

GRADUATE COUNCIL

Faculty Senate

MINUTES

March 19, 2026; 2:30pm

Graduate School Conference Room, RH 2215

Present: Gloria Sweida (Chair), Beidi Qiang, Cinnamon VanPutte, Chin-Chuan Wei, Kyong-Sup Yoon, Dan Segrist, Carole Frick, Mary Frazier, Jennifer Hookstra, Musah Sumaila, Saad Ullah, Chris Slaten, Elizabeth Cali, Mindy Dilly, Jill Smucker, Cheryl Borowiak, James Monahan

Excused: Ram Madupalli, Duff Wrobbel, Joe Kohlburn

Absent: Andrea Keller

Call to Order – 2:33PM

I. Announcements

- a. Course Review Committee (CRC) Report – On Teams
- b. Graduate Committee on Assessment (GCOA) Report – On Teams
- c. Enrollment Management Report – Jim Monahan
 - a. Domestic enrollment is flat and consistent with last year's admissions figures while international enrollment remains significantly down.
 - b. The Graduate Professional and Open House will be held on Monday. Faculty and staff were encouraged to share the event announcement through their personal and departmental social media channels.
 - c. Recruitment efforts included classroom visits to promote graduate programs, which reached approximately 800 students. Many students indicated they were not previously aware of early-entry and accelerated program options.
 - d. A question was asked about domestic enrollment, because the initial data suggested domestic enrollment was up approximately 20%. Jim replied that a deeper review of the numbers indicates overall enrollment is closer to flat due to some students admitted that were admitted to programs not able to accept more students.
- d. Student Affairs Announcements – Mindy Dille
 - a. Mindy Dille is serving as Interim Dean of Students. She discussed efforts to break down barriers so graduate students are more aware of available resources and support services. At the next meeting, she plans to provide QR cards linking to the Care and Concern form to increase awareness and accessibility. To date, the Care and Concern process has received over 700 submissions, including a notable number from graduate students.
 - b. Members were encouraged to help spread awareness of the Care process and the services offered through the Dean of Students office, including support related to the medical leave process. Emphasis was placed on ensuring graduate students know they are supported and have access to appropriate resources.
 - c. A question was raised regarding whether these services include the Dental School; confirmation was given that they do.
 - d. A suggestion was made to create a short informational video that could be shared with students to explain available support and processes, particularly for use in fully online courses and programs.
- e. International Affairs Announcements – Cheryl Borowiak

- a. Cheryl Borowiak reported increased hesitancy among international applicants to pay the SEVIS fee and move forward with visa appointment scheduling due to pending changes in national immigration regulations. She noted that Optional Practical Training (OPT) processing times are longer than usual. Current international students who are interested in OPT were encouraged to apply as early as possible to avoid delays.
 - b. Efforts remain focused on supporting current international students. As part of community building, students recently participated in an outing to Pere Marquette, which was described as a positive experience with students supporting one another.
 - c. Premium processing, which was previously an option to expedite OPT applications, does not appear to be effective at this time.
 - d. A question was raised regarding whether small number of approved visas aligns with peer institutions. The response indicated that outcomes vary significantly by country of origin. Countries mentioned as getting through the process include Bangladesh, India, Ghana, and Botswana. At this time, visas are not being approved for students from Nigeria.
 - e. A question was raised about GA SPA allotments being approved for fall 26 with a comment that this hinders accepting students because of not knowing their GA numbers. Dean Slaten indicated that schools should hear about GA allotments very soon.
- f. Graduate School Announcements – Chris Slaten
- a. Dean Slaten shared information about an SIU System award recognizing student service at both the undergraduate and graduate levels. The call for nominations typically comes out in January, is sent to the Provost’s Office, and then distributed to campus units. This year, Chris was notified four days before the deadline that SIUE had no applicants, indicating a breakdown in communication. He emphasized the importance of improving dissemination so SIUE can remain competitive for the award. He plans to send a reminder in December and again in the winter to ensure broader awareness.
 - b. Chris shared his goal of including at least one agenda item focused on discussion rather than reporting, particularly around improving services for graduate students.
 - c. Jill Smucker announced collaboration with Career Development on a virtual workshop focused on services offered and career planning for graduate students. The workshop will be held online on April 2nd at 5:30pm, in an effort to offer the workshop at a time accessible to graduate students.
 - d. Chris Slaten and Liz Cali shared about the most recent Grad Connect session and how the sessions have included strong attendance and connection between students.
 - e. Liz Cali shared that she will be reaching out to each school as Graduate Council terms expire to coordinate hosting elections. She explained the difference between at-large members and council members. Members were encouraged to help clarify these distinctions when communicating with colleagues and to connect with Liz if there is uncertainty. Term expiration information is available on the website.
- g. Other Announcements
- a. Gloria Sweida reported that the Chancellor is in the process of developing university-wide guidelines related to the use of artificial intelligence. Jessica Harris has posted a draft document and is soliciting feedback. Members were encouraged to review the document and provide suggestions using track changes.

II. Approval of Minutes of February 19, 2026 - Motion by Carole Frick; Musah Sumaila seconded; minutes approved.

III. Public Comments -none

- IV. Report of the Educational and Research Policies (ERP) Committee - Chairperson Chin-Chuan Wei
 - a. GR2526-08: Policy and Procedures for Responding to Allegations of Research and Academic Misconduct, Policy 1Q5
 - i. Chin-Chuan Wei shared that the amended policy was approved by ERP.
- V. Report of the Programs Committee – Reported by Cinnamon VanPutte
 - a. Public Health 91A: Eliminate Post-Baccalaureate Certificates- The program never had students enrolled in the PBC and had been on moratorium so the 91A was approved.
 - b. Full Program Review: Art Therapy Counseling- phenomenal program. Recommendation in good standing and approved. |
 - c. Full Program Review: Applied Communication Studies- Recommended in good standing and approved.
- VI. Continuing Business - none
- VII. New Business – none
- VIII. Adjournment- meeting adjourned at 3:03pm.