

1 **Meeting Minutes of the Graduate Council**

2 **Date:** September 8, 2026

3 **Location:** Alumni Board Room

4
5 **Members Present**

6 Philip Auter (CMCN, Chair), Stephanie Arceneaux (NURS), Julius Austin (COUE), Robin Beacom (NURS),
7 Maria Bracamonte-Larios (MANG), Sandy Brack (Grad Student Representative, PhD ENGL), Natalie
8 Douglas (CODI), William Ferguson (ECFN), Erika LeBlanc (COUN), Robert McKinney (ARCH), Eddie
9 Metrejean (ACCT), Robert Miller (CIVL), Clement Okolo (GSO President, PhD CMPS), Kelly Robinson
10 (BIOL), Catherine Roche-Wallace (MUS), Laurel Ryan (ENGL), Kaitlin Simpson (HIGP), Scott Sittig (HLSI),
11 Heather Stone (EDCI), Mehmet Tozal (INFX), Amy Veprauskas (MATH), and Mary Farmer-Kaiser (Graduate
12 School, ex-officio).

13
14 **Members Absent**

15 Natalie Keefer (EDCI), Jonathan Rausch (MCHE), Natalia Sidorovskaia (PHYS), Abby South (MUS) and Mark
16 Zappi (CHEE).

17
18 Guests: Dianne Olivier, Interim Provost and Vice President of Academic Affairs

19
20 **I. Call to Order**

21 The meeting was called to order by Philip Auter, chair, at 2:05PM, followed by introductions.

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23 **II. Invited Guest: Dr. Dianne Olivier**

24 D. Olivier, Interim Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs, addressed the council. She thanked
25 the members for their service and recognized the importance of the council's work, reflecting also on the
26 value of her own experience serving on the body. In her remarks, Olivier shared updates on University
27 actions, new faculty hires and support of the NCFDD license renewal. She welcomed time for a Q&A
28 session. Auter thanked Olivier for joining the meeting and she indicated that she would welcome the
29 opportunity to return later this academic year.

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31 **III. Announcements and Approvals**

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33 **Graduate Council Moodle Page and Meeting Materials**

34 Auter provided an overview of the Graduate Council Moodle page and reviewed how meeting materials
35 are shared. Auter asked that members review their Moodle access and to let him know if they cannot
36 access the page.

37
38 **May 12, 2026 Meeting Minutes:**

39 Motion made by L. Ryan to approve the May meeting minutes. The motion was seconded by R.
40 McKinney and carried.

41
42 **IV. Standing Committee Reports**

43 **Appeals – Heather Stone**

44 The Graduate School submitted a report on behalf of Heather Stone (Chair) detailing the May and August
45 Appeals Committee meetings. Motion made by L. Ryan to accept the report. The motion was seconded
46 by R. McKinney and carried unanimously.

1 **Curriculum – Dr. Amy Brown**

2 No report. The Graduate School shared that the curriculum committee will be meeting on September
3 30th.

4
5 **Fellowships and Awards – Ryan Nelson**

6 No report.

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8 **Graduate Faculty Membership – Frances Stueben**

9 No report. The Graduate School shared that the deadline for Graduate Faculty applications is September
10 21, 2026.

11
12 **V. Old Business**

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

14 Farmer-Kaiser shared an update on the University's fiscal health as it related to graduate education.

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16 **Review of 2025-2026 Reports and Recommendations**

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

19 Auter asked Council members to review the annual report from the University Committee on Graduate
20 Student Success and Retention Committee in preparation of the 2026-2027 Graduate Council goals
21 discussion that will be held at the October meeting.

22
23 **Annual Report from the Graduate Student Organization**

24 Auter asked Council members to review the annual report from the Graduate Student Organization in
25 preparation of the 2026-2027 Graduate Council goals discussion that will be held at the October
26 meeting. Also, Okolo shared an update for the Graduate Student Organization, including the GSO
27 operating budget will be \$36,000 this academic year and the GSO programming focus is career readiness
28 for this academic year.

29
30 **Ad Hoc Committee on Committees Final Report**

31 Auter asked Council members to review the Ad Hoc Committee on Committees final report in
32 preparation of the 2026-2027 Graduate Council goals discussion that will be held at the October
33 meeting.

34
35 **Outside Observer Assignments**

36 The Graduate School reported concerns on behalf of the Graduate School regarding continuing
37 challenges securing graduate faculty to serve as outside observers to meet the thresholds set by the
38 policy.

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40 **VI. New Business**

41 **Report on Summer Grad Council Executive Committee Actions**

42 Auter discussed the Summer Grad Council Executive Committee actions report. Motion made by L. Ryan
43 to approve the Summer Grad Council Executive Committee Action report. The motion was seconded by
44 R. McKinney and carried unanimously.

1 **Graduate Council Goals and Objectives for 2026-2027**

2 Auter shared that Graduate Council goals and objectives for the year would be an agenda item for the
3 October meeting.

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5 **VII. Good of the Order**

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7 **VIII. Adjournment**

8 Motion was made by E. Metrejean to adjourn the meeting at 3:22pm. The motion was seconded by K.
9 Robinson and carried unanimously.