

1 **Meeting Minutes of the Graduate Council**

2 **Date:** February 10, 2026

3 **Location:** Alumni Board Room

4

5 **Members Present**

6 Wesley Bradford (MUS, Chair), Philip Auter (CMCN), Sandy Brack (Grad Student Representative, PhD
7 ENGL), Ignatius Cahyanto (MGMT), Natalie Douglas (CODI), Nicholas Kooyers (BIOL), Erika LeBlanc
8 (COUE), Amanda Mayeaux (EDFL), Eddie Metrejean (ACCT), Clement Okolo (GSO President, PhD CMPS),
9 Nathan Rabalais (MODL), Catherine Roche-Wallace (MUS), Laurel Ryan (ENGL), Jennifer Sittig (NURS),
10 Abby South (MUS), Frances Stueben (NURS), Mehmet Tozal (INFX), Amy Veprauskas (MATH), Rui Zhang
11 (GEOS), and Mary Farmer-Kaiser (Graduate School, ex-officio).

12

13 **Members Absent**

14 Julius Austin (COUE), Farzad Ferdowsi (EECE), William Ferguson (ECFN), Natalie Keefer (EDCI), Jonathan
15 Raush (MCHE), Scott Sittig (HLSI), and Mark Zappi (CHEE).

16

17 **I. Call to Order**

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

19

20 **II. Announcements and Approvals**

21 **Provost Meeting Recap/Update**

22 Bradford shared a recap of his meeting with Provost Jaimie Hebert and Dean Farmer-Kaiser. Bradford
23 shared that during the meeting he recapped the Graduate Council December meeting agenda items with
24 Provost Jaimie Hebert. Discussion was held about the Spring 2026 Commencement schedule changes.
25 Hebert provided an update on the Presidential search and encouraged the Graduate Council to invite the
26 new President to a future meeting. Hebert also agreed to speak at one of the Grad Council meetings this
27 semester.

28

29 **December 9, 2025, Meeting Minutes:**

30 Motion made by L. Ryan to approve the December meeting minutes. The motion was seconded by N.
31 Rabalais and carried unanimously.

32

33 **Master's Mentor & Outstanding GTA Awards:**

34 Bradford reminded the Council of the February 27 nomination deadline for the Master's Mentor and
35 Outstanding GTA Awards.

36

37 **Spring Grad Council Dates**

38 Bradford reviewed the remaining Spring 2026 Grad Council meeting dates: March 10, April 14, and May 12.

39

40 **III. Standing Committee Reports**

41 **Appeals – Heather Stone:**

42 The Graduate School submitted a report on behalf of Heather Stone detailing the January 2026 Appeals
43 Committee meeting. Farmer-Kaiser shared that number of students had decreased from previous
44 semesters. L. Ryan inquired about a pending appeal request that was submitted to the Graduate School;
45 the Graduate School will review and follow up with L. Ryan directly. Motion made by A. Mayeaux to accept

1 the January 2026 Appeals report as submitted. The motion was seconded by M. Tozal and carried
2 unanimously.

3
4 **Curriculum – Dr. Amy Brown:**

5 No report. Bradford shared that Curriculum Committee membership appointments are complete with A.
6 Brown serving as Chair. Bradford and A. Brown will meet with himself and Dean Farmer-Kaiser to discuss
7 committee action items. Bradford and Farmer-Kaiser also shared that the updated Curriculum Committee
8 description was previously submitted to the Academic Affairs office. The Provost has not yet approved the
9 updated description but indicated that he is reviewing both the Undergraduate Council and Graduate
10 Council committee descriptions with the deans. He supported the decision to bring the reconstituted
11 committee together to review and discuss the old and new committee charges.

12
13 **Fellowships and Awards – Ryan Nelson:**

14 No report. Farmer-Kaiser shared that the Fellowships and Awards committee has met to discuss all
15 Dissertation Completion Fellowship applications. Recipients will be notified in the upcoming weeks.

16
17 **Graduate Faculty Membership – Frances Stueben:**

18 No report. Stueben shared the timeline for the Spring 2026 review cycle, including that the Graduate
19 Faculty Membership Committee will convene on March 27 to review application materials.

20
21 **IV. Old Business**

22 **Ad Hoc Committee on Committees**

23 Bradford shared that the formation of the Ad Hoc Committee on Committees is complete with L. Ryan
24 serving as Chair. The Ad Hoc Committee on Committees is charged with reviewing the need for additional
25 Graduate Council standing committees and recommending additions necessary to support the evolving
26 priorities of graduate education and its governance at the University. L. Ryan shared that the committee
27 will meet the first week of March to begin their discussions. L. Ryan shared some concern over the
28 timeline published in the committee charge and requested that the committee be given additional time if
29 needed. She hopes to provide a preliminary update to Graduate Council in April, with a final report
30 submitted for the May 2026 Graduate Council meeting. Bradford, Farmer-Kaiser and Council members
31 agreed with the amended timeline.

32
33 **University Fiscal Health and Graduate Education Updates**

34 Farmer-Kaiser shared an update on the University's Fiscal Health. Farmer-Kaiser shared that she had met
35 with each of the Academic College Deans in December 2025 to review departmental requests and
36 discuss college budget requests. She then met with Provost Jaimie Hebert and Dr. Dianne Olivier to finalize
37 the Graduate School budget request. Farmer-Kaiser anticipates having approval of the 2026-2027
38 graduate assistantship budgets soon. Farmer-Kaiser also shared updates that are being made to the
39 graduate assistantship letter of offer with more detailed expectations required as part of hiring and
40 orientation processes. Council members discussed questions involving graduate assistantships in regard
41 to recruitment, admission and hiring processes.

42 **V. New Business**

43 **Graduate Student Appreciation Week Planning and Changes**

44 Bradford invited Farmer-Kaiser to speak about the upcoming Spring 2026 Grad Student Appreciation Week
45 planning and changes to the schedule. Council members were reminded that Graduate Student

1 Appreciation Week (GSAW) will be held March 22-27, 2026. Members were encouraged to host a
2 departmental appreciation activity for the graduate students that week. Due to on-going budget
3 concerns, GSAW activities and partnerships may look different this year. Schedule details will be
4 released soon.

5

6 **Good of the Order**

7 Auter inquired about changes with the IRB approval process. The Graduate School will follow up regarding
8 Qualtrics access and the University's IRB processes and policy to inquire about updates recently made.

9

10 **VI. Adjournment**

11 Motion was made by A. Mayeaux to adjourn the meeting at 3:00pm. The motion was seconded by N.
12 Rabalais and carried unanimously.