

Meeting Minutes of the Graduate Council

Date: October 14, 2025

Location: FG Mouton Room 207

Members Present

Wesley Bradford (MUS, Chair), Philip Auter (CMCN), Sandy Brack (Grad Student Representative, PhD ENGL), Ignatius Cahyanto (MGMT), Farzad Ferdowsi (EECE), William Ferguson (ECFN), Nicholas Kooyers (BIOL), Erika LeBlanc (COUE), Eddie Metrejean (ACCT), Clement Okolo (GSO President, PhD CMPS), Nathan Rabalais (MODL), Jonathan Raush (MCHE), Catherine Roche-Wallace (MUS), Laurel Ryan (ENGL), Jennifer Sittig (NURS), Scott Sittig (HLSI), Abby South (MUS), Frances Stueben (NURS), Mehmet Tozal (INFX), Amy Veprauskas (MATH), Mark Zappi (CHEE), and Rui Zhang (GEOS).

Members Absent

Julius Austin (COUE), Mary Farmer-Kaiser (Graduate School, ex-officio), Natalie Keefer (EDCI), and Amanda Mayeaux (EDFL)

Guests Present

Paul Leberg (Graduate School) and Zachary Stein (University Libraries)

I. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order by Wesley Bradford, chair, at 2:06PM.

II. Announcements and Approvals

The Council agreed to shift the agenda to consider an old business item while an invited guest was present.

Institutional Repository on Manuscripts

Z. Stein presented the written request from the University Libraries asking that final dissertations, theses, and synthesis projects be included in the University of Louisiana at Lafayette Institutional Repository. After presenting the request, he answered questions. Stein explained that items in the Institutional Repository are discoverable without the need to have a university account and that such repositories are common practice at R1 institutions. He also clarified that there would be no cost or extra work on the graduating students' part. In response to a question about size limitations, he noted that he did not think that there were any size restrictions. There was also a question about the ability to restrict access to embargoed manuscripts to which Stein explained that embargoes could be managed. Discussion continued about how the final manuscripts (theses and dissertations) would need to be vetted by the Graduate School before being submitted to the Institutional Repository. There was a concern voiced about what would happen if the Institutional Repository was no longer being supported by the University; he noted that all data would be returned. Discussion continued about the need for submission to the Institutional Repository to be mandatory for all theses, dissertations, and synthesis projects. Discussion continued about requiring submission to both the Institutional Repository and ProQuest and potential redundancy

1 but it was agreed that ProQuest provides essential exposure for the student's work and the
2 institution. L. Ryan motioned to require all students to submit manuscripts to the Repository except
3 for those embargoed. M. Zappi seconded the motion. Motion carried unanimously.
4

5 **September 9, 2025, Meeting Minutes:**

6 Motion made by A. South to approve the September meeting minutes. The motion was seconded by
7 N. Kooyers and carried.
8

9 **Commencement Exercises & Call for Grand Marshal Nominations**

10 W. Bradford made an announcement that Grand Marshal nominations are due October 31 and that
11 they would be reviewed by the Graduate Council at its November meeting. Bradford also noted
12 recently-announced changes to the commencement schedule. There was clarification provided
13 that two ceremonies would be held on one day with four colleges combined in one ceremony in the
14 morning and four other colleges in another single ceremony in the afternoon. At this time, it was
15 also mentioned that the Doctoral Hooding Ceremony had been cancelled. Clement Okolo, GSO,
16 presented a letter written by GSO in favor of keeping the ceremony but mentioned possible cost
17 saving measures. It was shared that students had expressed discontentment with the ceremony
18 being cancelled and noted their appreciation of the more intimate opportunity to celebrate doctoral
19 graduates collectively. A Council member clarified that the hooding would still happen, but it would
20 be at the larger ceremony in front of more people. Other Council members noted that some
21 departments are discussing having their own smaller ceremony to recognize graduates and award
22 winners.
23

24 **Call for Participants & Judges – 3MT Preliminary Rounds of Competition**

25 Dr. Bradford shared a call for judges and students to participate in the upcoming 3MT competition.
26

27 **III. Standing Committee Reports**

28 **Appeals – Heather Stone:**

29 No report.
30

31 **Fellowships and Awards – Ryan Nelson:**

32 No report. Bradford shared that Dean Farmer-Kaiser and the Provost had had discussions about the
33 Doctoral Completion Fellowships, and they are being recommended to be retained by the Research
34 Office.
35

36 **Graduate Faculty Membership – Frances Stueben:**

37 F. Stueben shared that the standing committee had not met yet due to Graduate Faculty
38 applications now being due on October 15 instead of October 1. The due date was pushed back
39 because of the addition of new categories of membership being and delays in college criteria
40 updates. College reviews are due on November 21 and the standing committee will meet the week
41 of December 1. The Graduate Council will receive the committee's report for its December
42 meeting.
43

44 **IV. Old Business**

45 **Graduate Council Standing Committees**

Status of Curriculum Committee and Need for New Standing Committee(s)

Bradford shared a working draft of an updated description for the Graduate Curriculum Standing Committee. The draft was modeled after the curriculum committee that has been created as part of the new Undergraduate Council. Council members had many questions about how this committee would be used and what it would be charged with doing. Concern was voiced about pitting departments against deans and getting into the “weeds” of academic college operations. Questions also emerged over program review and the committee’s potential role in approval of new programs. More information was requested. Council members suggested comparison with similar committees at other institutions.

Bradford proposed that a Moodle forum discussion on this subject take place.

Ryan made a motion to form an Ad Hoc “Committees on Committees” to workshop current and potential committees. Due to the discontinuation of other committees this review will help to figure out what committees are needed. P. Auter seconded the motion. Motion carried unanimously.

Manuscript Binding Fees

Bradford reintroduced the request from the Graduate School to increase the binding fee. The request shared that the current binding fee of \$15 that was replaced the \$10 fee in 2017 and offered details of average cost per binding, the history of the fee, and notification of binding fee increase; it further shared that the Graduate School is currently incurring the extra cost and that present budgets make continuing to do so unsustainable. Bradford invited S. Brack to present a document created that detailed the cost difference between current printing and binding fees at the university and ProQuest fees. The analysis showed that, cost wise, thesis students may incur additional costs through ProQuest but that others would likely save money. Discussion centered on whether an archival copy of the final manuscript is still needed and whether students even want a physical copy. Several suggestions were made including that if the university wants an archival copy then it should subsidize the cost and that an archival copy of the manuscript could be requested through ProQuest rather than continuing to use the current third-party vendor. Agenda item to be continued at the next meeting. No action taken at this time.

V. New Business

Appeals for Admission

A student appeal for admission was presented to the Council. Council members discussed the appeal after review of the student appeal letter, departmental response, application materials, and decision of the Appeal Standing Committee during its August meeting. Discussion ensued with members noting appreciation that the applicant has shown persistence by appealing, that they have by enrolled as an entrée student, and that the possibility of success still exists. N. Kooyers motioned that the Council uphold the decision of the Appeals Standing Committee. P. Auter seconded the motion. Motion carried unanimously.

Request for Continued Graduate Faculty Membership for Departing Faculty Member

Bradford presented a request from a department head that a departing faculty member be allowed to continue contributing to two advanced doctoral student committees. The request noted that the faculty member had arranged for co-chairs from graduate faculty within the department so that the

1 students would still have an on-campus advocate. After discussion and input from a Council
2 member from the department in question, M. Zappi motioned to approve the request. F. Ferdowsi
3 seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

4 **Catalog Change Request EDD Degree Requirements – Transfer Credit**

6 Bradford presented a request from the Department of Educational Foundations and Leadership to
7 revise the Requirements for the Doctor of Education degree. Specifically, the department requests
8 to replace the following passage in the Academic Catalog: *A maximum of 12 semester hours of*
9 *appropriate graduate coursework (six from the master's degree and six from post-master's course*
10 *work), subject to approval by the Consortium, with prior approval by the candidate's advisor, the*
11 *program coordinator and the Graduate School Dean, may be transferred from other accredited*
12 *institutions or from within a consortium institution.* It proposes the following passage instead: “A
13 *maximum of 12 semester hours of appropriate graduate coursework (from the master's degree or*
14 *post-master's course work), with prior approval by the program coordinator and the Graduate*
15 *School Dean, may be transferred from other accredited institutions.”* The Council discussed the
16 request. N. Rabalais motioned to approve. Ryan seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

17 **Request to Revise Graduate Assistantship (GA) Designation**

19 Bradford invited P. Leberg to present a request from the Graduate School to rename the job
20 classification of “Graduate Assistant (GA)” to “Graduate Service Assistant (GSA).” Leberg explained
21 that the request comes as a recommendation from last year's ad hoc Graduate Assistantship
22 Handbook Committee and presented benchmarking data. He explained that use of the term
23 “Graduate Assistant” for positions with students with service or administrative duties is confusing
24 because many use “Graduate Assistant” as a general catch-all term to refer to all assistantships,
25 regardless of duties. Use of Graduate Assistant as a job classification for a subset of all students
26 with assistantships also prevents us from having a general term to describe all graduate
27 assistantship positions. Discussion ensued, including the difference between GAs and GRA/GTAs
28 and the belief that previous administrations had frowned upon GAs unless they were doing
29 research or teaching. Ryan motioned to approve the proposal. Zappi seconded. Motion carried.

30 **Graduate Council Goals and Objectives for 2025-2026**

32 Bradford asked that a Moodle forum discussion on this subject take place.

33 **Good to Order**

35 The Council asked if there was information that could be shared regarding the University's fiscal
36 health and impact to graduate assistantship budgets. P. Leberg shared that the upcoming Graduate
37 Program Leadership meeting would be focused on this topic.

39 Zappi asked if anyone had submitted a GRASS proposal to the Louisiana Board of Regents. No one
40 had. Zappi indicated that he contacted the BOR, Texas and LSU for more information.

41 **VI. Adjournment**

43 Motion was made to adjourn the meeting at 3:56pm. The motion was seconded and carried.