

1 **Meeting Minutes of the Graduate Council**

2 **Date:** May 12, 2026

3 **Location:** FG Mouton 207

4
5 **Members Present**

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

12
13 **Members Absent**

14 Farzad Ferdowsi (EECE), Jonathan Raush (MCHE), Catherine Roche-Wallace (MUS), Mark Zappi (CHEE)
15 and Rui Zhang (GEOS).

16
17 Guests: President Ramesh Kolluru and Reem Ahmed, Vice-President of the Graduate Student
18 Organization

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20 **I. Call to Order**

21 The meeting was called to order by Wesley Bradford, chair, at 2:01PM.

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23 **II. Invited Guest: Dr. Ramesh Kolluru**

24 The Council agreed to shift the agenda to allow R. Kolluru, University President, to address the council
25 later in the meeting upon his arrival.

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27 Kolluru expressed his appreciation to the Council members for their service and recognized the
28 significant contributions of its work. He acknowledged receipt of the Council's resolution concerning
29 graduate assistantship budgets and thanked members for their advocacy on behalf of graduate students.
30 Dr. Kolluru noted that the University has made substantial progress in strengthening its fiscal position;
31 however, ongoing efforts to address ___ remain necessary, and discussions regarding future priorities and
32 decisions are continuing. He then invited questions from the Council, which led to a broad discussion on
33 legislative developments, professorship funding, graduate funding, retention initiatives, and other
34 matters of concern to the faculty present.

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36 **Announcements and Approvals**

37 **Annual Meeting of the Graduate Faculty Recap:**

38 Bradford briefly recapped the report provided to the Annual Meeting of the Graduate Faculty.

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40 **April 14, 2026 Meeting Minutes:**

41 Motion made by L. Ryan to approve the April meeting minutes. The motion was seconded by A. Mayeaux
42 and carried unanimously.

43
44 **IV. Standing Committee Reports**

45 **Appeals – Heather Stone:**

46 No report.

1 **Curriculum – Dr. Amy Brown:**

2 The 2026-2027 Curriculum committee report was presented by Bradford on behalf of A. Brown. The
3 report detailed that the newly reactivated Curriculum committee met on April 20, 2026 to discuss the
4 committee's task and strategy for the upcoming academic year. Brown shared that she will have
5 additional conversations with the Graduate School and Academic Affairs offices to develop Curriculog
6 processes. A motion was made by N. Kooyers to accept the report. The motion was seconded by N.
7 Rabalais, and the motion carried unanimously.
8

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

10 No report.
11

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

13 Bradford shared a revised Spring 2026 Report and Recommendations of the Committee on Graduate
14 Faculty Membership. It was noted that the appointments of four faculty members were incorrectly listed
15 on the previously approved report. These faculty members did not meet the criteria for Full Membership
16 as stated on the application; however, the committee noted that their overall record supported
17 appointment at the Associate Membership level rather than denial or appointment with Full
18 Membership. A motion was made by A. Mayeaux to accept the revised report. The motion was seconded
19 by L. Ryan, and the motion carried unanimously.
20

21 **V. Old Business**

22 **Graduate Education Accessibility Issues**

23 Bradford informed the Council that the April 24 deadline for accessibility compliance requirements
24 across all University platforms has been extended by one year under federal and state regulations. He
25 encouraged faculty to continue their efforts to ensure that curricula and other instructional materials
26 meet accessibility standards. Dr. Farmer-Kaiser added that the Graduate School will continue updating its
27 website, Moodle sites, and related materials throughout the coming year to achieve full compliance with
28 accessibility requirements.
29

30 **University Fiscal Health and Graduate Education Updates**

31 Farmer-Kaiser shared an update on the University's fiscal health as it related to graduate education.
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33 **Resolution of the Graduate Council regarding 2026-2027 Assistantship Funding**

34 Bradford shared the final version of the Resolution of the Graduate Council regarding 2026-2027
35 Assistantship Funding that was sent to University administration. Bradford also shared that the
36 resolution was supported by the Faculty Senate on April 15, 2026. The resolution was addressed by
37 President Kolluru at the University Town Hall meeting on April 28.
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39 **VI. New Business**

40 **Ad Hoc Committee on Committees Final Report**

41 L. Ryan presented the final report and recommendations of the Ad Hoc Committee on Committees. The
42 Council engaged in discussion regarding the report and its recommendations. L. Ryan moved to endorse
43 the recommendation to establish a Student Admissions and Recruitment Committee by consulting with
44 the Provost and other stakeholders. The motion was seconded by M. Tozal and carried. L. Ryan then
45 moved to endorse the recommendation to establish a Student Affairs and Well-Being Committee by
46 consulting with the Provost and other stakeholders. The motion was seconded by C. Okolo, and the
47 motion carried unanimously. A suggestion was made to invite Andy Benoit, Vice President of Student
48 Success, to a Fall 2026 Council meeting.

Further discussion addressed potential revisions to the existing Curriculum and Appeals Committees. L. Ryan noted that the Curriculum Committee could play a role in promoting academic programs across disciplines, and that the Appeals Committee could provide additional support for graduate student grievances. The Council agreed to table further discussion of the recommendations until the Fall 2026 semester. A motion was made by N. Keefer to accept the report. The motion was seconded by A. Mayeaux, and the motion carried unanimously.

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

A. Mayeaux, Chair of the University Committee for Graduate Student Success and Retention, presented an overview of the committee's report submitted to the Graduate Council. The report summarized a year-long, evidence-based initiative aimed at advancing the University toward a more intentional, structured, and outcomes-focused model of graduate education. The committee's work centered on four strategic focus areas: (1) Student Connection and Belonging; (2) Manuscript Support and Completion; (3) Research and Scholarly Development; and (4) Career Readiness and Workforce Alignment. For each area, the report outlined key challenges, proposed interventions, and anticipated outcomes. A motion was made by P. Auter to accept the report. The motion was seconded by F. Stueben, and the motion carried unanimously.

Annual Report from the Graduate Student Organization

Okolo shared an overview of the Graduate Student Organization annual report. A motion was made by A. Mayeaux to accept the report. The motion was seconded by M. Tozal, and the motion carried unanimously.

Outside Observer Assignments

Bradford and Farmer-Kaiser reported concerns raised regarding continuing challenges securing graduate faculty to serve as outside observers in meet the thresholds set by the policy. Due to time constraints, discussion of this agenda item was postponed and will be continued at the next Council meeting.

Graduate Faculty Appointment Appeal

Bradford reported that a Graduate Faculty membership appeal had been received that morning. Because the appeal was not included on the meeting agenda and due to time constraints, consideration of the matter was deferred until the next Council meeting. The Council asked M. Farmer-Kaiser to follow up with the faculty member.

Recognition of Council Membership whose terms are ending

Bradford and Farmer-Kaiser expressed their appreciation to the members of the Graduate Council whose terms are concluding at the end of the academic year, recognizing their contributions to advancing graduate education and advocating for graduate students. Farmer-Kaiser also thanked Bradford, on behalf of the entire Council, for his leadership and service as chair.

2026-2027 Graduate Council Election Results

Bradford announced and congratulated the newly elected members who will be joining the Graduate Council in 2026-2027:

- College of the Arts: **Robert McKinney**, School of Architecture and Design
- B.I. Moody III College of Business Administration: **Maria Bracamonte Larios**, Department of Management
- College of Education and Human Development: **Heather Stone**, Department of Educational

1 Curriculum and Instruction

- 2 • College of Engineering: **Robert Miller**, Department of Civil Engineering
- 3 • College of Liberal Arts: **Kaitlin Simpson**, Department of History, Geography and Philosophy
- 4 • College of Nursing and Health Sciences: **Stephanie Arceneaux**, LHC Group – Myers School of
- 5 Nursing
- 6 • Ray P. Authement College of Sciences: **Kelly Robinson**, School of Biological Sciences

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8 **2026-2027 Graduate Council Chair Elections**

9 Bradford opened the floor for nominations for Chair of the Graduate Council for the 2026–2027 academic
10 year. P. Auter self-nominated. C. Okolo nominated M. Tozal, who declined the nomination. L. Ryan moved
11 to elect P. Auter as Chair of the Graduate Council for 2026–2027. The motion was seconded by A. Mayeaux
12 and carried unanimously.

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14 **VII. Good of the Order**

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16 **VIII. Adjournment**

17 Motion was made by A. Mayeaux to adjourn the meeting at 3:52pm. The motion was seconded by E.
18 Metrejean and carried unanimously.