Meeting Minutes of the Graduate Council
Date: October 13, 2026
Location: Alumni Board Room

Members Present
Philip Auter (CMCN, Chair), Stephanie Arceneaux (NURS), Robin Beacom (NURS), Maria Bracamonte-Larios (MANG), Sandy Brack (Grad Student Representative, PhD ENGL), Natalie Douglas (CODI), William Ferguson (ECFN), Natalie Keefer (EDCI), Erika LeBlanc (COUN), Robert McKinney (ARCH), Eddie Metrejean (ACCT), Robert Miller (CIVL), Kelly Robinson (BIOL), Catherine Roche-Wallace (MUS), Laurel Ryan (ENGL), Natalia Sidorovskaia (PHYS), Kaitlin Simpson (HIGP), Scott Sittig (HLSI), Abby South (MUS), Mehmet Tozal (INFX), Amy Veprauskas (MATH), and Mark Zappi.

Members Absent
Julius Austin (COUE), Clement Okolo (GSO President, PhD CMPS), Jonathan Raush (MCHE), Heather Stone (EDCI), and Mary Farmer-Kaiser (Graduate School, ex-officio).

Guests: Chad Parker, Interim Associate Vice President, Academic Affairs, Student and Faculty Excellence

I. Call to Order
The meeting was called to order by Philip Auter, chair, at 2:03PM.

II. Announcements and Approvals

Provost Meeting Recap/Update
Auter shared a recap of the meeting with Interim Provost Dianne Olivier and Dean Farmer-Kaiser. Discussion included graduate assistant payroll, international student health insurance, Graduate Council standing committee assignments, and ombudsman advocacy. Auter initiated a discussion regarding faculty morale and the role and responsibilities of Graduate Coordinators.

September 8, 2026 Meeting Minutes
Motion made by W. Ferguson to approve the September meeting minutes. The motion was seconded by M. Tozal and carried unanimously.

Commencement and Doctoral Hooding Updates
Auter shared that the Doctoral Hooding Ceremony will be held on Thursday, December 17th at 6pm in the Student Union. Auter also noted that the commencement schedule has been finalized and published on the Registrar's website. Ceremonies will be held on Friday December 18th at 9am, 1pm and 5pm.

Call for Grand Marshal Nominations
Auter made an announcement that Grand Marshal nominations are due November 5 and that they would be reviewed by the Graduate Council at its November meeting.

Call for Participants & Judges – 3MT Preliminary Rounds of Competition
Auter shared a call for judges and students to participate in the upcoming 3MT competition.

IV. Standing Committee Reports

Appeals – Dr. Heather Stone
No report.

Curriculum – Dr. Amy Brown
No report. Auter shared that the curriculum committee met on September 30th and the next meeting is scheduled for October 21st. The committee will be very busy during the next two months due to the Curriculog October 15th deadline to review recent academic catalog course and program proposal submissions.

Fellowships and Awards – Dr. Ryan Nelson
No report.

Graduate Faculty Membership – Dr. Frances Stueben
No report. Auter shared that 66 Graduate Faculty applications were received for the Fall 2026 application cycle. Currently, application reviews are being conducted at the college level. College level evaluations are due to the Graduate School by October 21st.

V. Old Business

Graduate Council Goals and Objectives for 2026-2027
Auter opened a discussion regarding the Graduate Council's goals and objectives for the 2026–2027 academic year. Following discussion, Auter proposed initiating Moodle forum discussions over the next month on the following topics. These items will remain on the agenda for continued discussion at the November meeting:

- Creation of the Student Affairs and Well-Being Committee
- Creation of the Admissions and Recruitment Committee
- Need for Faculty Career Development
- Proposal for a resolution requesting creation of a University task force defining the Graduate Coordinator role
- Review of the Outside Observer Policy

VI. New Business

Resolution Requesting Creation of University Task Force Defining the Graduate Coordinator Role
Auter shared that he would prepare a proposed resolution requesting creation of a university task force to define the role and responsibilities of Graduate Coordinators. The resolution will be reviewed and discussed at the next meeting.

VII. Good of the Order

VIII. Adjournment

Motion was made by W. Ferguson to adjourn the meeting at 3:30pm. The motion was seconded by N. Keefer and carried unanimously.