MONTANA STATE UNIVERSITY-BOZEMAN  
COLLEGE OF NURSING  

POLICY # B-14  

TITLE: THESIS AND PROFESSIONAL PROJECT COMMITTEE DEVELOPMENT  

POLICY: Thesis/project committees will consist of at least three members, two of whom (including the chair) must be from within the MSU College of Nursing (CON) faculty. Ideally, the chair should hold a doctorate and committee membership collectively should reflect knowledge in research methodology, knowledge in the specific content area, and expertise in writing. Membership may also include an outside member (e.g., a committee member from the student's support area, a nurse practitioner from the community). Selection of committee chairs and members is determined through negotiation between the graduate student advisor and campus director and coordinated through the Associate Dean's Office. All CON faculty are expected to participate as either members or chairs of graduate student committees regardless of whether or not they have teaching assignments in the graduate program.  

RATIONALE: Since the graduate program spans the four campuses, central coordination of committee selection is necessary so that the College and graduate students benefit from the full range of faculty expertise. Central coordination also provides for the appropriate use of college resources and facilitates committee selection for the student and advisor.  

PROCEDURE:  
1. The campus director assigns the academic advisor. (All CON faculty are expected to have graduate student advisees.)  
2. The student discusses thesis/project ideas with the advisor.  
3. The advisor consults with the associate dean during the student’s first semester of full-time study (or equivalent for part-time study) regarding the proposed thesis topic to identify related college resources.  
4. The associate dean reviews the faculty list of research interest areas and expertise and consults with the appropriate campus director as to the faculty member's appropriateness and availability to serve as chair of the committee. The campus director contacts the faculty member regarding interest/availability to serve as chair of the committee and advises the associate dean. (The faculty list of research interest areas and expertise is updated annually by the CONORS office; each faculty member submits updated information at the end of the spring semester.)  
5. The associate dean consults with the selected chair about potential committee members and then discusses membership with appropriate campus directors, as needed. The campus director contacts the faculty member regarding availability to serve as a member of the committee and advises the associate dean.  
6. Student and faculty discussion may be initiated.  
7. The associate dean informs the advisor, the graduate student and the campus director of the assignment through formal written communication.  
8. In the event that the student is dissatisfied with the committee assignment, the student and the advisor may request to re-negotiate the process.  
9. In the event that a committee member resigns from the faculty and/or moves out of the area, s/he may continue as a committee member if s/he is willing to continue and can be available enough to meet the needs of the student. The student and the chairperson determines if the member who has resigned/moved is willing and available to continue. If the person who resigns/moves is chairperson of the committee, another faculty member will be assigned as chair.
10. When negotiations are completed, the student is responsible for initiating the committee appointment form and obtaining signatures. It is forwarded through the advisor to the associate dean. The Associate Dean's Office forwards the completed form to the Dean of the College of Graduate Studies.