



## GRADUATE COUNCIL MINUTES

September 23rd, 2024

The Graduate Council met on Monday, September 23, 2024, at 2:00P.M. in Room #583, Close-Hipp Building.

Graduate Council members present: Dr. Terrance McAdoo, Chair; Mr. Hassan Anderson; Drs. Sourav Banerjee, John Doering-White, Lorie Donelle, Jing Fang, Ashley Gess, Andrew Graciano, Carolyn Harmon, Bill Hauk, Daniel Kilpatrick, Sheri Silfies, Sanjib Sur, Sriram Venkataraman, Jing Wen, Rachel Williams, Neal Woods, Mark Yancey, and Hannah Malcom (GSA).

Graduate Council members absent: Drs. Jing Fang, Edie Goldsmith (excused), Sanjib Sur, Nick Watanabe (excused), Neal Woods (excused), and Mr. Hassan Anderson (excused).

Graduate School Representatives: Dr. Ann Vail, Dr. Murray Mitchell (Secretary), Dr. Angelina Sylvain, Dale Moore, and Wanda Barr

Provost Office Representatives: Trena Houp and Dr. LaTrice Ratcliff-Small

Guests: Dr. Dimitris Rizos (Civil Engineering) and Harlan Smith (ISSS)

**NOTE: These minutes will become final on October 28, 2024, if not challenged.**

**1. Call to Order and Approval of Agenda** (Terrance McAdoo, Chair)

The meeting was called to order at 2:01p.m., and the Agenda was approved.

**2. Approval of the Minutes from August 26, 2024.** Approved actions by Graduate Council become effective 30 days after posting. A copy is available on the Graduate School website at: <https://bit.ly/3SvPO0E>.

***The minutes from August were unanimously approved.***

**3. Report of the Chair** (Terrance McAdoo)

Dr. McAdoo welcomed everyone to the meeting and asked if anyone is faced with challenges this semester to feel free to message him to have those challenges addressed by the Graduate Council.

**4. Report of the Dean of the Graduate School** (Ann Vail)

Since Dean Vail was out for the meeting in August, she welcomed all to the Graduate Council for the fall semester. She shared her vision for the Graduate Council and welcomed all to share and discuss. She always viewed graduate education as operating and supported by a three-legged stool being comprised as the Graduate Faculty, the Graduate Council, and the Graduate School. Each has its own functions and responsibilities in carrying out the delivery of graduate education at the University of South Carolina. You can read the official policies in the Graduate Council Handbook related to the

Graduate Council. Last academic year's Graduate Council and other members of the Graduate School saw the need to change how we elect members of the Graduate Council. This semester is the first group operating under this new system. We have representation from each college and school and those of you that represent those entities have been elected from your own group of faculty members. We thought that was important going forward to make sure that every college was represented and to make sure that the faculty members here were elected members from your group. We also have one student member representing the Graduate Student Association. The dean of the Graduate School and the senior associate dean of the Graduate School both serve in ex officio capacity. Your functions are responsible for approving major changes in graduate studies policy, approving new courses, approving changes to existing courses, approving new programs and modifications to existing programs if those changes are in alliance with university policy. Specifically, these are stated in the Graduate Council Handbook.

The Graduate Council will also serve as a consulting body for the dean of the Graduate School. It is that role that she will be leaning on the Graduate Council more this year than last year. As you are aware, we are doing some changes around our application system which has long term impact on our enrollment management and progression documentation. We will be depending on you a great deal to provide guidance and counsel in that process along with the Associate/Assistant Graduate Deans group and the Graduate Directors group. She views all working collaboratively and together sometimes with different responsibilities towards the same goal of producing state of the art quality graduate education and graduating graduate students to serve South Carolina, the United States, and around the world.

Dean Vail gave an update on the Strengthening Graduate Admissions Initiative. Dr. Angelina Sylvain shared the initiative information with you in August. From this initiative, the Systems Operations Task Force was created, and they will bring you up to date on what they have been working on in October. This Task Force consists of the following technical people from the University:

- Sam Beals, College of Arts in Sciences
- Lisa Carter, College of Nursing
- Dr. Julia Hodge, College of Education
- Dr. Bob Brookshire, College of Engineering and Computing
- Dr. Danny Jenkins, School of Music
- Elizabeth Orehovec, Undergraduate Admissions
- Dr. Tom Vrana, Division of IT
- Dr. Angelina Sylvain, Graduate School

This group will meet with various vendors and make recommendations to us.

Dean Vail shared an enrollment report for Fall 2024. We currently have 8,316 graduate students (4,040 Masters, 2,449 Doctoral, and 1,824 Professional). Compared to Fall 2023, we had 8,109 students (3,854 Masters, 2,444 Doctoral, and 1,811 Professional). When she arrived a year ago, except for Florida, we had the largest graduate program in the SEC. That is no longer the case, but we do not have the lowest numbers in graduate programs. We are now more in the middle. We are in an acceptable spot right now, but she hopes we can increase these numbers.

Dean Vail's greatest concern is our international students and numbers. She introduced Harlan Smith, the new Director of International Student and Scholar Support. He provided the following numbers for our international enrollment for Fall 2024:

- 1,602 total international student population--all levels, all programs, all campuses for Fall 2024
- 227 new international graduate students for Fall 2024 (136 doctoral, 90 masters, 1 law)

- 998 total graduate level enrollment (759 doctoral, 239 masters/law)
- 530 new international students were welcomed for Fall 2024

Dean Vail stated that our international numbers are low and steadily declining compared to other universities. She hopes to partner with Mr. Smith and ISSS to reverse this declining trend.

As of September 1<sup>st</sup>, we opened the portal for Fall 2025 applications. To date, we have received 564 applications. This number is slightly lower than this time last year, and this is good news in her opinion. We were slammed with applications last year which created an increased workload to manage campus wide. We certainly want as many strong applicants as possible. Many applicants were not admitted, but many of the applicants that we did admit did not come. Dr. Angelina Sylvain is currently conducting a survey to determine why so many chose not to come. We will keep you updated on those enrollment trends.

Dean Vail was pleased that the Graduate Student Expo 2024 was a huge success. Thank you if you participated. This was the first that we have put on for our graduate students since the pandemic. We had approximately 425 participants with 35 exhibitors. Approximately 60 students participated in the workshops with 19 students receiving some kind of tuition supplement or door prize for their participation. Going forward, we do have some ideas as to how to improve these numbers. Please let us know if you have any ideas to add. Our goal is to have this information available online for our online students by October 1<sup>st</sup>. Feedback indicates that we do not do enough to include our online students.

By now, you should have received your first official USC Graduate Student Newsletter which is a Graduate Student Association collaboration with the Graduate School and the Communications Department. Dean Vail will make sure that faculty receive a copy as well.

#### **5. Report of the Secretary of the Graduate Council (Murray Mitchell)**

Dr. Mitchell reminded the Graduate Council that he was still in search of a Vice Chair. He did receive one nomination from DMSB/Economics for Dr. Bill Hauk. The floor was opened for additional nominations by Chair McAdoo. Hearing no other nominations, Dr. Bill Hauk was unanimously welcomed as the new Vice Chair of the Graduate Council.

Dr. Mitchell announced that Dr. Jon Edwards has agreed to again conduct the 3MT (3 Minute Thesis) Training on Friday, October 25<sup>th</sup>, from 1pm to 3pm, 5<sup>th</sup> Floor. Further information will be available on the website soon so students can register for the training. The 3MT (3 Minute Thesis) Competition will be held on Friday, November 8<sup>th</sup>, 5<sup>th</sup> Floor. Preliminaries will be held from 10am to 11:30am with Finals in the afternoon from 3pm to 4pm. Please encourage your students to take part in this wonderful and valuable opportunity to get a chance to articulate what they do in a concise and meaningful manner.

#### **6. Report of the Graduate Student Association (Hannah Malcom)**

Hannah reported on the following:

- GSA welcomed Rushali Pandya as their new Treasurer on September 11<sup>th</sup>, and she has been doing a great job.
  - The Finance Committee has been established (5 members)
- GSA Cabinet is almost 100% complete
  - 28 filled positions
  - Someone expressed interest in Secretary of External Partnerships/Community Outreach position this morning

- Vacancy for Secretary of Veteran’s Affairs
- GSA Fall Social: Tentative Plans
  - When: October 10th from 5-8 pm
  - Where: Top of Carolina
  - Who: All graduate and professional students! Come meet new people, eat good food, and have fun!
- GSA Town Hall Feedback
  - Several students requested that she relay their frustrations about funding
    - Inequality of funding opportunities for graduate students, particularly PhD students
    - Lack of enforcement of the established \$20,000 floor stipend
    - Request for transparency regarding funding, stipends, etc. For example, posting the official \$20,000 floor stipend literature publicly so that students can take this to their respective departments and confirm it is being enforced

Dean Vail explained that the \$20,000 floor stipend was established by the Office of Provost—not the Graduate School. What gets confusing for students is that this only applies to Doctoral students. The intention of the \$20,000 minimum pay requirement for 20 hours per week was meant to apply to the calendar year, but some departments interpreted it as the being per academic year. This possibly is the cause of the disparity for some doctoral students.

**7. Report of the Academic Policy and Practices Committee (Bill Hawk)**

No report.

**8. Report of the 500/600 Level Courses (Angelina Sylvain)**

This report is presented to Council for informational purposes only; no action is necessary.

**500/600 Courses for September 2024 Grad Council**

(CCP = Course Change Proposal; NCP=New Course Proposal).

**HIST 504 (3) Spatial Approaches to Historical Research, (NCP: Spring 2025)**

**9. Associate Graduate Faculty Nominations (Murray Mitchell)**

Name: **Morgan Driver, PhD**  
 Program: Genetic Counseling (School of Medicine)  
 Term: Fall 2023 – Summer 2029

***This nomination was unanimously approved by Graduate Council.***

**10. Fellowships and Scholarships Committee (Murray Mitchell for Edie Goldsmith)**

No report.

**11. Report of the Science, Math, and Related Professional Programs Committee (Sourav Banerjee)**

Below is a list of proposals reviewed by the Committee. Total: 2

- **Railway Engineering, Certificate**, (Program Change Request: Fall 2025)
- **Physician Assistant Studies, M.S.**, (Program Change Request: Fall 2025)

**These proposals were approved by Graduate Council.**

**12. Report of the Humanities, Social Sciences, Education, and Related Professional Programs Committee (Andrew Graciano)**

Below is a list of proposals reviewed by the Committee. Total: 4

- **International Business, M.I.B./Audencia Business School**, (New Program Proposal: Fall 2025)
- **Library and Information Science, M.L.I.S.** (Program Change Request: Fall 2025)
- **Information Security and Cyber Leadership, Certificate** (Program Change Request: Fall 2025)
- **Journalism and Mass Communications, M.M.C., with Huazhong University of Science and Technology**, (New Program Proposal: Fall 2025)

**These proposals were approved by Graduate Council.**

**13. Report of the Grievances, Appeals and Petitions Committee (Sriram Venkataraman)**

- Dr. Venkataraman moved for the Graduate Council to go into Closed Session.
- Upon returning to Open Session, the motion from the Grievances, Appeals and Petitions Committee to deny the student's petition was unanimously approved.

**14. Other Committee Reports**

None.

**15. Old Business**

None.

**16. New Business**

The question was asked regarding what can be done about students using AI plagiarism to answer questions on applications for graduate education. It is so labor intensive. Applicants are using AI plagiarism in their personal statements and in their writing samples. It was suggested that the Systems Operations Task Force bring this up with the vendors that they meet with to see what can be incorporated in the new application system that we are seeking. This topic fostered much discussion, and it was decided to be discussed further at another Graduate Council meeting.

**17. Good of the Order**

Reminder Dates:

October 28, 2024: The next scheduled meeting of the Graduate Council will be in person on Monday, October 28<sup>th</sup>, 2024, at 2:00 pm in Room 583 in Close-Hipp.

October 25, 2024: 3MT (3 Minute Thesis) Training, Friday, October 25<sup>th</sup>, 1pm to 3pm in Room 583 in Close-Hipp.

November 8, 2024: 3MT (3 Minute Thesis) Competition, Friday, November 8<sup>th</sup>. Preliminaries will be held from 10am to 11:30am with Finals in the afternoon from 3pm to 4pm, 5<sup>th</sup> floor in Close-Hipp.

December 16, 2024: Doctoral Hooding, Monday, December 16<sup>th</sup>, 10am to 1pm in the Koger Center.

### **18. Adjournment**

The meeting was adjourned at 3:01p.m.

Murray Mitchell, Secretary

CC: Michael Amiridis, President  
Donna Arnett, Provost  
Ann Vail, Dean of the Graduate School  
Deans  
Department Chairs  
Graduate Directors  
Aaron Marterer, University Registrar  
Elaine Belesky, Office of the Registrar  
Malia Kiehl, Office of the Registrar

## Office of the Provost – Program Pre-Authorization Requests

Programs approved by the Office of the Provost to begin development; programs listed in italics are either recommended for approval or have been approved by Graduate Council

- New Program: Postbaccalaureate Certificate, Artificial Intelligence in Business
- New Program: DNP, Nurse Educator
- *New Dual Degree: MIB with Audencia Business School with their Master of Science in Financial Markets & Sustainable Investments, Responsible Procurement and Supply Chain Management, Data Science for Marketing, Business Strategy & Consulting, Food & Agribusiness, Sustainable Luxury, Cultural & Arts Management, and the Master in Management*
- New Program: Master of Science in Quantitative Economics
- *New Dual Degree: MA/MMC Journalism and Mass Communications with the School of Journalism and Information Communication at Huazhong University of Science and Technology (HUST)*