

1 **Meeting Minutes of the Graduate Council**

2 **Date:** April 14, 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), William Ferguson (ECFN), Natalie Keefer  
8 (EDCI), Nicholas Kooyers (BIOL), Amanda Mayeaux (EDFL), Eddie Metrejean (ACCT), Nathan Rabalais  
9 (MODL), Catherine Roche-Wallace (MUS), Laurel Ryan (ENGL), Jennifer Sittig (NURS), Abby South (MUS),  
10 Frances Stueben (NURS), Mehmet Tozal (INFX), Amy Veprauskas (MATH), and Mary Farmer-Kaiser  
11 (Graduate School, ex-officio).

12

13 **Members Absent**

14 Julius Austin (COUE), Farzad Ferdowsi (EECE), Erika LeBlanc (COUN), Clement Okolo (GSO President,  
15 PhD CMPS), Jonathan Raush (MCHE), Scott Sittig (HLSI), Mark Zappi (CHEE) and Rui Zhang (GEOS).

16

17 **I. Call to Order**

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

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. During the  
23 meeting, revision to the mission of the curriculum committee was discussed further, along with its  
24 approval. Also, Dr. Hebert noted that he was pleased to see the Undergraduate Council taking shape in a  
25 way that is modeled after the Graduate Council.

26

27 **March 10, 2026 Meeting Minutes:**

28 Motion made by P. Auter to approve the March meeting minutes. The motion was seconded by N. Kooyers  
29 and carried unanimously.

30

31 **Update on Pending Provost Approvals**

32 Bradford shared that the manuscript binding fee proposal is moving forward. Implementation of the new  
33 fee structure will be applied this semester and going forward.

34

35 **Graduate Council Elections**

36 Bradford reported that Graduate Council nominations were opened on April 2 and made available to all  
37 graduate faculty. Bradford asked that members of the Graduate Council encourage their colleagues to  
38 participate. In addition, Bradford reminded Council members about the deadline for nominations on Friday,  
39 April 24, 2026 at 12:30 PM. The elections will take place (electronically, by college) on April 28, 2026 - May  
40 5, 2026. Election results will be announced at the Annual Meeting of the Graduate Faculty on Wednesday,  
41 May 6th at 1pm in Moody 103.

42

43 Election of the new Graduate Council Chair will be held at the Council meeting in May. Interested  
44 individuals should reach out to Bradford to learn more about the role.

45

46 **IV. Standing Committee Reports**

47 **Appeals – Heather Stone:**

48 No report.

1 **Curriculum – Dr. Amy Brown:**

2 No report. Bradford shared that the Curriculum committee has a meeting scheduled later this month.

3  
4 **Fellowships and Awards – Ryan Nelson:**

5 The 2025-2026 Fellowships and Awards committee report was presented by Bradford on behalf of R.  
6 Nelson. The report detailed that 38 applications for the 2026-2027 Dissertation Completion Fellowship  
7 awards were received and evaluated by the committee. The committee recommended awarding 16  
8 fellowships to the top ranked applicants. The report also stated that the committee reviewed and  
9 recommended the Outstanding GTA Award and the Graduate Teaching Excellence Award nominations.  
10 Award winners were announced during Graduate Student Appreciation Week. Motion made by N. Rabalais  
11 to accept the report as submitted. The motion was seconded by N. Kooyers and carried unanimously.

12  
13 **Graduate Faculty Membership – Frances Stueben:**

14 Bradford shared three reports submitted by F. Stueben on behalf of the Graduate Faculty Membership  
15 Committee. The first report detailed 8 graduate faculty applications that did not require Committee review  
16 as all three independent review entities (College Dean, Department Head, and College Peer Review  
17 Committee) were in agreement with recommendation for appointment at the level requested by the  
18 individual applicants. A motion was made by P. Auter to accept all recommendations for appointment  
19 included in the first report. The motion was seconded by A. Mayeaux, and the motion carried unanimously.

20  
21 The second report detailed 12 graduate faculty applications that required review by the Graduate Faculty  
22 Membership Committee. The Council reviewed the report and its recommendations to appoint 8  
23 applicants to the Graduate Faculty in accordance with the membership level requested on the  
24 applications and in alignment with the recommendations of the various college review entities; to appoint  
25 one applicant to the Graduate Faculty at a different level than applied for; and to deny appointment to  
26 three applicants who do not meet the criteria for the college through which they applied for membership to  
27 the Graduate Faculty. Considered in three parts, L. Ryan made a motion to approve the first set of  
28 recommendations included in the second report; motion was seconded by A. Mayeaux. The motion carried  
29 unanimously. After discussion of the recommendation to appoint at a different level and to deny  
30 appointment, a motion was made to accept the remaining recommendations by the committee by N.  
31 Rabalais and seconded by P. Auter. The motion carried unanimously.

32  
33 The third report detailed that there were no new hire tenured/tenure-track faculty members who were  
34 automatically appointed to the Graduate Faculty.

35  
36 **V. Old Business**

37 **Ad Hoc Committee on Committees Report**

38 L. Ryan provided an update on process and working findings from the Ad Hoc Committee on Committees.  
39 She reported that they anticipated a recommendation to add two new standing committees to the  
40 Graduate Council: 1) Admissions/Recruitment and 2) Student Development. In addition, she indicated  
41 that the ad hoc committee would make recommendations regarding the work of two existing standing  
42 committees. The ad hoc committee's formal report will be submitted to the Graduate Council for its May  
43 meeting.

44  
45 **TOEFL English Language Test Score Update Request**

46 Bradford and Farmer-Kaiser continued discussion on the proposal presented to identify the minimum  
47 expectation for TOEFL iBT English language scores in alignment with the new 1-6 score scale. Motion to

1 accept the Graduate School request and set 4.5 as the minimum expectation was made by L. Ryan. The  
2 motion was seconded by M. Tozal and carried unanimously.

3  
4 **Graduate Education Accessibility Issues**

5 Bradford reminded Council about the upcoming April 24 deadline for accessibility requirements on all  
6 University platforms. Agenda item to be continued at the next meeting.

7  
8 **University Fiscal Health and Graduate Education Updates**

9 Farmer-Kaiser shared an update on the University's fiscal health as it relates to graduate education. She  
10 provided an update on the release of assistantship and fellowship budgets for 2026-2027, explaining that  
11 to date only departments with PhD programs had been provided budgets with new offers limited to PhD  
12 applicants at this time. She further reported that while additional funds are considered "encumbered" for  
13 continuing students appointed to assistantship roles in academic-degree-granting programs who are not  
14 graduating with active offer letters, this encumbrance has not yet been relayed to departments through  
15 formal budget approval. She discussed the Council of Graduate Schools April 15 Resolution, the national  
16 date upon which accepted offers are understood as binding, and the challenges associated with issuing  
17 assistantship budgets and making offers this late.

18  
19 **VI. New Business**

20 **Call for Standing Committee Interest**

21 Farmer-Kaiser shared that the Standing Committee Interest form will be shared at the Annual Meeting of  
22 the Graduate Faculty on Wednesday, May 6.

23  
24 **Grad Council Resolution**

25 Discussion was held regarding the development of a formal Graduate Council resolution being sent to  
26 University Administration urging the need to finalize the assistantship funding for the 2026-2027 academic  
27 year. A motion was made to move forward with resolution. The motion was seconded and carried  
28 unanimously. (See below for formal resolution.)

29  
30 **VII. Good of the Order**

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32 **VIII. Adjournment**

33 Motion was made by A. Mayeaux to adjourn the meeting at 4:08pm. The motion was seconded by W.  
34 Ferguson and carried unanimously.

35  
36  
37 **14 April 2026**

38 **Resolution of the Graduate Council Regarding Fall 2026 Graduate Assistantship Funding**

39  
40 Whereas the Graduate Council acknowledges that the University of Louisiana at Lafayette is facing an  
41 unprecedented financial crisis and appreciates the difficulty of the decisions before the administration;  
42 and

43  
44 Whereas the continued delay of the release of proposed graduate assistantship funding has created grave  
45 concern for the future of our graduate programs; and

1 Whereas, as of April 14, departments cannot make offers of funding to master's students, and delaying  
2 offers beyond the April 15 Resolution of the Council of Graduate Schools threatens serious harm to  
3 recruitment and program stability; and  
4

5 Whereas continued delay jeopardizes crucial services fulfilled by students who hold graduate  
6 assistantships, including support of faculty retention, delivery of undergraduate education, and  
7 advancement of critical academic and retention services provided by Counseling & Testing, the Honors  
8 Program, Disability Services, Dupre Library, the ADVANCE Research Program, Campus Cupboard, the  
9 Office of First Year Experience, and other student support offices and functions; and  
10

11 Whereas master's degree students typically complete their program in only two years and the State of  
12 Louisiana's funding metrics now prioritize degree completion over enrollment numbers, so that a decrease  
13 in master's students may adversely impact State funding; and  
14

15 Whereas graduate students who serve in graduate teaching assistantship roles are crucial to our  
16 university's ability to offer core undergraduate courses thus maintaining the health of our undergraduate  
17 programs; now, therefore be it  
18

19 **Resolved** that the Graduate Council  
20

21 1. respectfully *urges* the President, Provost, Vice Provost, CFO, and VP of Student Success provide clarity  
22 on **graduate assistantship** funding as soon as possible;  
23

24 2. specifically *requests* that departments be afforded the opportunity to immediately extend graduate  
25 assistantship offers to avoid further damage to our graduate programs; and  
26

27 3. *submits* this request in a spirit of professionalism, shared concern, and commitment to the long-term  
28 strength and well-being of the University.  
29

30 Resolution unanimously approved by a quorum of Members of the Graduate Council on this 14<sup>th</sup> day of  
31 April 2026.