CONSTITUTION OF THE GRADUATE SENATE
OF LIBERTY UNIVERSITY

Article I  Name

The name of this organization shall be The Graduate Senate of Liberty University.

Article II  Purpose

As a deliberative body comprising members representing the faculty of the various graduate programs of Liberty University, the Graduate Senate shall in a spirit of prayerful consideration conduct the general business of the Faculty as it pertains to graduate educational concerns. The Graduate Senate shall be authorized by the General Faculty to advise and make recommendations to the Vice President for Academic Affairs of Liberty University on the initiation, modification, and discontinuation of graduate programs. It evaluates and recommends policy for curriculum, Graduate Internship and Assistantship programs, and admissions, academic and graduation standards.

Article III  Units of the Faculty

The units of the faculty shall be the graduate programs of Liberty University as determined by the Graduate Senate.

Article IV  Units of Representation

The Graduate Senate consists of one faculty member from each existing graduate program, and one faculty member from each department/college/school that is developing an additional graduate program and petitions the Graduate Senate for membership. Senators representing developing programs will have voice but not vote. Ex-officio members shall be the Registrar, the Director of Graduate Admissions, the Dean of the Library, the Dean of Graduate Studies, the Vice President for Academic Affairs, and the President.

Article V  Eligibility for Graduate Senator

Representatives to the Graduate Senate shall be elected from among full-time faculty approved to teach at the graduate level. The appropriate Graduate Committee within each department/college/school with existing or developing graduate programs chooses its representatives. Ex officio members of the Graduate Senate shall not be eligible to serve as unit representatives to the Graduate Senate.

Article VI  Term of Office for Graduate Senator

Representatives to the Graduate Senate shall be elected to a term of office consisting of three academic years. The terms to be served shall be staggered in such a way that approximately one-third of the Senate membership will be elected each year. The terms of office for Senate members shall commence at the beginning of the fall semester following their election and shall expire at the end of the spring semester of their third year of service.

Article VII  Mode of Election for Graduate Senator
During the first week of February, the Graduate Elections Committee will notify all graduate programs that are to elect representatives that year to hold an election for unit representative from eligible members. The selection shall be made as specified in Article V.

**Article VIII  Officers of the Graduate Senate**

A. **Officers.** The officers of the Graduate Senate shall be the President, the Chair, the Vice Chair, the Secretary and the Parliamentarian.

B. **President.** The President of Liberty University shall be *ex officio* the President of the Graduate Senate. The President of the Graduate Senate shall have power to call and to preside at meetings of the Graduate Senate and of the Graduate Senate Executive Committee.

C. **Chair.** The Chair of the Graduate Senate shall preside at meetings of the Graduate Senate and the Graduate Senate Executive Committee. Subject to approval by the Executive Committee, the Chair shall have authority to call special meetings of the Graduate Senate. The Chair of the Graduate Senate shall act as Chair of the Executive Committee of the Graduate Senate.

D. **Vice Chair.** The Vice Chair shall assume the responsibilities of the Chair in the absence of the Chair and is the Chair-elect.

E. **Secretary.** The Secretary of the Graduate Senate shall prepare and distribute agendas and minutes of Graduate Senate meetings to all faculty approved to teach at the graduate level and to all members *ex officio* of the Graduate Senate. This person shall prepare and distribute the agenda and the minutes of Executive Committee meetings to all members of the Executive Committee and shall provide minutes of each of these meetings to the University Archivist. The agenda and the minutes will have a list of all senators identified with the unit they are representing.

F. **Parliamentarian.** The Parliamentarian shall be appointed by the Chair of the Graduate Senate, and serves at the discretion of the Chair. The Parliamentarian shall be a member of the full-time faculty of Liberty University. The Parliamentarian shall ensure that the proceedings of the Graduate Senate are conducted according to the most current edition of Robert's Rules of Order with the exception that there shall be no secret ballot unless specified by this constitution.

G. **Election and Term of Office for Chair, Vice Chair, and Secretary.** At its first regular meeting during each spring semester, the Graduate Senate will choose a Chair, Vice Chair, and Secretary for the following calendar year, 01 July to 30 June.

1. **Election.** Elections shall be conducted by secret ballot with a majority being required for election. If more than two candidates are running for the same office, a run-off election shall be held between the two candidates receiving the most votes on the first ballot.

2. **Term of Chair and Vice Chair.** The Chair and Vice Chair shall serve one-year, non-renewable terms of office.

3. **Term of Secretary.** The Secretary shall serve a one-year, renewable term of office during a normal term of service as a unit representative. Unit representatives in the third year of a senate term are ineligible for election to the office of Secretary.

4. **Unit Representation Extended.** If either the Chair or the Vice Chair is elected during the third year of their terms of the Graduate Senate, that term as unit representative shall be extended to accommodate his or her service as an officer of the Graduate Senate. His or her
successor to the Graduate Senate shall then be elected to complete unexpired terms and shall be eligible for reelection according to the conditions specified under Article V.

Article IX  Ex Officio Members of the Graduate Senate

A. Members. *Ex officio* members of the Graduate Senate shall consist of those persons specified in Article IV above.

B. Voting. Among the *ex officio* members of the Graduate Senate, only those who are full-time faculty of Liberty University approved to teach on the graduate level shall be voting *ex officio* members of the Graduate Senate.

C. New Positions. The designation as an *ex officio* member of the Graduate Senate of any individual holding a newly created administrative position shall be subject to approval by the Graduate Senate. In any event, the voting *ex officio* membership of the Graduate Senate shall never exceed one-fourth of the total voting membership of the Graduate Senate.

Article X  Meetings and Procedures

A. Meeting Schedule. The Graduate Senate shall meet regularly at 3:20 p.m. on the first Tuesday of the months of September, October, November, December, February, March, April and May, and at the call of the President of the University, the Chair of the Graduate Senate, or one-fourth of its voting membership.

B. Proposed Legislation. The Graduate Senate must give consideration to any recommendation proposed by any of its members or committees, by any group of three members of the faculty approved to teach at the graduate level or by the President of the University. Such recommendations must be submitted in writing to the Secretary of the Graduate Senate for inclusion on the Graduate Senate agenda at least two working days prior to the Graduate Senate meeting at which the proposal is to be considered. Its originators upon submission shall sign the recommendation.

C. Attendance. Attendance at every meeting of the Graduate Senate is required of each of its elected members. All faculty and administrators may attend meetings of the Graduate Senate and may be recognized at the discretion of the Chair. The Secretary of the Graduate Senate shall circulate a roster at each meeting of the Graduate Senate and shall enter the names of absentees and whether the absences were excused or unexcused in the minutes. Absentees may be excused for due cause by the Graduate Senate Executive Committee. Any member who accumulates three unexcused absences during the term of office shall forfeit the right to membership on the Graduate Senate and shall be ineligible to serve on the Graduate Senate for the duration of the unexpired term and for a full academic year thereafter. In such cases, the Graduate Senate Elections Committee shall take action to secure a replacement unit representative. In the Graduate Senate a quorum shall consist of a majority of the voting membership.

D. Voting. A majority vote shall be required for a bill or resolution to pass the Graduate Senate. No final action on a main motion or resolution introduced at a regular or special meeting may be taken at that same meeting. This rule may be suspended by a two-thirds majority of those voting at any regular or special meeting.

E. Bills. When the Graduate Senate passes a bill, it shall be signed by the Chair of the Graduate Senate and submitted to the Vice President for Academic Affairs for consideration. The VPAA shall provide the Executive Committee with a decision in writing prior to the next regular meeting of the Graduate Senate. The decision of the VPAA is final. In the event that the bill needs to be addressed by the Liberty University Board of Trustees, the President shall inform the Graduate Senate Executive
Committee of the decision within five working days after the first Board meeting following receipt of the bill from the Chair.

F. Resolutions. When the Graduate Senate passes a resolution, it shall be signed by the Chair and submitted to the Vice President for Academic Affairs for consideration. No response from the VPAA is required for a resolution.

Article XI Graduate Senate Committees

A. Purpose. The standing committees of the Graduate Senate are the centers of investigation and consideration through which most of the Graduate Senate’s business is initiated. The establishment of standing committees places the diverse responsibilities of the Graduate Senate into smaller bodies, each with specific areas of concern.

B. Relationship to the Graduate Senate. The committees exist as extensions of, and are subordinate to, the entire Graduate Senate assembly. The Graduate Senate must ratify all committee recommendations.

C. Membership on Committees. The Graduate Senate Elections Committee may nominate a faculty member to a committee for a maximum of three consecutive years. Standing committee membership shall consist of no more than one member from each College or School except where otherwise specified. Unless otherwise specified, both graduate senators and faculty members approved to teach at the graduate level shall be eligible for election to the standing committees. The President and the Vice President for Academic Affairs shall be ex officio members of all standing and ad hoc committees of the Graduate Senate except the Senate Elections Committee.

D. Election to Committees. Elections shall be held at the regular Graduate Senate meeting in April of each year. Except when otherwise specified, the Graduate Senate Elections Committee shall provide a slate of nominees for each Graduate Senate standing committee for inclusion in the agenda for the regular April meeting. The slate of nominees shall include the designation of a Senator as Chair of each committee and a secretary for each committee. Committee vacancies occurring after the April meeting shall be filled by a special vote of the Graduate Senate from names submitted by the Graduate Senate Elections Committee.

E. Organization of Committees. It is the responsibility of the committee chair to call committee meetings according to a schedule that allows committee members due notice of each meeting. Prior to each meeting, the chair must provide committee members with an agenda of the items to be considered. The committee secretary shall keep minutes of the meetings and provide copies of these minutes to the Chair, Vice Chair, and Secretary of the Graduate Senate, the President, the Dean of Graduate Studies, and the Director of Planning, Research and Assessment. Recommendations from standing committees must be submitted to the Secretary of the Graduate Senate in writing prior to the regular monthly meeting of the Executive Committee if they are to be included on the Senate’s agenda. All committee recommendations must be submitted to the Graduate Senate for action.

F. Annual Committee Reports. It is the responsibility of each standing committee chair to prepare an annual written report of the committee’s action as it relates to the charge given that committee in this constitution. The Executive Committee shall establish a schedule for submission of reports by the various committees each year in conjunction with the committee chairs. Committee chairs may be asked to meet with the Executive Committee to discuss the report.

G. Procedure for Communicating with Committees. Individuals or groups wishing to present recommendations and matters for consideration by a particular committee will do this in writing to the Chair of the Graduate Senate for assignment to the appropriate standing committee. Committees
shall receive requests from and make reports to the Administration only through the Executive Committee of the Graduate Senate.

H. Standing Committees. The Graduate Senate shall determine standing committees when and as it is found necessary. The membership of each committee except the Executive Committee shall consist of at least three members, and no unit shall be represented by more than one member on each committee.

1. Executive Committee. The Executive Committee of the Graduate Senate of Liberty University shall consist of the Dean of Graduate Studies, the Chair of the Graduate Senate, the Vice Chair, the Secretary, and two at-large members elected at the second meeting of the spring semester to take office on July 1. The Executive Committee shall meet one week prior to each regular meeting of the Graduate Senate and at the call of the President or the Chair of the Graduate Senate. The functions of the Graduate Senate Executive Committee shall include the following:

- to set the agenda for Graduate Senate meetings including a time for the University President (or a representative designated by the President) to respond to questions from, and provide information to, the Graduate Senate;
- to serve as a channel through which any group of three faculty approved to teach at the graduate level may introduce matters for consideration by the Senate;
- to assign to the standing committees such work as is within the charge of each committee;
- to submit to the Graduate Senate for action all recommendations from the Graduate Senate standing committees and Graduate Senate ad hoc committees;
- to solicit annual reports from and evaluate action by the Graduate Senate Standing Committees;
- to act on behalf of the Graduate Senate as needed during the summer (such action will be subject to approval by the Graduate Senate when convened); and
- to interpret this constitution.

2. Elections Committee. The Graduate Senate Elections Committee shall be responsible for conducting the elections of unit representatives to the Graduate Senate according to Article VII of this Constitution. The Committee has the responsibility of nominating members for the various committees of the Graduate Senate for election according to Section C. of this article and is further responsible for overseeing these elections. The members of the committee shall be elected by the Graduate Senate with all nominations being made from the floor. Membership on the committee shall be for the duration of the member’s term as representative to the Graduate Senate.

3. Committee on Graduate Academic and Admissions Standards. This committee regularly reviews and makes recommendations regarding all graduate academic standards and procedures, admissions policies, oversight of Graduate Assistantship programs, and graduate student academic dismissals. The Registrar and the Director of Admissions shall be ex officio members of this committee.

4. Graduate Curriculum Committee. This committee coordinates and advises on graduate academic matters and recommends policy to the Graduate Senate. It advises on the initiation, modification, and discontinuation of graduate programs. It further evaluates and recommends policy for curriculum and Graduate Internship and Assistantship programs. It receives proposals for consideration only after approval of department and college or school levels. The Dean of Library Services and the Registrar shall be ex officio members of this committee.

5. Graduate Library Committee. This committee serves in an advisory capacity to the Dean of Library Services with respect to library policies and acquisitions. It assists the Dean of Library Services in establishing guidelines for the allocation of funds for books, journals, and audiovisual materials. It evaluates the effectiveness of the library as a resource for Graduate studies. It formulates recommendations concerning institutional policy on library cooperation locally and nationally. The Dean of Library Services shall be ex officio a member of the committee.
I. **Ad Hoc Committees.** The President or the Graduate Senate may appoint special committees as occasions warrant.

**Article XII Amendments**

Amendments to this constitution may be proposed to the Graduate Senate by any of its standing committees, by the petition of one-fourth of the voting members of the Graduate Senate, or by the President of Liberty University. Amendments that are passed by a two-thirds vote of the Graduate Senate shall be placed on the agenda for the next meeting of the General Faculty. Amendments shall be ratified by a two-thirds vote of the General Faculty. Amendments to the Graduate Senate Constitution are subject to approval by the President.

This Constitution ends with Article XII above.