Proposal for

Revising the Bylaws of the Board of Graduate Studies and the Faculty Graduate Studies Committees

Establishing the Graduate Council

May 2011
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Revising the Bylaws of the Board of Graduate Studies and the Faculty Graduate Studies Committees

A. Introduction

With the expansion of graduate education at AUB and the growing number of new graduate programs of an interdisciplinary nature, an overhaul of graduate governance has become a necessity. Both the strategic planning for graduate education and research report of 2004 and the AUB 2008 self-study report recommended the establishment of a graduate school. These recommendations evolved from the need to elaborate, build, and carefully operate graduate governance structures and to unify regulations and policies in order to enhance academic and research processes.

At present, AUB offers more than fifty Master’s and PhD programs in different disciplines, and the number of graduate students this academic year of 2010-11 is about 1170 of whom forty per cent are graduate assistants and graduate research assistants.

The BOD has extensively discussed and reviewed this proposal in consultations with Faculties Graduate Studies Committees for the establishment of the Graduate Council which will result into some changes of the Board of Graduate Studies bylaws and consequently the Faculty Graduate Studies Committee bylaws.

The BGS studied and recommended approval of the revisions of the bylaws in its meeting of May 20, 2011.

B. The Role of the Graduate Council

The GC reports to the Provost of the University and will play a vital role in implementing the rules and regulations governing graduate work uniformly across the University, in accordance with policies approved by the Board of Graduate Studies (BGS) and the senate, and recommended by faculties/schools. The Graduate Council will facilitate and coordinate graduate education and will follow up on the implementation of graduate policies and deadlines. The Graduate Council will work closely with the BGS and Faculty Graduate Studies Committees (FGSCs) to provide mechanisms for quality control for all aspects of graduate education. In cooperation with concerned University officers, faculty, and graduate students, the Graduate Council undertakes preparatory steps and supports faculties/schools graduate recruitment programs to ensure a selection process from a highly qualified pool of student applicants, provides information about admission to all graduate programs; administers graduate standards of scholarship and policy; and encourages the development and success of graduate students through workshops, training activities, counseling, and initiatives which promote timely degree completion. The Graduate Council also monitors implementation of AUB policies concerning
graduate assistantship appointments. The Graduate Council will work with appropriate University and faculty/school officers to ensure that the above functions are properly carried.

C. Structure and Staffing of the Graduate Council

The Graduate Council will be an independent unit, responsible to the Provost, and will include:

a. Graduate Council Chair.

b. Graduate Admissions and Student Services Coordinator (Admissions Office).

c. Graduate Academic and Financial Aid Coordinator (Registrar Office).

d. Administrative Officer

The GC Chair shall be appointed by the provost from among the professorial faculty. The GC Chair will be an ex-officio member of the BGS. S/He will coordinate graduate admission processes with the deans of faculties/schools, and the FGS Committees. S/He will also facilitate and follow up on financial aid allocations to graduate students with deans of faculties. S/He will also coordinate information on graduate students’ status and records with the Registrar. The GC chair will closely coordinate with the Board of Graduate Studies and with the deans of faculties on all graduate policies and issues. In addition, the GC chair shall

- Oversee the functions of the Graduate Council and chair its meetings.
- Coordinate with the BGS and FGSC to align the vision, standards, and practices of graduate studies in the different faculties’ strategic plans with AUB’s goals.
- Assess, in coordination with the Provost and the BOD, the most appropriate administrative structure to support sustainable and successful graduate studies at AUB.

The Graduate Admissions and Student Services Coordinator will be the University staff member dedicated to graduate admissions issues and processes at the Admissions Office with full access to graduate admissions data and resources. The Graduate Academic and Financial Aid Coordinator will be the University staff member dedicated to graduate academic policies’ implementation and record keeping at the Office of the Registrar. Both the Graduate Admissions and the Graduate Academic Coordinators shall report to the Chair of the GC. Close coordination shall take place between the chair of the GC, the Registrar, and the Director of Admissions to ensure that all graduate issues are addressed in a timely manner and coordinated with the concerned officers in the faculties/schools.

D. Resulting Revisions of the Board of Graduate Studies Functions
(Senate Bylaws)
The creation of the Graduate Council will result in some changes in the function and composition of the Board of Graduate Studies. The BGS addresses policy issues related to the graduate programs and will no longer be involved in the executive functions of ensuring compliance of PhD theses proposals and theses committees to University graduate academic policies and acting on PhD admissions. The new revised functions of the BGS are stated below and they require approval of the Senate. The only change in the composition of the BGS is that the Chair of the Graduate Council will serve as ex-officio member of the BGS.

**BGS Functions**

a. Shall oversee and approve general procedures and criteria for the evaluation of the graduate programs.

b. Shall make recommendations to the senate on academic rules and regulations of graduate studies in general and graduate programs in particular.

c. Upon the recommendation of the Faculty Graduate Committee and/or the Inter-Faculty Graduate Program Committee, and approval of the faculty(ies) concerned, shall examine and make recommendations to the senate concerning the following:
   - Introduction of a new graduate degree program.
   - Discontinuing of a graduate degree program.
   - Changing a graduate degree program title.
   - Major graduate program modifications including
     - Changes in the required number of credits for completion of a program.
     - Changes in Master’s degree type from thesis to non-thesis option or vice versa.
     - Introduction of new tracks in the Master’s degree program.

d. Upon the recommendation of the Faculty Graduate Studies Committee and/or the Inter-Faculty Graduate Program Committee, and approval of the faculty(ies) concerned, shall examine and approve the following graduate program modifications:
   - Changes of program requirements without change in number of total program credits. These changes include core course credit requirements or changes in assigned credit for thesis and/or number of permitted tutorial courses.
   - Changes in a program that affect other units or programs at the university outside the concerned faculty/school.

e. Shall request from the Graduate Studies Committees of the faculties to submit a copy of their annual reports on their graduate programs for review by the BGS.

f. Shall assess and approve criteria for admission to graduate study, for academic graduate regulations, and for requirements for graduation.

g. Shall act on other matters referred to it by Faculty Graduate Committees.
h. Shall assess and approve baseline criteria for the credentials of examiners on thesis committees when: i) the examiner is from the department; and ii) the examiner is from outside the department, or outside of the university, in coordination with the graduate committees of various faculties and interfaculty graduate programs.

i. Shall set graduate applications, admissions, and acceptances deadlines.

**BGS Composition**

a. Three members from the Faculty of Arts and Sciences (one from humanities, one from social sciences, and one from natural sciences including mathematics), two members from Engineering, and one from each of the other faculties/school elected by the faculty for a term of three years.

b. The provost, ex-officio member.

c. The registrar, ex-officio member non-voting.

d. The chairperson of the board shall be appointed by the president from within the board.

e. The Chair of the Graduate Council, ex-officio member non-voting.

**E. Proposed Revision of the Faculty Graduate Studies Committee Bylaws**

- The registrar, director of admissions, and the Graduate Council chair and/or their representatives in the FGSC are non-voting members.

- The chair of the FGSC shall preferably be of the rank of professor. The dean shall appoint the chair from among professors of the faculty/school who is not necessarily a member of the committee.

- The FGSC shall act on PhD applications and recommend its decisions to the dean who will forward his/her final recommendations to the Admissions Office with a copy to GC as is the case in the Master’s applications.

- The FGSC shall examine and approve the following course related matters:
  - Course number.
  - Changes in course description.
  - Course name.
  - Course number of credit hours.
  - Change in course pre-requisites.
  - New course.
  - Cross listing a course in two programs.
  - Deletion of a course that is no longer offered (only if it does not affect other programs outside the department.)

- The FGSC shall examine and recommend to the faculty/school the following program related matters:
- Change in graduate program core courses while keeping the same core courses’ number of credits and the same total program credit requirement.
- Changes in a program that affect other units or programs in the same faculty/school.

- The FGSC shall examine and recommend to the faculty/school and the BGS the following graduate program modifications:
  - Changes of program requirements without change in number of credits. These changes include core course credit requirements or changes in assigned credit for thesis and/or number of permitted tutorial courses.
  - Changes in a program that affect other units or programs at the university outside the concerned faculty/school.

- The FGSC shall examine and recommend to the faculty/school, the BGS, and the senate major graduate program modifications including
  - Introduction of a new graduate degree program.
  - Discontinuing of a graduate degree program.
  - Changing a graduate degree program title.
  - Major graduate program modifications including
    - Changes in the required number of credits for completion of a program.
    - Changes in Master’s degree type from thesis to non-thesis option or vice versa.
    - Introduction of new tracks in the Master’s degree program.