

UNIVERSITY GRADUATE COUNCIL

MINUTES

September 10, 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)
Ryan Thum (Agriculture)
Akash Gulati (Student Representative)
Kari Perry (Student Representative)
Anna French (Student Representative)
Sarah Mannheimer (Library)
Deborah Haynes (Dean of The Graduate School)

Also in Attendance:

Emily Peters (Graduate School)
Lauren Cerretti (Graduate School)
Donna Negaard (Graduate School)

Absent

Rollin Beamish (Arts)
Stephan Warnat (Engineering)

Meeting started at 10:03 a.m.

August 27, 2025 minutes

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

Announcements

- Graduate School update
 - Formed housing council to address graduate student housing concerns. Two graduate students serving on the council.
 - Dean Haynes is working with the Provost to streamline the graduate policy approval process

- Prior Learning Assessment for graduate education: way to take prior experience and match with coursework requirements at MSU.
 - Example: experience supervising student teachers
 - Dean Haynes will draft a policy to mirror undergraduate version. Will review at UGC and go to policy subcommittee to work on.
- Deah Hanyes toured the Spectrum Lab. The lab is looking for graduate students from engineering, computer science, chemistry, physics, etc.
 - Have funding available (up to 3 positions)
- Grad Fair on October 6th – opportunity for undergraduates to visit with graduate schools
- Dean Hayes and Chair Warnar have a meeting scheduled with President Tessman
- Faculty Senate update
 - Faculty Senate leadership met with President Tessman
 - Conveyed that they were interested to hear his direction on graduate education
 - Plans to begin strategic planning process, likely next year
 - President addressed housing at Faculty Senate Q&A: stated the university doesn't have direct control over the market, but can manage costs in other aspects of the enterprise
 - Statewide push to be innovators in AI – BOR meeting next week. Open to hearing graduate education perspective that Faculty Senate reps can pass along.
 - CFE provides flexibility in ways to use
 - Environmental impacts of AI: assess water usage, carbon footprint, community impacts for data centers
 - Directly incompatible with graduate education in the humanities –research, analytical, and writing are fundamental skills that need to be developed
 - Certifying that the person submitting the working is the one doing the work
 - Graduate students in teaching roles are encountering this with undergraduate students submitting work
 - Training would be helpful
 - Lot of focus on AI as “cheating.” AI can also be seen as an equity tool for students that struggle with writing or when English is not their first language.
 - Concern that students are turning in fabricated quotes, made up sources. Students don't know how to verify the information. Internalize information that is false.
 - Seeing applications that all have very similar text
 - Library is establishing an AI lab – tools, large language models that aren't funded by big corporations – working on more ethical uses
 - Lab is open to everyone
 - Scheduling workshops that will be on the university calendar
 - Mannheimer will send an email to UGC with more details
 - Guidelines on CFE website – if used a prompt to generate something, tell us what the prompt was – cite the process you used for AI – help students think critically about how they're using it as a tool
 - Can email any additional comments to Downs
 - Faculty raising concerns on transition to Canvas

- Can email Downs feedback

Old Business

- Subcommittee appointments
 - Policy & Procedures: Franklin, Thum, and Secor
 - Curriculum: Reines, Livingston
 - Governance: Warnat, Giullian, Johnston, Windchief

New Business

- Graduate policies
 - Grad school provides background on policy approval path as directed by Provost Office
 - Former process was UGC approved, and policy was updated on GS website
 - Provost changed the process (~3-4 years ago), so policies flowed to Faculty Senate, JAGS, Academic Council, Provost, and President)
 - Increased timeline to approval
 - Ex: took 18 months to update Academic Standing policy to match OCHE and undergraduate
 - GS policies also moved to catalog
 - This summer, Grad School met with various offices on campus for guidance on process (Legal, Chief Policy Officer, Associate Provost Dougher, Registrar)
 - Registrar updates undergraduate catalog by communicating the change to Associate Provost Dougher. Sometimes solicit feedback from councils (e.g., Faculty Senate, Academic Council), but do not seek voting/approval from these bodies.
 - Q: Do the committees on the approval path have set meeting schedules? Not all do, JAGS met as needed last year.
 - Will be meeting monthly this semester
 - Q: Do other policies go through a path like this? No, this policy path is specific to graduate policy, as prescribed by the Provost.
- Review of Graduate Policy needs
 - Academic Standing policy and appeal policy
 - Academic standing policy at the end of the approval line had procedural aspects that do not match actual process
 - Appeal policy is still pending
 - Raises legal issues
- Question/Discussion
 - What is the function of UGC?
 - Role of UGC with upper administration and shared governance
 - Advisory Council for the Dean of The Graduate School
 - What precipitated the change to this process?
 - From members that have served on UGC, Faculty Senate wanted more oversight on the policies being approved by UGC
 - Suggest developing clear language on UGC's role, so Faculty Senate can trust
 - Clear language on timing of JAGS review/feedback would be helpful

- Reines will not be continuing as Vice Chair. Invitation to Council to serve as Vice Chair for this year and would become Chair for the next two years.

Updates from subcommittees

Public comment

Adjourned at 11:29 am

Next scheduled meeting – September 24, 2025