**BYLAWS FOR THE DEPARTMENT OF BIOLOGY GRADUATE PROGRAM COMMITTEE**

Passed by unanimously GPC on October 23, 2024

The GPC will consist of six elected faculty members, one elected graduate student, the Associate Head for Graduate Studies, and the Assistant Program Director. All elected members have voting rights and serve three-year terms. If a scheduled meeting is called at least one week in advance, there will be no minimum quorum size for voting. If less than one week’s notice is given, the minimum quorum size will be five voting members. The chair of GPC will be elected by the committee.

The GPC will have monthly meetings with the Associate Head of Graduate Studies to conduct any of the following responsibilities:

* Approve new graduate courses put forth by the faculty.
* Discusses graduate student curriculum concerns brought by the Department of Biology faculty.
* Make necessary revisions to the graduate student course curriculum and the Department of Biology Graduate Student Handbook.
* Select recipients for all student awards, scholarships, and fellowships administered by the Department of Biology, with the exception of those administered by BioGSA, Lechner Funds, and one-time awards with less than one month of lead time.
* Determine rotation and permanent lab placement based on the protocol described below with future updates as needed.
* Coordinate professional development programming for the department’s graduate students based on students’ needs and interests.

How these charges are performed procedurally will be at the discretion of the elected GPC, in cooperation with the Associate Head for Graduate Studies.

**APPENDIX**

Passed by the Faculty on June 21st, 2024:

**Procedures for Laboratory Rotations and Selection of Advisor**

**Rotations**

Ph.D. students (including many of the direct recruit Ph.D. students) admitted to the program are required to do three five-week rotations in laboratories of interest. Rotations will begin the 3rd week of the fall semester. Students are expected to contact and/or visit faculty members they are considering for rotations or permanent positions to obtain additional information, prior to listing them as preferred rotations. Two weeks prior to beginning of rotations students will submit a Rotation Selection Form and faculty will submit their lab's availability for rotations. No lab should accept students for rotations if they are not interested in taking students.

Direct recruit Ph.D. students (students admitted directly into a Ph.D. advisor’s lab) will rotate in their prospective faculty advisor’s lab for the first rotation. The Ph.D. student and faculty advisor will sign a Lab Placement Agreement at the end of the first rotation. Lab placement agreements will be honored by the faculty, students, and the department. Direct recruit Ph.D. students have the option to rotate in labs that are not accepting new students, enabling them to learn new skills. If the faculty advisor and student agree to not take part in lab rotations, the faculty advisor will cover the direct recruit Ph.D. student with a research assistantship for the fall semester.

The graduate program committee will make every effort to ensure that students have the opportunity to rotate in the labs they rank highest. Rotation assignments will be arbitrated by the Graduate Program Committee based on ranked choices by the students and available space in research laboratories.

**Permanent Lab Placement**

One week prior to the end of the third rotation (and not before), faculty advisor will submit a ranked list of the potential students they would be willing to take into their labs. Likewise, students will submit a rank list of the labs they wish to join. The rank lists will only contain the names of those in which you have an interest to work with for the long-term.

The Graduate Program Committee will first and foremost consider the faculties and students’ rankings in this arbitration process. Funding and the faculty need of a particular lab will also be considered. Faculty needs to have available funding in which they can support graduate student development and summer research assistantship/tuition for a minimum two years. Exceptions to this policy can be made with prior department head approval. To ensure open discussion with all faculty about lab assignments, Ph.D. student placements will be shared in advance with faculty before lab assignment notifications are sent to the students. Faculty and students should not make independent prior arrangements or agreements regarding the student’s dissertation lab.

In the event a student does not find a laboratory for their dissertation research, the student can complete a fourth rotation to try to find an advisor. If a student has not found a research laboratory for their dissertation research, the student will meet with the Associate Head for Graduate Studies to discuss options for a master’s degree.