

Overview of Graduate School Council Role in Reviewing New Graduate Degree and Graduate Certificate Program Proposals

(Revised February 3, 2010)

The Graduate Council plays an important role in the university's process for designing and implementing new graduate certificate and degree programs. Below is a brief description of the Council's role for each kind of program:

New Graduate Certificate Programs

A graduate certificate program is a linked series of credit bearing graduate courses that constitutes a coherent body of study. It is designed to enhance the education of matriculated graduate students and professional students or to provide continuing education to graduate non-matriculated (GNM) students. Graduate certificate programs require a minimum of 15 quarter-credits, the successful completion of which yields notation on the student's transcript.

Any proposal for a new graduate certificate will go through a proposal development process, facilitated by staff in the Graduate School (as outlined in the document found at: <http://www.grad.washington.edu/fac-staff/programreviews/guidelines-certificates.shtml>). This process helps the proposing unit develop a proposal that will address issues such as demand/need for the program, purpose of the program, curriculum and course evaluation/student assessment, governance and structure, admissions and graduation standards, and budget.

Once the proposal is fleshed out, it will be sent to internal and external constituents for comment. It is after this 10-day comment period that a revised proposal will be put before the Graduate Council, along with an oral presentation by the proposing unit, for review and approval.

The Council's Role:

1. The Council's role is, fundamentally, to either:
 - a. Provide the Dean of the Graduate School with a formal recommendation to advance the proposal—pending the unit's revisions according to the Council's recommendations—to the Board of Regents for formal approval; or
 - b. To provide the Graduate School with concrete feedback it can communicate back to the proposing unit that outlines specific issues that must be addressed before the Council can recommend advancement to the Board of Regents.
2. The Council should use its discretion, as a multi-disciplinary body of duly elected faculty members, in asking questions of the proposing unit that help make the case for the proposed program's positive impact on the intellectual life of graduate students at the university. It should also consider the program's ability to stimulate the intellectual work of faculty and the proposing unit(s).
3. A flowchart depicting the approval process is attached, but can also be found at: <http://www.grad.washington.edu/fac-staff/programreviews/flowchart-certificate.pdf>

New Graduate Degree Programs

Designing, gaining university and state-level approval, and launching a new graduate degree program is a major undertaking. Because so much of this process is governed by guidelines put forth by the Higher Education Coordinating Board of the State of Washington, the Graduate School has created a detailed process description, which can be found at: <http://www.grad.washington.edu/fac->

[staff/programreviews/guidelines-new-degrees.shtml](http://www.grad.washington.edu/fac-staff/programreviews/guidelines-new-degrees.shtml), that also includes a link to the State of Washington's standards and procedures.

What's important to keep in mind from the Council's perspective is that proposals that come before the Council for consideration will have already undergone an extensive array of steps, including an initial design process with staff in the Graduate School, a 10-day internal comment period, a 30-day preliminary notification of intent at the state-wide level, and peer review by external experts.

The Council's Role:

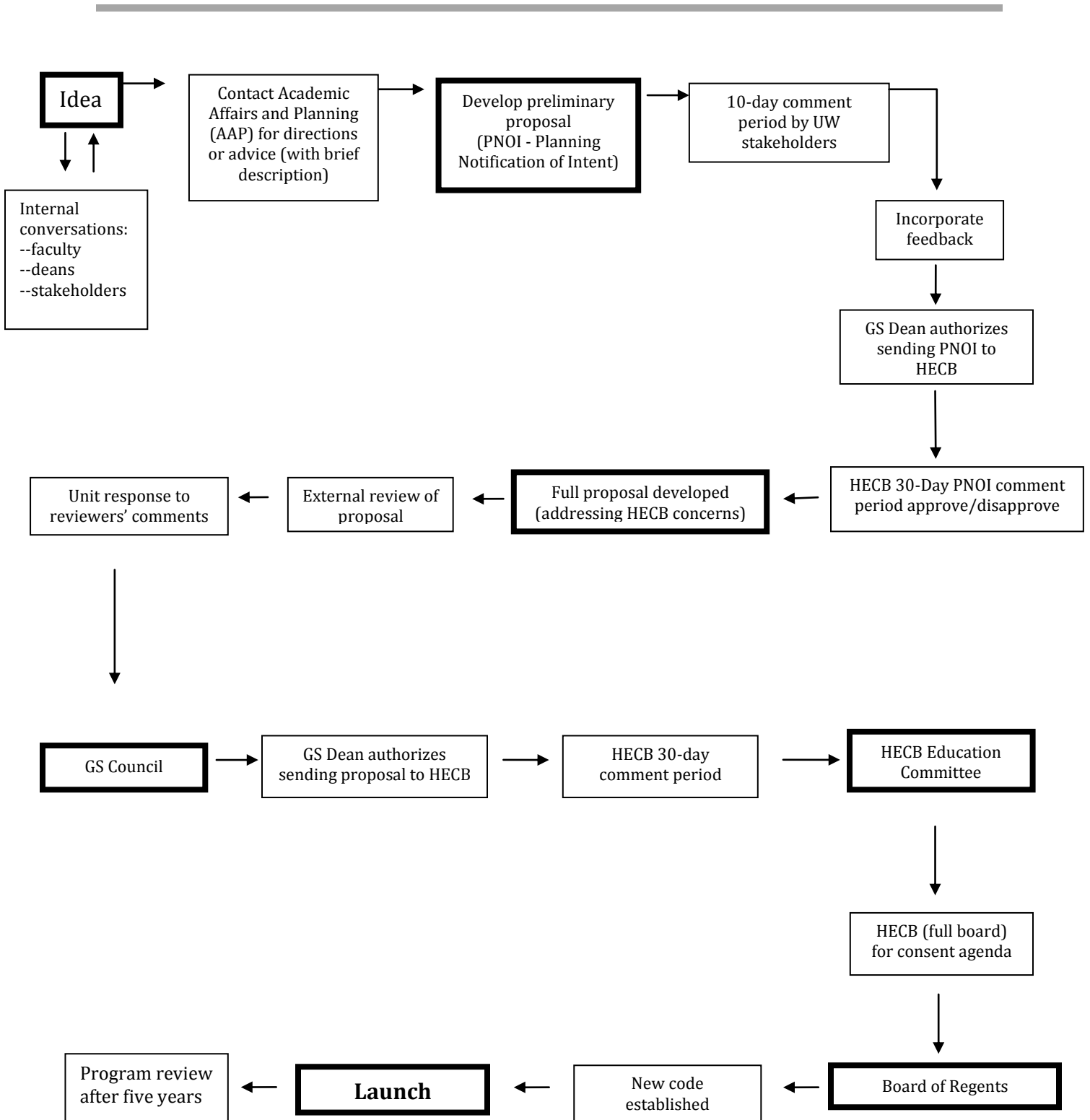
1. The Council's role is, fundamentally, to either:
 - a. Provide the Dean of the Graduate School with a formal recommendation to advance the proposal—pending the unit's revisions according to the Council's recommendations—to the State of Washington's Higher Education Coordinating Board for formal authorization (UW Board of Regents approval happens later on in the process); or
 - b. To provide the Graduate School with concrete feedback it can communicate back to the proposing unit that outlines specific issues that must be addressed before the Council can recommend advancement to the Higher Education Coordinating Board.
2. Like above, the Council should use its discretion, as a multi-disciplinary body of duly elected faculty members, in asking questions of the proposing unit that help make the case for the proposed program's positive impact on the intellectual life of graduate students at the university. It should also consider the program's ability to stimulate the intellectual work of faculty and the proposing unit(s).
3. Attached (and also found at: <http://www.grad.washington.edu/fac-staff/programreviews/flowchart-newprogram.pdf>) is a flow chart that depicts these steps.

Here are some additional thoughts...

The Graduate Council is the only multidisciplinary elected body of faculty that comes together to provide a comprehensive, three-campus, voice for graduate education at the University of Washington. The Council has the benefit of seeing across the multitude of programs at the university, given its unique composition of members. As such, it can give proposing units great insight into how their proposed programs fit into the landscape of our university's program offerings. The Council also has the ability to offer proposing units insight into how their proposed new programs can collaborate with, and even leverage, existing efforts within other departments, schools, or colleges.

Moreover, because all new programs will eventually undergo an academic program review, the Council should consider offering the proposing units with any and all feedback it believes the unit should aim to address in the first years of the new program's existence. The Council might consider these issues five years later, when the program undergoes its first mandatory academic program review.

Proposal Process for New Graduate Degree



Proposal Process for New Graduate Certificate

