

# **The University Senate of Michigan Technological University**

## **Proposal 37-15** (Voting Units: Academic)

### **“Revision of Graduate School Policy Regarding External Members of Graduate Committees”**

#### **I. Background**

There has been ongoing discussion among the members of the Graduate Faculty Council regarding the roles and definition of external members of graduate students’ committees. A benchmarking study was conducted by the Graduate School in advance of development of this proposal. Results of that study indicate that the proposed policy is similar to policies at other universities.

The rationale for this proposal is that it gives students and advisors the maximum flexibility to identify the most appropriate members of the Graduate Faculty at Michigan Technological University to serve as members of a specific graduate student’s committee. Through the appointment of ad hoc members of the Graduate Faculty, students have the ability to include expertise from outside the regular Michigan Tech community in their graduate committees.

The primary role of the “external” member of a graduate student’s committee is to promote cross-disciplinary scholarly collaboration and consideration of a student’s research from a perspective that might not be available if all committee members were drawn solely from the student’s home department.

It is important to note that individual graduate programs can have policies that are more restrictive than the Graduate School policy. This means that individual graduate programs can enact requirements that are in addition to the Graduate School policy.

#### **II. Proposal**

Beginning fall semester, 2015:

- “External” committee members will not be required for master’s students.
- Faculty eligible to serve as “Internal” committee members will be defined as members of the Graduate Faculty with greater than 50% appointment in a student’s administrative home department.
- Faculty eligible to serve as “External” committee members will be defined as:
  - Members of the Graduate Faculty with less than 50% appointment in a student’s administrative home department.

- This includes members of the Graduate Faculty who possess Affiliated Faculty status in a student's administrative home department or with the student's graduate program (for non-departmental and interdisciplinary programs) unless the Affiliated Faculty member is serving as the student's advisor or co-advisor.
- Ad hoc members of the Graduate Faculty.

Proposal History:

- Proposed to the Graduate Faculty Council on February 3, 2015.
- Approved by the Graduate Faculty Council on March 3, 2015.
- Modified by Dean's Council on March 4, 2015.