

Graduate Council Meeting

Monday, February 2, 2026 ~ 3:00 – 4:00 pm
Decker College of Nursing and Health Sciences, HSB-301

MINUTES

PRESIDING: Terrence Deak, Vice Provost and Dean of the Graduate School

STAFF: Joshua Reno, Mohamadreza Babae, Courtney Ignarri, Erica Sausner, April St. John, Ann Marie Kellogg (recorder)

PRESENT: David Bisaha, Heidi Ewen, Samiksha Gaur, Guy German, Yetrib Hathout, Yvonne Johnston, Hyejung Kim, Matthew McConn, Jacqueline McGinley, Vladimir Nikulin, Jeffrey Pietras, Aravind Prakash, Nicole Rouhana, Kevin Seeber, Cihan Uzmanoglu, Katherine Wander, Tao Zhang,

ABSENT: Prabhu Anil Bhor, Pegor Aynajian, Christopher Bartlette, Heather Bragg, Kathleen Brunt, Judith DeLuca, Debjit Gupta, Michael Jacobson, Carmen Jones, Carl Lipo, Loretta Mason-Williams, Andreas Pape, Joseph Roth, Hiroki Sayama, Pamela Smart, Haley Thayer, Rosko Tzolov, Sara Wozniak, Ning Zhou

Call to Order:

Dr. Reno called the meeting to order at 3:04 p.m.

1. Minutes of Meeting on December 1, 2025

Dr. Reno asked for a motion to approve the minutes of the meeting held on December 1, 2025. A member made a motion to approve the minutes and another member seconded. All were in favor and none were opposed. The minutes of the meeting were approved as written.

2. Report from the Dean:

Dean Deak welcomed the committee and thanked them for coming to the Decker location. He provided a report as follows:

a. Update on new President's plans for graduate education

As part of President D'Alleva's Strategic Planning initiative, which is in the planning process, there have been open forums for staff and faculty to participate. A couple of sessions have already been held, and more are coming up. Dean Deak encouraged participation in these sessions to share their programs' priorities. He was pleased to report that graduate education is emerging as a priority in the strategic plan. The committee discussed the priorities it would like considered. Some of the items that were brought forward were graduate student housing, recruiting international students and recruitment in

general, workforce development in healthcare-related areas, support for clinical doctorates, and job placement as a recruiting tool.

b. Time-to-degree reminders

Reminder letters continue to go out. The action letter turnaround time between fall and spring is short. Many faculty do not respond during the first few weeks of January. Programs need to have a designated contact during early January so that we can communicate about individual student issues (probation, jeopardy, severance, etc). Dean Deak discussed our plans to publicly report 5-year and 7-year completion rates for doctoral programs beginning in the Fall of 2026 to meet requirements for Financial Value and Transparency regulations. Programs were also encouraged to use the January break to move forward on graduate application review and admissions.

c. Middle States and curricular maps

Curricular maps are a priority. For those not familiar with these, a curricular map is a structured representation showing how courses in a program align with learning outcomes across semesters to ensure intentional sequencing, coverage, and assessment of program goals. Some undergraduate programs currently have them. Graduate templates are being rolled out. A template is being developed that will be embedded in WEAVE and will be required for Middle States accreditation.

d. Academic Program Review update

The Graduate School oversees academic program reviews. Middle States requires that institutions conduct periodic systematic program reviews every 7 years; assess student learning outcomes; use data to inform improvement; align programs with institutional mission; evaluate faculty qualifications; review enrollment, retention, graduation, and time-to-degree; and consider resource sufficiency. The Graduate School is nearly caught up on reviews. Once caught up, the goal will then be to conduct 6-8 reviews per year. There are currently five reviews scheduled for this semester.

e. Institutional policies on postdoc salaries

In order to comply with expected regulations from the Fair Labor Standards Act, the campus will be updating its minimum postdoctoral trainee salary to \$59,000 effective July 1st, 2026. We are exploring the possibility of adopting the NIH “zero year” postdoc salary as an institutional minimum effective July 1, 2027, consistent with most R1 institutions. This matter was discussed and endorsed by Graduate Council.

3. Report from OGRA

April St. John shared that the TOEFL (Test of English as a Foreign Language) standardized measurements will change effective January 21, 2026. TOEFL is switching from the traditional 0–120 overall score to a new scale of 1–6 in 0.5 increments for both section and total scores. This new scale aligns the TOEFL with the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) to make proficiency levels easier to interpret globally.

4. Subcommittee Updates

- a. Academic Standards Committee – met on January 30
- b. Diversity Committee – met on January 22 to plan for Clark reviews
- c. Professional Development Committee – Excellence Awards have been decided and notifications have been made

- d. Budget Advisory Committee – did not meet
- e. Grievance Committee – did not meet
- f. Strategic Planning Committee – will meet within the week. Doctoral Focus Fellowships have been determined. Those who were not selected have been notified. Those who were selected will be notified as soon Human Resources approves language for award letters and terms and conditions.

5. Upcoming Deadlines:

- a. Three Minute Thesis - February 9 at 10 a.m. in Old Union Hall. All are welcome to attend and watch the students. The deadline was moved up from previous years to allow the first-place winner to participate in the regional virtual competition on April 22 held in Montreal. In prior years we held our competition later, which precluded the winner from participating on the regional level.
- b. Clark Fellowship – February 15; only two students nominated per department/program
- c. Distinguished Dissertation Awards – March 6

6. Any Other Business:

The Graduate Students Excellence Awards luncheon will be held on Thursday, March 26, at 11:30 a.m. in the Mandela Room. Students' advisors have been invited, and winners are also welcome to bring up to two guests.

The New Graduate Student Welcome Event will be held on Tuesday, August 25, at 3-5 p.m. in the Mandela Room. There will be tabling by campus partners. New graduate students will be encouraged to network and become familiar with the services available to them across campus. There will not be a panel this year.

There being no further business, Dr. Reno asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting. A member made a motion to adjourn and another member seconded. All were in favor and none were opposed. The meeting was adjourned at 3:58 p.m.

*****Next Meeting: Monday, March 2, 2026 ~ 3:00-4:00 p.m.***
Couper Administration Building, AD-148**