

1 **Meeting Minutes of the Graduate Council**

2 **Date:** May 13, 2025

3 **Location:** Griffin Hall Room 315

4
5 **Members Present**

6 Nathan Rabalais (MODL - Chair), Marietta Adams (EDCI), Gracie Babineaux (Grad Student Rep, PhD
7 EESC), Josh Bendickson (MGMT), Brian Bolton (ECFN), Wesley Bradford (MUSC), Beenish Chaudhry
8 (CMIX), Mary Farmer-Kaiser (Graduate School, ex-officio), Natalie Keefer (EDCI), Nicholas Kooyers
9 (BIOL), Christy Lenahan (NURS), Amanda Mayeaux (EDFL), Clement Okolo (GSO President, PhD
10 CMPS), Catherine Roche-Wallace (MUSC), Laurel Ryan (ENGL), Meng-Ru Shih (CJUS), Scott Sittig
11 (HLSI), and Frances Stueben (NURS).

12
13 **Members Absent**

14 Elena Babatsouli (CODI), Ashlie Boelkins (ARCH), Farzad Ferdowsi (EECE), Raju Gottumukkala
15 (MCHE), Robin Koytcheff (MATH), Javier Portillo-Elias (ECFN), Peng Yin (MCHE), Mark Zappi (CHEE),
16 and Rui Zhang (GEOS).

17
18 **Guests Present**

19 Paul Leberg
20

21 **I. Call to Order**

22 The meeting was called to order by Nathan Rabalais, chair, at 2:06 PM.
23

24 **II. Announcements and Approvals**

25 **Invited Guest – Dr. Jaimie Hebert, Provost**

26 Rabalais shared that the Provost is unable to attend the meeting today due to Red and White Day at
27 the Capitol.
28

29 **April 8, 2025, Meeting Minutes:**

30 Motion made to approve the April meeting minutes. The motion was seconded and carried.
31

32 **Commencement Exercises**

33 Rabalais reviewed commencement assignments and message to be delivered across all colleges
34 during individual ceremonies on behalf of the Graduate Council. The Graduate School has notified
35 the College Dean's office with the names of the volunteers and sent a copy of the final message.
36 College volunteers are as follows:
37

38 Arts: Catherine Roche-Wallace (speaker); Wesley Bradford (backup)
39 Business: Josh Bendickson (speaker); Brian Bolton (backup)
40 Education: Natalie Keefer (speaker); Amanda Mayeaux (backup)
41 Engineering: Farzad Ferdowsi (speaker); Raju Gottumukkala (backup)
42 Liberal Arts: Nathan Rabalais (speaker); Laurel Ryan (backup)
43 Nursing: Scott Sittig (speaker); Frances Stueben/Christy Lenahan (backup)
44 Sciences: Nicholas Kooyers (speaker); Beenish Chaudhry (backup)
45

1 Rabalais also reminded all members that the Doctoral Hooding Ceremony will be held on Thursday,
2 May 15 at the Cajundome Convention Center. The doors will open at 6pm and the ceremony will
3 begin promptly at 7pm.

4 **Grand Marshal Updates**

6 Rabalais congratulated Dr. Paul Leberg who was selected and will serve as the Spring 2025 Grand
7 Marshal. Professor Emeritus Lynda Frese was announced as the Summer 2025 Grand Marshal.

9 **III. Standing Committee Reports**

10 **Appeals – Yung-Hsing Wu:**

11 No report.

13 **Curriculum – Amy Brown:**

14 No report.

16 **Fellowships – Ryan Nelson:**

17 No report.

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

20 No report.

22 **IV. Old Business**

23 **Ad Hoc Committee Report: Guidelines for Graduate Assistants Handbook:**

24 Leberg, Associate Dean of the Graduate School and chair of the Ad Hoc Committee presented the
25 final report and recommendations regarding reintroduction of a graduate assistantship handbook.
26 The handbook offers guidance on responsibilities, procedures, and resources related to GTA, GRA,
27 GA appointments. It is intended for graduate students appointed to those roles as well as faculty
28 and other individuals who serve as supervisors, and University units who employ graduate students
29 in these roles. Discussion was held regarding the report and recommendations for future policy
30 development. A motion was made to accept the report, inclusive of the draft Graduate
31 Assistantship Handbook, and to allow the Graduate School to move forward with the document,
32 review with Academic Affairs and Human Resources, and finalize for implementation for the 2025-
33 2026 academic year. The motion was seconded and carried.

35 **V. New Business**

36 **Guidelines for the Use of Generative Artificial Intelligence (GAI) in Graduate Education** 37 **Research**

38 Farmer-Kaiser shared with members of the Graduate Council the Guidelines for the Use of
39 Generative Artificial Intelligence (GAI) in Graduate Education Research. Discussion was held
40 regarding the need for the guidance, disclosure of use of GAI, development of discipline-specific
41 guidance, and incorporation of the Graduate School guidance in the Guidelines for Preparation and
42 Submission of Theses, Dissertations and Synthesis Projects. Farmer-Kaiser shared that she will be
43 attending a Global Summit on AI in the Fall semester. Discussion will continue at the May Graduate
44 Program Leadership meeting and continue with the Graduate Council in 2025-2026.

1 **Annual Report from the University Committee on Graduate Student Success and Retention**

2 On behalf of Emily Sandoz, chair of the University Committee for Graduate Student Success and
3 Retention, Rabalais gave an overview of the report that was submitted to the Grad Council, which
4 included recommendations and data analysis by the Retention committee over the past year.
5

6 **Annual Report from the Graduate Student Organization**

7 Okolo shared an overview of the Graduate Student Organization annual report.
8

9 **2025 Graduate Council Election Results (Engineering and Liberal Arts)**

10 Rabalais congratulated the two new elected members who will be joining the Graduate Council in
11 2025-2026: Phil Auter (Liberal Arts) and Jonathan Raush (Engineering).
12

13 **Recognition of Council Membership whose terms are ending**

14 Rabalais and Farmer-Kaiser thanked the members of the Grad Council whose terms are ending with
15 the close of the academic year for all that they do to enhance graduate education and to advocate
16 for graduate students. Farmer-Kaiser then thanked Rabalais on behalf of the entire Graduate
17 Council for his leadership as chairperson.

18 **2025-2026 Graduate Council Chair Elections**

19 Rabalais opened the floor for nominations for chairperson of the Graduate Council for 2025-2026.
20 Bradford was nominated. A second motion was made to elect Bradford by unanimous acclamation
21 as the Graduate council Chairperson for 2025-2026. The motions were seconded and carried.
22

23 **IDEA Committee Resolution**

24 Rabalais presented the following resolution to recognize the work of the IDEA committee.
25

26 *Whereas the Graduate Council recognizes the valuable contributions of the Inclusion,*
27 *Diversity, Equity and Access (IDEA) Committee since its inception in 2022;*
28

29 *Whereas the Committee has enriched our academic community for graduate students and*
30 *graduate faculty alike through its broad understanding of diversity and inclusion;*
31

32 *Whereas its initiatives have included policy language recommendations, enhanced*
33 *accessibility resources for individuals with disabilities navigating campus, and contributing*
34 *to academic programming and campus engagement, and much more;*
35

36 *Whereas some of the Committee's key accomplishments include:*
37

- 38 • *Completing an updated, georeferenced inventory of ADA-compliant access points*
39 *across campus;*
- 40 • *Initiating the development of a campus languages map;*
- 41 • *Reviewing Graduate School and University policies to identify areas for improvement*
42 *aligned with the University's Strategic Plan for Inclusive Excellence;*

- 1 • *Proposing bylaws of the James Jackson Community of Scholars to formalize its mission*
2 *and strengthen its mentorship of graduate students from underrepresented*
3 *communities,*
- 4 • *Establishing relationships with local organizations, including the Louisiana*
5 *Entrepreneurship & Economic Development Center, and*
- 6 • *Organizing events to demystify the process of applying to graduate school and the hidden*
7 *curriculum of graduate education;*

8
9 *Be it resolved that, although the recent executive orders have led to the dissolution of the*
10 *IDEA committee, the Graduate Council affirms the enduring significance of the Committee's*
11 *contributions and honors its lasting impact on our graduate education community.*
12

13 A motion was made to approve the resolution. The motion was seconded and carried.
14

15 **VI. Adjournment**

16 Motion was made to adjourn the meeting at 3:55pm. The motion was seconded and carried.