

GRADUATE COUNCIL

Faculty Senate

MINUTES

Thursday, September 18, 2025, 2:30 PM
Graduate School Conference Room, RH 2215

PRESENT: Gloria Sweida (Chair), Carole Frick, Jennifer Hookstra, Ram Madupalli, Beidi Qiang, Dan Segrist, Chin-Chuan Wei, Duff (Eric) Wrobbel, Cheryl Borowiak, Liz Cali, Rony Die, Andrea Keller, Joe Kohlburn, Chris Slaten, Jill Smucker

ABSENT: James Monahan, Mary Frazier, Saad Ullah

EXCUSED: Cinnamon VanPutte

GUESTS:

The meeting was called to order at 2:31 p.m. by Gloria Sweida, Chair.

I. Announcements

- A. Course Review Committee (CRC) Report – On Teams
- B. Graduate Committee on Assessment (GCOA) Report – On Teams
- C. Enrollment Management Report – None

D. Student Affairs Announcements

Rony Die informed the Council that he will be out of the office for the next month. The school year is off to a strong start and there are no other specific announcements at this time.

E. International Affairs Announcements

Cheryl Borowiak let the Council know that the international enrollment is down due to an increase in difficulties in obtaining visa appointments and approvals, a trend which is likely to continue into the spring semester. Social media vetting is now occurring with visa appointments, which extends the time needed in the process for visa approvals. There are around 720 total international students on campus this fall.

ISSS is doing OPT workshops for students graduating this fall, occurring next week. Details are on their website.

ISSS is also hosting a Study Abroad fair next Tuesday, and they encourage graduate students to participate.

F. Graduate School Announcements

- i. Dean Chris Slaten thanked the Council for their service on the committee, and for their dedication to graduate education and graduate students. He informed the Council that graduate students and recent alumni were surveyed in the spring, and that those survey results indicated graduate students were generally very satisfied

with their experience. Areas of improvement that were noted included opportunities for students to connect to campus and their peers. Duff Wrobbel asked about how much lack of connection could be due to the increased amount of online activity, and Dean Slaten responded that it is a large contributing factor. He mentioned that he and Associate Dean Liz Cali submitted a grant proposal to enhance online student engagement for the Council of Graduate Schools.

- ii. Jill Smucker informed the Council about two new initiatives to support graduate students and graduate programs launching this fall. GradConnect is a dedicated time/space for graduate students to connect to peers in a relaxed environment, and is being hosted in Lovejoy Library. Graduate Studies is also launching a weekly office hour on Teams for Graduate Program Directors and grad advisors to provide an alternative avenue to receive quick assistance for any questions or concerns that may arise.

G. Other Announcements

Andrea Keller reminded the group that homecoming is next weekend. She also mentioned that the faculty/staff advancement campaign will be coming to mailboxes soon.

II. Approval of Minutes of May 8, 2025

Duff Wrobbel motioned to approve the minutes; Ram Madupalli seconded the motion. The motion carried.

III. Public Comments - None

IV. Report of the Educational and Research Policies (ERP) Committee

A. GR2526-01: Policy 4F1 – Earned Summer Tuition Waivers for Graduate Assistants

Chin-Chaun Wei provided an overview of the changes to this policy approved by ERP, which was a regular review. The committee approved the changes.

V. Report of the Programs Committee

A. 91A from Management Information Systems – Addition of Cybersecurity Management Specialization

Duff Wrobbel gave the Council an overview of this 91A, which includes a RisePoint collaboration. There will be two tracks within the specialization. They hope to launch in fall 2026. The committee approved the 91A.

VI. Course Retention Recommendations from Grad Course Review Committee - None

VII. Continuing Business

A. Elect Grad Council Chair-Elect

The Grad Council Executive Committee nominated Ram Madupalli as Grad Council Chair-Elect. All voted unanimously to elect Ram as the Chair-Elect.

B. Volunteer for Open Meetings Act Representative

Gloria Sweida shared that she served in this role previously and it is not burdensome, and provided a summary of the responsibilities. Joe Kohlburn volunteered to serve.

VIII. New Business

A. Graduate Dean Evaluation Discussion

Gloria Sweida discussed that although policy requests that Graduate Council coordinate an annual evaluation of the Graduate School Dean, she proposes to forgo the evaluation this year since Dean Slaten has only been in the position since this July. Duff Wrobbel commented that it would not make sense to do an evaluation this year, and agreed that waiting until 2026 makes sense. He also commented that there is precedent for this delay in prior years.

Duff Wrobbel motioned to move the evaluation to 2026, and Ram Madupalli seconded. All voted in favor with no opposition.

IX. Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 3:07 PM.