SOILS and BIOGEOCHEMISTRY GRADUATE GROUP BYLAWS
Administrative Home: Department of Land, Air and Water Resources
Revised: June 2010
Approved by the Graduate Council: October 1, 2010

ARTICLE I: OBJECTIVE

A. The Graduate Group in Soils and Biogeochemistry (hereinafter called the “Group”) is organized primarily to establish and administer graduate education leading to M.S. and Ph.D. degrees in conformance with the rules of the Graduate Council and the Office of Graduate Studies of the Davis campus of the University of California.

B. Disciplines

The six core disciplines of the Group are: Soil Chemistry, Soil Physics, Soil Microbiology, Pedology, Soil Fertility/Plant Nutrition, and Biogeochemistry.

C. Mission

The mission of the Group is to train future scholars in the study of the physical, chemical and biological processes that occur in the soils of different landforms, ecosystems, and the globe. The goal is to understand the complex processes of mass and energy flow that control agricultural and natural ecosystem functions, productivity, and sustainability.

ARTICLE II: MEMBERSHIP

A. Criteria for membership in the Group

1. Membership in the Group shall be open to UC Davis faculty who have expertise, research, and/or accomplishments in any of the six core disciplines. Members must hold an appropriate academic title as (a) a member of the Academic Senate of the University of California, including Professors, Lecturers with Security of Employment, Professors in Residence, Professors of Clinical “__”, Professors Emeritus/a, and Research Professors; (b) Adjunct Professor; (c) Lecturer (without Security of Employment); or (d) Lecturer Without Salary. Academic faculty with primary appointments such as Cooperative Extension Specialists or in the Professional Research series who also hold an appropriate instructional title (normally Lecturer Without Salary) are eligible to be members of the Group.

2. Members of the Group are expected to have an active commitment to graduate education in Soils and Biogeochemistry, to be qualified to guide candidates toward graduate degrees in Soils and Biogeochemistry, to maintain active programs of research or scholarship commensurate with the expectations of the University, and to participate in the activities of the Group. Membership is based on disciplinary expertise and is independent of departmental appointments.

3. All active members of the Group are eligible to vote.
B. Application for membership

1. Faculty may nominate themselves for membership in the Group. In addition, any Group member may nominate other faculty for membership in the Group. Nominations shall be submitted through the Graduate Group Chair to the entire Group membership for approval, and members shall be approved by a quorum. A membership application consists of a CV and letter of intent to contribute to the Group as defined in Article II.B.2.

2. Anticipated contributions of members of the Group include:
   - Performing research and graduate instruction in Soils and Biogeochemistry.
   - Providing guidance to graduate students by serving as a mentor or major professor.
   - Contributing to the recruitment of new graduate students and admissions decisions.
   - Service on dissertation/thesis and/or qualifying examination/Master’s examination committees.
   - Service on administrative committees of the Group and attending meetings of the Group.
   - Participating in the Group’s student seminars, social functions, field trips, retreats, and other activities.

C. Emeritus members

Emeritus faculty who are active members of the Group as defined in Article II.B.2. are afforded full rights. Emeritus faculty who are no longer active members of the Group may attend and participate in Group activities, including meetings, but are not afforded the right to vote on policy and Bylaw issues related to the Group.

D. Review of membership

1. Membership will include reviews for continuation of membership every three years. The review shall be conducted by the Executive Committee.

2. Members will be reviewed based upon their contributions to the Group as stated in Article II.B.2. above.

3. Inactive members shall be notified that their membership is not being renewed.

E. Membership Appeal Process

Membership applications or applications for membership renewal that are denied may be appealed in writing to the Executive Committee. Applicants denied membership or renewal of membership by the Executive Committee may make a final appeal to the Dean of Graduate Studies.
ARTICLE III: ADMINISTRATION

The administration of the Group and its activities shall be vested in the Group Chair and the Executive Committee.

ARTICLE IV: GRADUATE GROUP CHAIR

A. Graduate Group Chair (hereinafter referred to as “Chair”) appointment process:

The Chair shall be appointed in accordance with the Academic Personnel Manual policy UCD-245.B and the policies and procedures of the Graduate Council and the Office of Graduate Studies.

A Nominating Committee shall be named by the Executive Committee to solicit from the faculty and graduate students of the Group names of nominees for Graduate Group Chair. Those nominated shall then be contacted regarding their willingness to serve. The names of the nominees who have indicated a willingness to serve shall then be submitted to the Group’s faculty and graduate students for comments. All comments shall remain confidential.

The Nominating Committee shall forward at least one name to the Dean of Graduate Studies along with all comments received on the nominee(s). All comments solicited from faculty and students of the Group shall be treated as confidential information by the Group’s Nominating Committee and by the Office of Graduate Studies.

If the Group nominates more than one person, it may express a preference and, if it does, should indicate the basis for determining that preference. The Dean of Graduate Studies may interview nominees, and then shall forward his/her recommendation to the Chancellor for appointment. The normal term of the Chair’s appointment is three years, however, what is recommended shall be based on the nominees’ willingness to serve.

B. Duties of the Chair

- Provide overall academic leadership for the program.
- Develop and implement policies for the program.
- Represent the interests of the program to the campus and University administrators, and the Dean of Graduate Studies.
- Facilitate nomination of new members to the Group.
- Call and preside at meetings of the Executive Committee and of the Group.
- Be responsible for coordinating all administrative matters with the Office of Graduate Studies.
- Be responsible for the accuracy of all publications related to the program, including Web pages and catalog copy.
- Nominate members to the Admissions and Scholarship Committees for appointment.
- Serve on Admissions and Scholarship Committees.
- Nominate advisers to the Office of Graduate Studies.
ARTICLE V: COMMITTEES

A. Executive Committee

1. The Executive Committee shall consist of four elected members and the Graduate Group Chair. Graduate Advisers, if not elected as members of the Executive Committee, shall serve as ex-officio members. In addition, the Chair of the Scholarship Committee shall be an ex-officio, non-voting member. One Ph.D. graduate student appointed by the Chair shall serve as a non-voting member. The committee must excuse the student member from meetings during discussion about other students, personnel actions or disciplinary issues relating to faculty, during discussion about funding for prospective and/or existing students, and for disciplinary issues related to students. The graduate staff coordinator attends all Executive Committee meetings.

2. The Executive Committee shall be nominated and voted upon by members of the Graduate Group as stated in Article IX below.

3. Meetings of the Executive Committee shall be held at least once per quarter. Additional meetings may be called as needed.

4. The Executive Committee is responsible for appointment of subcommittees, decisions on faculty membership and reviews, specification of SBG curriculum, and matters in which authority has been delegated by the Group.

B. Admissions Committee

1. The Admissions Committee shall consist of the Group Chair, the Admissions Adviser (who serves as Chair of the committee), two other faculty members and one Ph.D., third-year graduate student. Members may self-nominate and may also be nominated by the Chair; members are appointed by the Executive Committee. Appointments are for one year (renewable). The committee must excuse the student member from meetings during discussion about funding for prospective and/or existing students. All members shall have voting rights.

2. The Admissions Committee is responsible for review of M.S. and Ph.D. applications, including those from students transferring from other programs at UC Davis or seeking a second degree program.

3. The Admissions Committee shall collaborate with the Scholarship Committee in making admissions decisions based on funding.

C. Scholarship Committee

1. The Scholarship Committee shall consist of the Group Chair and up to three faculty members who may self-nominate or be nominated by the Chair; committee members are appointed by the Executive Committee. Appointments are for one year (renewable).
2. The chair of the Scholarship Committee shall be decided by vote of the committee members.

3. The Scholarship Committee is responsible for decisions regarding student financial support in the form of fellowships and research awards.

4. The Scholarship Committee shall collaborate with the Admissions Committee in making admissions decisions based on funding.

ARTICLE VI: GRADUATE ADVISERS

A. Graduate Advisers are appointed in compliance with the policies and procedures of the Graduate Council and the Office of Graduate Studies. The Executive Committee shall provide nomination(s) for appointment of one or two Graduate Advisers to the Office of Graduate Studies, each with a term of service of two years (renewable). If possible, a student’s thesis/dissertation adviser shall not serve as his/her Graduate Adviser.

B. Duties and responsibilities of the Graduate Advisers

- Serve as member or ex-officio member of the Executive Committee.
- Assure that each student in the program meets the curriculum requirements for the specific degree objective.
- Determine the prerequisite (undergraduate) course work that must be completed by the M.S. and Ph.D. students who do not have sufficient academic background in Soils and Biogeochemistry.
- Assist students in the recommendation of members of qualifying examination, thesis, and dissertation committees.
- Formally nominate the members of the qualifying examination committee for Ph.D. candidates to the Dean of Graduate Studies.

ARTICLE VII: GRADUATE ADMISSIONS ADVISER

A. The Graduate Admissions Adviser is appointed in compliance with the policies and procedures of the Graduate Council and the Office of Graduate Studies. The Executive Committee shall provide nominations for appointments of one Graduate Admissions Adviser to the Office of Graduate Studies for appointment with a term of service of two years (renewable).

B. As chair of the Admissions Committee, the Graduate Admissions Adviser is responsible for review, evaluation and recommendations of M.S. and Ph.D. applications.

ARTICLE VIII: MEETINGS

The Chair shall call an annual meeting of the Group in the Spring of the academic year. The Chair may call special meetings as deemed necessary or desirable by the Executive Committee. A special meeting of the Group can be invoked by a petition of three or more
Group members. The date and time of the annual or any special meetings shall be announced to members by e-mail at least one week before the meeting.

ARTICLE IX: QUORUM

A quorum for decisions that require a vote consists of 50+% of the eligible members. Passage requires 50+% supporting vote of members voting, with balloting either in a meeting of the Group or by e-mail. If via e-mail, a one-week time period must be allowed for expression of opinions about the issue prior to the acceptance of votes. Votes shall then be accepted for a period of at least two days before the votes are counted.

ARTICLE X: AMENDMENTS AND REVISIONS

Amendments and revisions to the bylaws may be proposed by any Group member and submitted to the Executive Committee for Group approval. The Executive Committee shall review the proposed changes, and balloting shall be either by e-mail or at a Group meeting. Amendments and revisions to the bylaws must be approved by a quorum and submitted to Graduate Council for review and approval.