

1 **Meeting Minutes of the Graduate Council**

2 **Date:** December 10, 2024

3 **Location:** Alumni Center Board Room

4

5 **Members Present:**

6 Nathan Rabalais (MODL - Chair), Marietta Adams (EDCI), Brian Bolton (ECFN), Ignatius Cahyanto
7 (MGMT), Farzad Ferdowsi (EECE), Natalie Keefer (EDCI), Nicholas Kooyers (BIOL), Christy Lenahan
8 (NURS), Amanda Mayeaux (EDFL), Clement Okolo (GSO President, PhD CMPS), Javier Portillo-Elias
9 (ECFN), Catherine Roche-Wallace (MUSC), Laurel Ryan (ENGL), Meng-Ru Shih (CJUS), Scott Sittig
10 (HLSI), Frances Stueben (NURS), and Mary Farmer-Kaiser (Graduate School, ex-officio)

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12 **Members Absent:**

13 Elena Babatsouli (CODI), Ashlie Boelkins (ARCH), Gracie Babineaux (Grad Student Rep, PhD EESC),
14 Wesley Bradford (MUSC), Beenish Chaudhry (CMIX), Raju Gottumukkala (MCHE), Robin Koytcheff
15 (MATH), Peng Yin (MCHE), Mark Zappi (CHEE), and Rui Zhang (GEOS).

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17 **I. Call to Order**

18 The meeting was called to order by Nathan Rabalais, chair, at 2:04 PM.

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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 students appointed to assistantship roles and
28 assistantship supervisors; the handbook could also be used a recruitment/retention tool.

29

30 **November 12, 2024, Meeting Minutes:**

31 A motion to approve the November 12 meeting minutes was made by Natalie Keefer and seconded
32 by Amanda Mayeaux. The motion carried.

33

34 **3MT Competition Update**

35 Rabalais reminded all members that the 3MT finals will take place on Friday, January 31. Rabalais
36 thanked faculty who volunteered to serve as judges during the preliminary rounds.

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38 **Spring Grad Council Meeting Dates**

39 Rabalais reviewed the Spring 2025 Grad Council meeting dates: February 11, March 11, April 8, and
40 May 13.

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42 **III. Standing Committee Reports**

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44 **Appeals – Yung-Hsing Wu:**

45 No report.

46

47 **Curriculum – Amy Brown:**

48 No report.

1 **Fellowships – Ryan Nelson:**

2 No report.

3

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

5 No report.

6

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

8 No report.

9

10 **IV. Old Business**

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

12 Rabalais shared with council members that discussions regarding possible creating distinct
13 categories of Graduate Faculty membership for retired/emeritus and non-tenured/tenure-track
14 faculty and temporary UL employees will be discussed at the upcoming Graduate Program
15 Leadership Meeting. Farmer-Kaiser shared that she discussed the proposal with the Dean’s Council
16 and she shared their feedback. Recommendations and discussions continued within the council
17 with commitment also to continue these discussions within colleges and department after the
18 meeting and to return in February for final discussion and vote.

19

20 **Graduate School Request to Expand English Language Proficiency Exemption**

21 Rabalais updated members regarding the English language proficiency exemption for applicants
22 with degrees from identified countries. The Graduate School will share several data points to review
23 at a meeting in the Spring semester.

24

25 **Doctoral Hooding Ceremony and Commencement**

26 Rabalais reminded all members that the Doctoral Hooding Ceremony will be held on Thursday,
27 December 19 at the Cajundome Convention Center. The doors will open at 6pm and the ceremony
28 will begin promptly at 7pm. Rabalais reminded members of the Graduate Council who volunteered
29 to deliver the message across all colleges during commencement on behalf of the Graduate
30 Council. Rabalais thanked Laurel Ryan who assisted with finalizing the message. The Graduate
31 School will notify the College Dean’s office with the names of the volunteers and send a copy of the
32 final message. College volunteers are as follows:

33

34 Arts: Catherine Roche-Wallace (speaker); Wesley Bradford (backup)

35 Business: Brian Bolton (speaker); Ignatius Cahyanto (backup)

36 Education: Natalie Keefer (speaker); Marietta Adams (backup)

37 Engineering: Farzad Ferdowsi (speaker); Peng Yin (backup)

38 Liberal Arts: Nathan Rabalais (speaker); Laurel Ryan (backup)

39 Nursing: Christy Lenahan (speaker); Frances Stueben (backup)

40 Sciences: Nicholas Kooyers (speaker); Robin Koytcheff (backup)

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42 **V. New Business**

43 **Creation of Ad Hoc Committee: Guidelines for Graduate Assistants Handbook**

44 The Graduate Council agreed to establish an ad hoc committee to research best practices and draft
45 a graduate assistantship handbook for review by the Graduate Council. Rabalais solicited names of
46 Grad Council members and other faculty who would be potential candidates to serve on this ad hoc
47 committee in Spring 2025.

48

1 **Request for Emergency Graduate Faculty Appointment**

2 Rabalais shared a request for emergency one-semester graduate faculty appointment. Discussion
3 was held regarding the request, the individual’s credentials, and the Graduate Faculty University
4 Guidelines and College criteria. The discussion and decision considered understandings of how
5 individuals who are not members of the Graduate Faculty can serve on graduate student
6 committees, the terminal degree requirement, University and college level expectations for
7 membership, timeline and nature of the request, and opportunity to apply through the regular
8 application process. Overwhelmingly, members of the Council concluded that an emergency
9 appointment to the Graduate Faculty was not warranted in this instance and that, instead and as
10 happens in graduate programs across our campus community, individuals with similar distinctive
11 expertise, professional experience, and commitment to individual graduate student research have
12 the ability to serve on graduate student committees and mentor graduate students as members
13 “outside of the UL Graduate Faculty.” Referred to more commonly as outside or external members,
14 these committee members, members of the Council noted, are equal in voting and approval rights
15 on committees with no distinction made on the approval page of theses, dissertations, or synthesis
16 projects; they are not regarded as secondary members and their contributions to graduate student
17 research is vital in many areas on our campus. A motion to deny the request was made. The motion
18 passed.

19
20 **Graduate Faculty Appointment Appeals**

21 Rabalais shared that two Graduate Faculty membership appeals from individual faculty were
22 received. For both Fall 2024 Graduate Faculty applications, the Graduate Council had approved
23 appointment to the graduate faculty at the Associate, rather than Full, membership level. Each
24 faculty member presented a formal appeal asking that their applications be reviewed and that Full
25 membership be granted. The Council reviewed each application, recommendations received from
26 the College review entities as well as the recommendation from the Graduate Faculty Membership
27 standing committee, the appeal letter, and supporting materials from the dean of the academic
28 college. After discussion, motions were made to approve each appeal and request for appointment
29 at the Full membership level. Each motion passed. These appeal decisions will be submitted to the
30 Provost and Vice-President of Academic Affairs for final University approval.

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32 **VI. Adjournment**

33 A motion to adjourn the meeting was made. The motion carried. The meeting was adjourned at 3:37
34 PM.