

GRADUATE PROGRAM IN ECOLOGY AND EVOLUTION

BY-LAWS

Original adopted: 1971; Amendments adopted: 1974, 1981 & December 2, 2022

1. Purpose

The purpose of the Graduate Program in Ecology and Evolution (GPEE) is to provide advanced training leading to related employment for students after graduation, and to provide a stimulating and supportive teaching and research environment that leads to the expansion of knowledge and practices in Ecology and Evolution. It is an organization created by those faculty members of Stony Brook University, and affiliated institutions, who desire to join in its work and actively contribute to its objectives. The GPEE includes both Ph.D. and M.A. degrees. The specific educational objectives of the program are spelled out in the program handbook.

The GPEE is subject to all the regulations of the Graduate School. The current regulations and policies can be found at

<https://www.stonybrook.edu/sb/graduatebulletin/current/regulations/>

2. Member Requisites and Responsibilities

a. Requisites

Membership in GPEE is defined as faculty, including tenure track, non-tenure track, and adjunct faculty at Stony Brook University or affiliated institutions, who declare their interest in its program, are willing to direct graduate research in E&E, and meet the requisites of membership. Tenure-track faculty in the Department of Ecology and Evolution ("The Department") are automatically included in the GPEE upon appointment. Other faculty who wish to join should present a public seminar, and may be accepted into the program by majority vote of members of the Graduate Program.

b. Responsibilities

Expectations and responsibilities for good standing in the program are spelled out in the Policies and Procedures Manual. These include offering graduate student seminars, grading preliminary exams, and service on GPEE committees. The program executive committee may organize duties and responsibilities among the program members.

3. Program Leadership

a. Executive Committee

The governing body of the Graduate Studies is the E&E Graduate Program Executive Committee (hereafter called the Executive Committee). It shall ordinarily be composed of a chair (the Doctoral Program Director, DPD; elected by the program membership), a co-chair (the Master's Program Director, MPD; elected by the program membership), the chair of the Department of Ecology and Evolution (elected by the Department; in the case of co-chairs, either one may serve). In addition, the committee includes two at-large members (elected by the program membership), including one position reserved for a member of the graduate program from outside of the Department. At-Large Members of the Executive Committee shall be elected to staggered two-year terms of office. They may be re-elected. The executive committee shall also include a voting student representative, to be elected by the students for a term of one year, but who is recused for discussions of student grades and evaluations, and faculty evaluations, suspension, or terminations.

The purview of the Executive Committee includes: curriculum, operating a student advising system, program review and evaluation (see section 4a), student evaluation, student examination and advancement policies, admissions policies, advising policies and mentorship development, seeking adequate operational and student support funds, service assignments and policies, and development of the GPEE, including recruitment of new faculty. The Executive Committee may routinely appoint whatever committees and take whatever actions are necessary for the operation of the program.

Minutes of the executive committee meetings will be made available to graduate program members (redacted as necessary to remove confidential information). Decisions of the executive committee may be challenged by petition of at least five graduate program members who may request that the decision be put to a general vote of the program; a majority vote would then override the previous decision of the executive committee.

Service on the admissions and preliminary exam committees (among others) will be organized by the Executive Committee in consultation with the Department Chair to balance service requirements, disciplinary representation, and representation from outside the department, as described in the Policies and Procedures document. Similarly, the Executive Committee will also work with the Department Chair to organize seminar teaching responsibilities.

b. Graduate Program Directors

The Doctoral Program Director (DPD) and Master's Program Director (MPD) run

the day-to-day operations of the doctoral and Master's graduate programs, respectively. The GPDs implement the policies of the Executive Committee, and serve as the point of contact for external interactions. Such tasks include, but are not limited to, working with graduate students and faculty to ensure successful placements, degree progress, support, and completion, running a semi-annual evaluation meeting, and other roles and responsibilities delegated by the Graduate School. The GPDs will convey the current admissions policies to the admissions committee and work with the graduate school to determine admissions targets. The DPD and MPD shall each be elected to three-year terms of office and may be re-elected.

c. Elections

Elections shall normally be held every April, either in-person or electronically. Directors and Executive Committee Members must be elected by 50% of the vote of all program members; rounds of ranked voting may be used to achieve this. If a position doesn't achieve a 50% threshold and/or no one volunteers to run for a position, the Department Chair shall appoint a Department member to the position. Further nomination and election rules are described in the policies and procedures document.

4. Program Excellence

a. Program Assessment

The graduate program directors and Executive Committee shall produce and maintain an assessment plan that addresses both whether students regularly achieve program learning outcomes as well as other program quality metrics including time to degree, completion rates, and the professional outcomes of students after graduation. The assessment shall also review whether the department is meeting its commitment to include individuals from a broad range of backgrounds. The directors and Executive Committee shall produce a biennial report highlighting the effectiveness of the program in reaching these goals, outlining areas for improvement, and indicating proposed changes for program modification and improvement. This report shall be distributed to GPEE members.

b. Program Revision, Policies and Procedures Manual, and Student Handbook

Policies and Procedures for day-to-day operation of the GPEE are contained in a manual developed and compiled by the program directors and Executive Committee.

The program directors and Executive Committee shall enact whatever modifications are necessary for the improvement of the program, according to their purview

outlined in Section 3. Any revisions shall be reflected in the Policies and Procedures Manual and Student Handbook.

Guidelines for students, including program learning outcomes, course requirements, preliminary exam, oral exam, and dissertation defense processes are outlined in the Policies and Procedures Manual and summarized for students in the Student Handbook.

5. Conflict Resolution and Accountability

In the event of a program-related grievance by a student or faculty member, either program director or chair may help resolve the matter, with a preference for the appropriate program director unless there is a known conflict of interest. If the matter is not resolved to the satisfaction of the involved student or involved faculty member, the program director shall bring it to the attention of the full Executive Committee, which may attempt to help resolve the matter. If the matter is not resolved to the satisfaction of the involved parties, the decision may be appealed to a program grievance committee. The full grievance procedure shall be outlined in the Policies and Procedure manual (section 4c.) and in compliance with the Graduate School rules for Grievance and Appeals:

https://www.stonybrook.edu/sb/graduatebulletin/current/regulations/academic_probation/appeals.php

An *ad hoc* program grievance committee may be assembled by the Executive Committee to handle student or faculty grievances. The committee shall be assembled of two program faculty members (of equal or higher rank to any faculty involved in the matter) and two graduate students from the program. If it is not possible to assemble an impartial committee from within the program, up to one faculty member and one student on the committee may be drawn from outside of the program. Any dissertation committee members must not be involved in the matter in question to ensure maximum impartiality. The committee shall hold hearings with the interested parties. If appropriate, the committee may seek a resolution agreeable to both parties. Alternatively or in addition, the committee may render a decision on the matter by a private 3/4 majority vote. Decisions of the committee may be appealed to the Graduate School.

6. Suspension or Termination of Membership

Members shall be suspended from taking on new GPPE students if they do not contribute to the purposes of the program, as specified in the bylaws and Policies and Procedures.

a. Lack of contribution

Every year, the GPEE members will be reviewed by the Executive Committee to determine who has been *inactive* (as defined in Policies and Procedures) in the program for the previous three years. Such members will be notified and should provide written affirmation to the GPD if they wish to continue. In any case, these members may be suspended from taking students, by majority vote of the Executive Committee. Alternatively, these members may be removed from the GPEE by a unanimous vote of the executive committee.

b. Underperformance

Members shall be suspended from taking on new GPEE students due to substantial deficiencies in their mentoring, or other unsatisfactory performance, as determined by a majority vote of the Executive Committee (examples provided in the policies and procedures). The Executive Committee shall revisit such suspensions annually for up to three years, working with the faculty member until by majority vote the Executive Committee agrees the issue is resolved. If the matter remains unresolved after three years, the Executive Committee may decide by unanimous vote to remove the member from the GPEE.

7. Amendment

These By-Laws may be amended by the affirmative votes of a majority of GPEE members.