

UNIVERSITY GRADUATE COUNCIL

MINUTES

October 8, 2025

10:00 a.m. – 11:30 a.m.

LJH 325

Council in Attendance:

Marc Giullian (Business)
Doug Downs (Faculty Senate)
Katherine Johnston (Letters)
Chris Livingston (Architecture)
Rachael Filwett (Sciences)
Sweeney Windchief (Education)
Katey Franklin (Health & Human Development)
Molly Secor (Nursing)
Akash Gulati (Student Representative)
Kari Perry (Student Representative)
Sarah Mannheimer (Library)
Sally Mudiamu (Office of International Programs)
Sarah Mannheimer (Library)
Deborah Haynes (Dean of The Graduate School)
Stephan Warnat (Engineering)

Also in Attendance:

Emily Peters (Graduate School)
Lauren Cerretti (Graduate School)
President Brock Tessman (President of MSU)
Provost Bob Mokwa (Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs and Provost)
Mary Farina (Graduate Student)

Absent

Rollin Beamish (Arts)
Anna French (Student Representative)
Ryan Thum (Agriculture)

Meeting started at 10:01 a.m.

September 24, 2025 minutes

Motion to approve by Livingston, Giullian 2nd, unanimous approval, motion passes

New Business

- Graduate Education (President Tessman)
 - Introductions
 - Graduate Education at MSU

- Did not land in this role with an existing blueprint for graduate education at MSU. Will work together with UGC, and the university as a whole, to answer key questions about graduate education.
- Faculty background and time as a graduate program director informed perspective. Saw how the structure of administration really matters.
- Discussion on balance between resources and value of graduate education
- Over the next year, will begin work on the strategic plan. Will engage groups, including UGC, on the strategic planning process. Graduate education will be prominent in that plan. All the key elements should be prominent in the plan.
- Communication has been a topic brought up. Communication is important. Key is intention and practice. Hope this meeting reflects that intention. Can continue to engage with UGC.
- Provost Mokwa: thank you for serving on this council. Want to learn from you all. At a hinge point at the university in terms of graduate education. You all are the forefront of that.
 - Graduate education has grown organically from your colleges. Spent a lot of time focusing on undergraduate education last few years. How do we take some of the same momentum from undergraduate education with graduate education. Future looks bright. Research expenditures hit a record this year. Be more deliberate about growing graduate education. Want this council to be involved.
 - Work you are doing on policy is very important.
- Dean Haynes: Officially retiring June 1st. National search for new Graduate School Dean soon. Hope for some overlap with the new Dean to help onboard.
 - Thank you to Dean Haynes for her service.
 - Think about what you want to see in the position. Should we think about any changes in the organizational structure? Who should be encouraged to apply – strong internal candidates. Important hinge point in terms of that future direction.
 - Position will be advertised this fall. Hope for candidates on campus in the early spring. UGC will likely have their own time with each of the candidates.
 - This role is in flux around the country. Wonder if this council could look at different models that exist out there. Graduate education continues to change rapidly.
- Questions
 - Graduation rates are important for R1 status. How do you see the future of graduation playing into the role of maintaining R1 status?
 - A: We are mission based, and classifications follow. Maintaining a healthy doctoral student population is an important factor in meeting the completion rates for R1 status. R1 status brings return on investment.
 - Any thoughts or vision about dealing with the changes for international students?
 - A: Will be an unsatisfying answer. Has been an exceptionally challenging time for international students, faculty, and staff. Limit to tools we have at our disposal. We can work toward a recognition that international students add value to their campus, their community, the state, the country. Stability is crucial – work toward building an effective plan.

- With the progress that's been made on growing undergraduate studies, what are your thoughts on growing graduate school and faculty hires to keep up with the demand for GTAs, faculty, increasing class size?
 - Very open minded. Faculty to support growing student population. Graduate student population supports our undergraduate population as well. Opportunity to increase the number of graduate students compared to undergraduate numbers.
 - Interested in recommendations on programs. 4+1 programs.
 - Discussion:
 - We have continued to hire at a fairly healthy rate, still not enough, but have tried to target the areas that have seen the most growth.
 - Need to look at growing professional master's programs. Areas that bring in revenue.
 - We invest in the areas because there is value, not just because they balance out. Our university does not "balance out." We require state funds to operate.
 - Students are fluid. We do not hire and fire and move resources with the same fluidity. There is often a lag.
 - Where should we be investing to grow graduate education and support it with the faculty? Something for this council to think about.
 - This could be outlined in the strategic plan. Example: 3 areas to focus on. Own the intention that this is the area we want to target.
 - Strategic plan should allow our provost and us as university to understand where a dollar should be allocated.
 - Will focus on engagement throughout the process. Shared creation of the plan.
- What will the strategic planning process look like?
 - Being determined right now. Curious how the campus feels about those questions – should we run the process on our own or hire an external partner?
 - Next week will have leadership council meeting – will be discussing the timeline, stakeholder involvement
 - Engage about engagement. How do stakeholders want to be involved?
 - Would like to have a mixed method. One way doesn't work for everyone.
 - Leadership transitions provide an opportunity to listen and learn
- Council Discussion
 - How is the dean chosen for chairing the search committee?
 - Selected by the Provost
 - Would like the decision to be shared input
 - Appreciated the language shift from just focusing on revenue to the value of graduate education in general – for the community and beyond
 - Discussion on the strategic planning process
 - How do we address the accommodations from the accreditation review in the strategic plan?
 - The next accreditation will look at the strategic plan to make sure they are addressed
 - Encourage members to think about what to see in the strategic plan

Announcements

- Graduate School update
 - Graduate policy approval process: minor updates could be made in the catalog, larger updates could go through full campus review.
 - Discussion:
 - Seeking feedback versus official approval. What that actually looks like would be helpful.
 - Downs will bring feedback to group about voting for approval versus feedback
 - We represent faculty. Additional vote from Faculty Senate is redundant. Seek feedback step could go to Faculty Senate on consent agenda.
 - Grad Fair this week: well over 1,000 students participated (in person and online)
- Faculty Senate update
 - 590/690 learning outcomes discussed at senate. Once question that came up: could the syllabus be the same or would the learning outcomes have to be updated each time?
 - Could review each semester and may only have to change date etc. Only need to change outcomes if the student/advisor determine it is needed.
 - Could create 590/690 template in Canvas. Can share and this with faculty in your department.
 - Question came up on international students running out of time, hearing that students can't count doctoral credits toward a master's degree.
 - OIP: there are changes with students being able to have master's degrees conferred while a doctoral student
 - Graduate School can help advise on options e.g., "mastering out"
 - Students contact Graduate School and OIP to discuss options

Old Business

- Syllabus Learning Outcomes for 590/690
 - Tabled until next meeting
- Appeal Policy & Academic Standing Policy
 - Tabled until next meeting

Updates from subcommittees

Public comment

- Housing Council. Discussing the structure and hope to be active this semester.
 - Could we receive updates from that Council at UGC?
 - Yes

Adjourned at 11:30 am

Next scheduled meeting – October 22, 2025