

1 **Meeting Minutes of the Graduate Council**

2 **Date:** November 12, 2024

3 **Location:** Alumni Center Board Room

4

5 **Members Present:**

6 Nathan Rabalais (MODL - Chair), Marietta Adams (EDCI), Elena Babatsouli (CODI), Gracie
7 Babineaux (Grad Student Rep, PhD EESC), Brian Bolton (ECFN), Wesley Bradford (MUSC), Ignatius
8 Cahyanto (MGMT), Farzad Ferdowsi (EECE), Natalie Keefer (EDCI), Nicholas Kooyers (BIOL), Robin
9 Koytcheff (MATH), Christy Lenahan (NURS), Clement Okolo (GSO President, PhD CMPS), Catherine
10 Roche-Wallace (MUSC), Laurel Ryan (ENGL), Frances Stueben (NURS), Peng Yin (MCHE), Rui Zhang
11 (GEOS), and Mary Farmer-Kaiser (Graduate School, ex-officio)

12

13 **Members Absent:**

14 Ashlie Boelkins (ARCH), Beenish Chaudhry (CMIX), Raju Gottumukkala (MCHE), Amanda Mayeaux
15 (EDFL), Meng-Ru Shih (CJUS), Scott Sittig (HLSI), and Mark Zappi (CHEE)

16

17 **I. Call to Order**

18 The meeting was called to order by Nathan Rabalais, chair, at 2:07 PM.

19

20 **II. Announcements and Approvals**

21 **Provost Meeting Recap/Update**

22 Rabalais shared a recap of his meeting with Provost Jaimie Hebert and Dean Farmer-Kaiser.
23 Rabalais shared that Paul Thomas and Teressa LeDay from the Human Resources Office have been
24 invited to attend a Spring Grad Council meeting to discuss power-based violence and Title IX.
25 Discussion was held regarding graduate assistant benefits including the possibility of sick leave
26 and health insurance. Rabalais introduced the re-creation of the Graduate Assistants Handbook
27 that would provide expectations to graduate assistants upon hire; the handbook could also be used
28 a recruitment/retention tool.

29

30 **October 8, 2024, Meeting Minutes:**

31 A motion to approve the September 10 meeting minutes was made by Laurel Ryan and seconded by
32 Frances Stueben. The motion carried.

33

34 **2025-2026 Dissertation Completion Fellowship Call for Applications**

35 Rabalais shared that the Dissertation Completion Fellowship call for applications will be launched
36 by December 1.

37

38 **III. Standing Committee Reports**

39 **Appeals – Yung-Hsing Wu:**

40 No report.

41

42 **Curriculum – Amy Brown:**

43 No report.

44

1 **Fellowships – Ryan Nelson:**

2 Rabalais introduced the Fellowships Committee Guidelines proposed revision. Farmer-Kaiser
3 shared that she attended the last Fellowships committee meeting where discussion was held
4 regarding the guidelines and purpose of the committee. Discussion was held by council members
5 regarding the fellowship committee role. A motion to accept the newly revised Fellowships
6 Committee Guidelines was unanimously supported.

7

8 Upon approval of these revisions within the Graduate Council Handbook by the Provost, the
9 Fellowships committee will participate in the selection of the doctoral student research and travel
10 awards; several University awards (Outstanding GTA and Instructor of Record award);
11 review/selection of the dissertation completion fellowship awards; and provide support to the
12 University Fellows Community.

13

14 **Graduate Faculty Membership – Patricia Lanier:**

15 Rabalais shared a report that was submitted by P. Lanier, not present, from the Graduate Faculty
16 Membership Committee. The report detailed 67 graduate faculty applications that did not require
17 Committee review as all three independent review entities (College Dean, Department Head, and
18 College Peer Review Committee) were in agreement with recommendation for appointment at the
19 level requested by the individual applicants. The report also detailed 21 graduate faculty
20 applications that required review by the Graduate Faculty Membership Committee. After discussing
21 the report, it was discovered that there was one correction needed to update a department name
22 related to a specific faculty member. A motion was made to accept all recommendations on the
23 report including the correction mentioned, with the understanding that the Graduate School will
24 make the correction. A motion to approve the Grad Faculty Membership reports as presented was
25 made by Gracie Babineaux and seconded by Wesley Bradford. The motion carried.

26

27 **Inclusion, Diversity, Equity, and Access – Davide Oppo:**

28 No report.

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30 **IV. Old Business**

31 **Graduate Faculty Membership: Emeritus/Retired Faculty and Non-Tenured/Temporary Faculty:**

32 Rabalais shared with council members that discussions regarding possible creating distinct
33 categories of Graduate Faculty membership for retired/emeritus and non-tenured/tenure-track
34 faculty and temporary UL employees will be discussed at the upcoming Graduate Program
35 Leadership Meeting. Farmer-Kaiser shared that she discussed the proposal with the Dean’s Council
36 and she shared their feedback. Recommendations and discussions continued within the council
37 with commitment also to continue these discussions within colleges and department after the
38 meeting and to return with feedback in December.

39

40 **Graduate School Request to Expand English Language Proficiency Exempt Countries**

41 Rabalais reviewed the English Language Proficiency Exempt Countries proposal. Discussion was
42 held by council members regarding questions about specific countries still in discussion. Council
43 requested that the Graduate School office collect several data points to review at a meeting in the
44 Spring semester.

1 **V. New Business**

2 **Re-creation of Guidelines for Graduate Assistants Handbook**

3 After a discussion about creating a Graduate Assistants Handbook, the Graduate Council agreed to
4 establish an ad hoc committee to research best practices and draft a handbook for review by the
5 Graduate Council. Rabalais encouraged Graduate Council members to nominate themselves or
6 other graduate faculty in their departments who would be interested in serving on the committee.
7 The motion carried.

8
9 **Selection of Grand Marshal**

10 After a discussion of the Grand Marshal nominations, the Graduate Council voted on the three
11 faculty members to be invited to serve in the Fall 2024 and Spring 2025 doctoral hooding
12 ceremonies and the Summer 2025 commencement ceremony. M. Farmer-Kaiser agreed to extend
13 the invitations from the Graduate Council and report back in December. A motion to approve the
14 Grand Marshal nominees was made by Frances Stueben and seconded by Robin Koytcheff. The
15 motion carried.

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17 **Doctoral Hooding Ceremony and Commencement**

18 Rabalais asked members of the Graduate Council to volunteer to read the message that is being
19 delivered across all colleges during commencement on behalf of the Graduate community.
20 Discussion was had about revisions to the Commencement message. The Graduate School will
21 notify the College Dean's office with the names of the volunteers and send a copy of the final
22 Graduate Council commencement message. College volunteers are as follows:

- 23
24 Arts: Catherine Roche-Wallace; Wesley Bradford (backup)
25 Business: Brian Bolton; Ignatius Cahyanto (backup)
26 Education: Natalie Keefer; Marietta Adams (backup)
27 Engineering: Farzad Ferdowsi; Peng Yin (backup)
28 Liberal Arts: Nathan Rabalais; Laurel Ryan (backup)
29 Nursing: Christy Lenahan; Frances Stueben (backup)
30 Sciences: Nicholas Kooyers; Robin Koytcheff (backup)

31
32 **VI. Adjournment**

33 A motion to adjourn the meeting was made by Natalie Keefer and seconded by Nicholas Kooyers.
34 The motion carried. The meeting was adjourned at 4:04 PM.