares, in varying degrees, similar limitations to the process of approving graduate faculty (listed in the previous section on the graduate faculty approval process). One additional issue that is unique to the graduate course approval process is the adherence to the stated deadline for course approval in the faculty handbook. According to the faculty handbook, graduate courses offered in fall terms are to have a deadline of February 15 and those offered in the spring or summer terms are to have a deadline of September 15. The Graduate Council currently operates under a “rolling” deadline, whereby courses are approved at every Graduate Council meeting. Adopting a hard deadline for graduate course approval would add structure to the process; however, this would also limit the curricular flexibility of the graduate program directors. If it is decided that hard deadlines are unnecessary, then that language pertaining to hard deadlines should be removed from the appropriate section of the faculty handbook.

(1) Graduate Council Reform

Creation/re-focusing of college-level graduate councils

One way in which USI can increase the rigor of processes related to graduate education is to create strong, focused, and dynamic college-level graduate councils in each of the four academic colleges. Many of the issues and concerns related to previously stated graduate policies and procedures can be greatly improved by fostering and developing these college-level councils. At USI, every college has a body that deals with graduate education; however, these groups vary greatly by college. In this section, a particular vision of college-level graduate councils will be espoused that could be employed by all four academic colleges.

College-level graduate councils will be populated by the following individuals:
(a) an assistant/associate dean of the college who will serve as a non-voting, ex officio member and chair the council,
(b) every graduate program director in that particular college who will serve as voting members,
(c) at least two elected graduate faculty representatives from the college who will serve as voting members,
(d) the director of Graduate Studies who will serve as a non-voting, ex officio member,
(e) the registrar who will serve as a non-voting, ex officio member, and
(f) the collections development librarian who will serve as a non-voting, ex officio member.
Based on the discretion of each individual college, additional members (e.g., external constituencies) can be added to the college-level council. If the chair of the council (the assistant/associate dean) is also a graduate program director in that college, he/she may serve as
a voting member. These college-level graduate councils will likely be populated by 7-10 members in total.

Most colleges already possess an individual in the dean’s office that is instrumental in (or oversees) graduate education in that college. One necessity of this proposed model is that, if a college currently does not have such an individual, one will need to be appointed. Also, if colleges have councils/committees that oversee graduate education that do not meet these requirements in terms of group composition (e.g., the Pott College of Science, Engineering, and Education use their chairs council), then these collectives will need to be reconstituted in that particular college. These college-level graduate councils will serve as the college’s graduate curriculum committee and as the college’s graduate faculty application vetting committee. Due to the smaller size of these collectives and the greater expertise in the nature of graduate education and faculty credentials in a particular academic area (as compared to the current Graduate Council), these college-level graduate councils should be able to more effectively and rigorously vet applications. Another important task of the college-level graduate councils is to determine the standards of teaching and scholarship for graduate faculty within their college (in the same way colleges currently develop criteria and standards for faculty review leading to tenure/promotion). These college-level graduate councils will use these standards when evaluating graduate faculty applications. The proposed process for graduate course and graduate faculty applications will be explained in greater detail later in the document.

Refocusing of the University Graduate Council

Because, in this proposed model, graduate course and graduate faculty applications will be vetted by college-level graduate councils, the nature of the university’s Graduate Council can be amended. Each of the four colleges will elect two (or more if necessary) representatives to college-level graduate councils, so elected membership for each college on the University Graduate Council becomes less necessary. The constituency of this group will be each graduate program director serving as a voting member and the director of Graduate Studies, director of the David L. Rice Library, and provost serving as non-voting ex officio members. In this proposal, the University Graduate Council will address the charges in the faculty handbook that the current Graduate Council does not address (e.g., long-term planning, issues affecting graduate education more globally, etc.). The University Graduate Council will take over certain duties related to graduate education such as selecting scholarship recipients, vetting and approving new graduate program petitions, etc. Essentially, this group will serve as the graduate studies steering committee.

(2) Proposed modifications to the graduate faculty application process

Proposed policy

The current process of approving graduate faculty is both unwieldy and limited. This proposal calls for a process that adds rigor and maintains fairness. This model possesses two very different features when compared to the current graduate faculty approval process.

First, this proposal calls for consolidating and streamlining distinctions of faculty status. Instead of operating within a system possessing affiliate, regular-3, and regular-6 distinctions, USI could go to a two-category system of classifying graduate faculty. The first distinction is “regular.” A regular member of the graduate faculty is an individual who holds the terminal degree in his/her field and holds a renewable appointment in excess of one-year, is on the tenure-track, or is tenured.
For tenured or tenure-eligible faculty:
  o Graduate faculty status will be reviewed every six years by submitting the admission/renewal/readmission form to the chair of their college’s graduate council along with an updated curriculum vita.
  o When an individual is hired with the appropriate credentials who is tenured, on the tenure-track, or on multi-year renewable contract (e.g., clinical faculty or three-year renewable faculty), he/she will be added to the graduate faculty immediately upon signing his/her contract for employment.
  o When an individual is hired with tenure and promotion (e.g., in the cases of new department chairs), he/she will be added to the graduate faculty immediately upon signing his/her contract for employment.
  o For those on the tenure-track, the tenure and promotion process will serve as the individual’s first six-year review for graduate faculty membership. Upon receiving promotion and tenure, a faculty member would receive reappointment to the graduate faculty as a regular member and would need to reapply every six years thereafter.
  o In the event that an individual brings in time that counts toward his/her tenure clock, he or she will be appointed to the graduate faculty for a length of time not to exceed the duration of the probationary period with the tenure and promotion process serving as the individual’s first graduate faculty review. Upon receiving promotion and tenure, a faculty member would receive reappointment to the graduate faculty as a regular member and would need to reapply every six years thereafter.
  o In the event that an individual is hired with tenure and promotion, he/she would need to reapply as a regular member of the graduate faculty six years after his/her start date and then every six years thereafter.
  o An exemption to these conditions is when a regular faculty member receives a conditional appointment (this is explained in the next section). In the case of a conditional appointment for a regular member of the graduate faculty, the individual will be reviewed three years after receiving the appointment.

For multi-year renewable or clinical-track faculty holding the terminal degree: Graduate faculty status will be reviewed at the beginning of each appointment cycle by submitting the admission/renewal/readmission form to the chair of their college’s graduate council along with an updated curriculum vita. In order to be a regular member of the graduate faculty, multi-year renewable or clinical-track faculty must hold the terminal degree in their field. Multi-year renewable or clinical-track faculty not holding the terminal degree may apply for affiliate membership to the graduate faculty.
  o Once approved as a regular member of the graduate faculty, a multi-year renewable or clinical-track faculty member will serve a term equaling, but not exceeding, the length of his/her employment contract.

The second graduate faculty distinction is “affiliate.” An affiliate member of the graduate faculty will hold a term of one academic year. Consequently, affiliate members of the graduate faculty will be asked to renew annually. Individuals applying for affiliate status on the graduate faculty will be asked to submit the same materials as individuals applying for regular membership. An affiliate member of the graduate faculty may be an individual who is employed by the university on a contract that does not exceed one-year (e.g., adjunct faculty and one-year renewable and non-renewable faculty). Other candidates for affiliate graduate faculty membership could be full-time tenured or multi-year renewable/clinical-track faculty not holding regular membership on the graduate faculty. These individuals may apply for affiliate status in special situations as determined by the graduate program director and department chair.
Second, this proposal calls for a more decentralized process with checks-and-balances built in. Instead of graduate faculty applications being vetted by the University Graduate Council, college-level graduate councils will have that responsibility. The process of approving graduate faculty applications is further explained in the next section.

Application, review, and re-admission processes
Step 1: College-level graduate council –
When an individual applies for admission, renewal, or readmission to the graduate faculty, he/she will deliver the form and an updated vita to the chair of the college-level graduate council (specified associate/assistant dean). The chair of the college-level graduate council will then distribute those materials to the other members of the council including the director of Graduate Studies. After vetting the materials, the college-level graduate council will make a recommendation on the individual’s appointment to the dean. Based on the degree to which the individual meets the established and stated criteria of graduate faculty membership for that college, the council can recommend approval, conditional approval, or rejection. Only regular members of the graduate faculty can be given conditional status. Along with the council’s recommendation on the form, the council must submit a memorandum (not to exceed one page single-spaced) articulating the committee’s decision as applied to the criteria and standards of that college in terms of graduate faculty membership. The college-level graduate council can make distinctions in terms of the criteria and standards used when evaluating affiliate versus regular faculty.

Step 2: Dean of college –
Once the college-level graduate council makes its recommendation on a graduate faculty application, the dean of that college will make an independent recommendation. If the dean agrees with the recommendation of the council, then he/she will indicate so on the form and forward it to the director of Graduate Studies. If the dean disagrees with the college-level council’s recommendation, he/she will author a memorandum (not to exceed one page single-spaced) indicating his/her recommendation and describing how the individual meets (or fails to meet) the criteria and standards of graduate faculty membership for that college, and then the dean will forward all materials on to the director of Graduate Studies.

Step 3: Director of Graduate Studies –
If the director of Graduate Studies agrees with a recommendation by the council and the dean that are in agreement, then he/she will indicate so on the form and forward it to the provost. If the director of Graduate Studies disagrees with the council and dean’s recommendation, he/she will author a recommendation (not to exceed one page single-spaced) and will forward all materials to the provost. If the college-level committee and dean of the college are in disagreement on a graduate faculty application, then the director of Graduate Studies must author a memorandum (not to exceed one page single-spaced) indicating support for one of the two conflicting recommendations and forward all materials on to the provost.

Step 4: Provost –
The provost will make a decision on each graduate faculty application using the materials provided by the college-level graduate council, dean, and the director of Graduate Studies.
(C) A Revamping of the Graduate Faculty and Graduate Course Application Processes.

Criteria for Membership on the USI Graduate Faculty by Type

As graduate education at the University of Southern Indiana continues to grow and evolve, it becomes necessary to formalize what the university deems as “graduate faculty membership.” At USI, graduate education is considered to be “advanced methodological, theoretical, and/or practical study in a particular academic area whereby students can attain advanced knowledge and skills that exceed that of undergraduate study.” To ensure that graduate programs meet the University’s definition of graduate education, members of the graduate faculty are expected to be actively engaged scholars and/or practitioners in order to effectively educate their students on the current research trends and relevant content areas within or across disciplines. The University’s expectation of graduate faculty scholarship helps to inform the quality of the graduate curriculum for USI students and is commensurate with nation-wide best practices for graduate education. Each individual college may have requirements for graduate faculty membership in addition to those listed in this document.

Two categories of graduate faculty membership exist at the University of Southern Indiana: (a) regular membership and (b) affiliate membership. Each category possesses different standards for membership. To follow are the standards for graduate faculty membership for regular and affiliate faculty.

Criteria for regular membership on the graduate faculty

Regular members of the graduate faculty are expected to be leaders on USI’s campus in scholarship and graduate pedagogy and will receive three credit-hours of assigned time during any semester (fall/spring) in which they teach one (or more) stand-alone graduate-level course(s). The following characteristics and responsibilities reflect the standards for regular membership on the graduate faculty at the University of Southern Indiana:

1. The individual must be employed by the University of Southern Indiana as a multi-year renewable, clinical-track, tenure-track, or tenured member of the faculty.
2. The individual must hold the terminal degree in the discipline or a related field.
3. The individual must demonstrate an ongoing and measurable record of scholarly activities commensurate with expectations of the academic department, college, and Office of Graduate Studies. A regular member of the graduate faculty will apply for renewal every six years post-tenure (or at the end of every contract for multi-year renewable faculty) and will be evaluated on his/her scholarly activities only for the period following his/her previous graduate faculty review. Examples of ongoing and measurable scholarly activities include, but are not limited to, the following:
   a. Presentation of scholarship at regional, national, and international academic/professional meetings.
   b. Peer-reviewed publications.
   c. Invited academic articles or chapters.
   d. Funded external grants.
   e. Book-length projects or monographs.
   f. Community engagement research projects.
   g. Juried creative works.
4. The individual must demonstrate effective teaching at the graduate level. Examples of teaching effectiveness at the graduate level include, but are not limited to, the following:
   a. Deliver the most recent and relevant course content in each graduate course.
   b. Develop and deliver courses with standards of rigor commensurate with USI’s expectations for graduate-level curricula.
c. Deliver course content in formats that support program growth and student learning.

d. Collaborate with graduate students on research and/or creative works projects.

e. Direct graduate student research and/or creative works.

f. Mentor and advise graduate students.

g. Serve on and/or chair graduate student committees (e.g., capstone and thesis projects).

Only regular members of the graduate faculty should chair graduate student final project committees.

Criteria for affiliate membership on the graduate faculty

Affiliate members of the graduate faculty are individuals who are typically adjunct/part-time faculty or faculty on one-year contracts. These individuals can offer graduate-level courses based on their expertise or professional experience in the specific content area. Tenured, multi-year renewable, or clinical-track faculty who do not meet the criteria for regular membership on the graduate faculty may apply for affiliate status. Typically, due to the reduced expectation for scholarship, graduate student mentoring/advising, and long-term commitment to the particular graduate program, individuals holding affiliate status will not receive release time when offering graduate-level coursework. The following characteristics and responsibilities reflect the standards for affiliate membership on the graduate faculty at the University of Southern Indiana:

1. The individual must be employed by the University of Southern Indiana as adjunct faculty, one-year, full-time faculty, or, in special cases, tenured, multi-year renewable, or clinical-track faculty who do not meet the criteria for regular faculty membership.

2. The individual must hold the terminal degree in the discipline or a related field OR provide evidence that the individual has content expertise or professional experience that obviates this requirement.

3. The individual must demonstrate effective teaching at the graduate level. Examples of teaching effectiveness at the graduate level include, but are not limited to, the following:
   a. Deliver the most recent and relevant course content in each graduate course.
   b. Develop and deliver courses with standards of rigor commensurate with USI’s expectations for graduate-level curricula.
   c. Deliver course content in formats that support program growth and student learning outcomes (e.g., distance education, hybrid courses, accelerated formats).
   d. Collaborate with graduate students on research and/or creative works projects.
   e. Serve on graduate student committees for final projects.

(D) Modifications to the Graduate Course Approval Process

Course approval process

The college-level graduate council will serve as the curriculum committee for the graduate programs housed in a particular college. The course approval process and forms will likely remain similar to the forms that the University Graduate Council currently uses. As previously stated, a discussion needs to occur regarding the deadlines for graduate course approval as listed in the faculty handbook and how courses are approved in practice.
Implementation Plan

Implementation of a plan such as this poses its challenges. In particular, if we adopt this plan in respect to graduate faculty membership, we need to do so in a sensible manner. In general, there are aspects of equity and fairness that need to be maintained for the faculty already on USI's campus when this policy comes into effect. Consequently, a “bulletin” approach, whereby new faculty hires come in under the new policy and current USI faculty operate for a period of time under the old system, seems inappropriate. Moreover, graduate faculty membership should not be confined to departments that currently possess graduate programs. A more inclusive policy on graduate faculty membership is beneficial to USI for two reasons. First, USI possesses multiple interdisciplinary graduate programs that utilize faculty expertise from across campus. This policy enables faculty wanting to teach in these graduate programs more access to doing so and assists the directors in more easily locating faculty to teach in the programs. Second, graduate education is a site for future growth at USI. By relegateing graduate faculty membership to those within academic units currently housing graduate programs, the university unnecessarily sets up obstacles for units who intend to move forward with graduate program development and implementation.

Plan for policy implementation for current USI faculty:

- All adjuncts or full-time faculty on one-year contracts (renewable or non-renewable) would need to (re)apply for affiliate graduate faculty membership.
- All multi-year renewable faculty holding the terminal degree in their field would be granted regular membership for the duration of the length of their appointment. If renewed, those faculty would need to reapply in order to maintain their membership on the graduate faculty. This reflects the policy for multi-year renewable faculty stated earlier.
- All current tenure-track faculty would be granted regular membership to the graduate faculty for the duration of their probationary period. The tenure and promotion process will serve as the first graduate faculty review as stated earlier in this document.
- All tenured faculty less than six years past their date of tenure (and promotion) would be granted regular membership on the graduate faculty until (a) they reach six years post-tenure, in which case they would need to reapply, or (b) their current membership expires, if that date exceeds the date of six years post-tenure.
- All tenured faculty more than six years post-tenure would need to apply for membership to the graduate faculty unless they are currently members. This is consistent with the proposed policy for individuals in excess of six years past their date of tenure.

Proposed date of implementation for college-based graduate councils, the refocusing of the University Graduate Council, and all changes to graduate processes: Fall 2012.

Proposed date of implementation for the university-wide graduate teaching load policy: Spring or Fall 2013.