

## Graduate Council Meeting

Monday, March 2, 2026 ~ 3:00 – 4:00 pm  
Couper Administration Building, AD-148

### MINUTES

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

STAFF: Joshua Reno, Mohamadreza Babaee, Madhusudhan Govindaraju, Courtney Ignarri, Yongabi Ngoh, Erica Sausner, April St. John, Erica Sausner, Elise Thornley, Kim Yousey-Elsener, Ann Marie Kellogg (recorder)

PRESENT: Pegor Aynajian, Christopher Bartlette, David Bisaha, Kathleen Brunt, Heidi Ewen, Debjit Gupta, Yetrib Hathout, Yvonne Johnston, Carmen Jones, Hyejung Kim, Loretta Mason-Williams, Matthew McConn, Jacqueline McGinley, Vladimir Nikulin, Andreas Pape, Jeffrey Pietras, Aravind Prakash, Nicole Rouhana, Hiroki Sayama, Pamela Smart, Katherine Wander, Tao Zhang, Ning Zhou

ABSENT: Prabhu Anil Bhor, Heather Bragg, Judith DeLuca, Samiksha Gaur, Guy German, Michael Jacobson, Carl Lipo, Joseph Roth, Kevin Seeber, Haley Thayer, Rosko Tzolov, Cihan Uzmanoglu, Sara Wozniak

Call to Order:

Dr. Reno called the meeting to order at 3:00 p.m.

#### **1. Minutes of Meeting on February 2, 2026**

Dr. Reno asked for a motion to approve the minutes of the meeting held on February 2, 2026. 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 reported that the Vice President for Research interviews are now completed. July 1 is the target start date for the person selected. This position goes hand-in-hand with graduate studies as graduate students and postdocs are the engine of research.

##### **a. Postdoc salary policy update**

Dean Deak announced that campus has adopted a new minimum for postdoc salaries of \$59K effective July 1. By July 1, 2027, we will benchmark to the NIH “zero year” postdoc salary (currently \$62, 232). This should have minimal budget impact and has already been discussed with the academic deans. Currently, we have a total of 55-60 postdocs collectively on the State and RF side, which is about a quarter of what our peers have.

**b. Graduate admissions and PSDF reminder**

Dean Deak reported on current graduate admission statistics. Currently, 60 percent of students who matriculate into a research-based doctoral program earn a doctorate. We want that percentage to be closer to 80 percent.

Although international enrollment is down approximately 31 percent, domestic enrollment is up about 25 percent.

**c. Completion contract addition to 5-year petition**

Dr. Babae presented the modified version of the Petition for Extension of Pre-ABD and ABD Status, with a specific focus on the addition of completion contract to the form. Based on the council's feedback, the form was modified to allow students who receive an approved medical withdrawal to extend one additional semester. In the absence of an approved medical withdrawal, students would be ineligible for a Leave of Absence.

**d. Strategic planning update**

Dr. Yousey-Elsener reported that graduate education will be a priority in the new strategic plan. The open forums have informed priorities significantly. Participation in the few remaining open forums is strongly encouraged.

**e. Middle States curricular mapping**

Dr. Yousey-Elsener reported that a memo was sent from the Provost advising the requirement for both graduate and undergraduate programs to submit a curriculum map to WEAVE by July 30. There will be a Q&A via zoom on March 7 and another Q&A session after commencement. There will be further discussion on this at the April meeting.

**3. Subcommittee Updates**

- a. Academic Standards Committee – met on February 24
- b. Diversity Committee – just submitted Clark reviews; will meet soon
- c. Professional Development Committee – upcoming Distinguished Dissertation review
- d. Budget Advisory Committee – did not meet
- e. Grievance Committee – email exchanges; may meet soon
- f. Strategic Planning Committee – did not meet

**4. Graduate Council Elections**

- a. Graduate Director Representative vacancies (graduate director caucus). These vacancies have been filled and will be announced at the April meeting.
- b. Faculty Representative vacancies (voted by faculty ballot). These vacancies are currently being voted on and will be announced at the April meeting.

**5. Upcoming Deadlines:**

- a. Distinguished Dissertation Awards – March 6
- b. Candidates to be facilitators for Entering Mentoring – March 15
- c. Travel Awards – April 1

**6. Any Other Business:**

None.

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 4:01 p.m.

**\*\*\*Next Meeting: Tuesday, April 7, 2026 ~ 3:00-4:00 p.m.\*\*\*  
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