Graduate Council Meeting Minutes

Thursday, September 17, 2026 – Zoom

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Amy Benjamin, Grad School
Jennifer Bergner, MSME
Stephanie Bernhard, ENG
Joshua Bolton, PUBCOM
Rachel Buchanan, MSW
Farren Christ, GSC President
Jessica Clark, Interim Provost
Maida Finch, EDD
James Fox, EDLD
Aston Gonzalez, HIST
Clifton Griffin, Dean of Graduate School
Allen Koehler, AVP Enrollment Management
Eric Liebgold, BIO
Rhoda Lukens, Registrar
Ruth Malone, CURRMED
Lauren McDermott, GIS
Vance Nan, At-Large Perdue School Rep
Mineseok Park, At-Large Henson School Rep
Heather Porter, Seidel Rep
Jessica Scott, Grad School
Mark Shaffer, CHHS Rep
Ignaciyas Soosaipillai, CADR
Christine Spillson, Fulton School Rep
Brian Stiegler, MED Higher ED
Star Weaver, MAT
David Yoon, Faculty Senate Liaison

MEMBERS ABSENT:

Annette Barnes, DNP, MSN
Yvonne Downie-Hanley, MBA

I. Call to Order – 3:31pm.

II. Introduction

III. Good News

- A. Gonzalez – Taught a summer class for the first time (HIST 600 – Career Professionalization). Students showed a lot of reflection and growth over 10 weeks. Recommend that type of course for other programs.
- L. McDermott – Promoted GIS program at MD State GIS Conference at Towson. Yielded prospective students for spring.
- B. Stiegler – Higher Ed program has an intern at Hagerstown Community College. Has gotten a lot of info regarding the Promise grant and is sharing with all community colleges.
- A. Koehler – We've asked for clarification on whether part-time students are eligible.

IV. Minutes

- November minutes were unanimously approved as submitted.

V. Chair's Remarks – M. Finch

- Update on immunization requirements for online students
    - Student Health and Dr. Amy Johnson were very responsive.
    - Will take some time to update the system to accommodate these exemptions.
    - Looking into removing those requirements for online students in the next academic year beginning with Fall 27.
        - J. Fox thanked Dr. Finch for advocating for students.

VI. Elections

- Chair – R. Buchanan volunteered to serve as Chair. She was elected unanimously.
- Vice Chair – L. McDermott volunteered to serve as Vice-Chair. She was elected unanimously.
- Graduate Curriculum Committee - A. Barnes, J. Bergner and B. Stiegler have volunteered to return.

VII. Enrollment Management and Marketing Update – C. Griffin

- Supporting marketing with $80K. This does not include money spent by Enrollment Management (For example, Study College is campus-wide).
- Number of clicks are going well but we need an increase in complete application (all components are completed).
- M. Finch – Are we gathering data from students who don't enroll?
    - C. Griffin – It's important to effectively communicate with students. Maybe add phone calls in addition to emails.
- International Students – Several program directors are seeing an uptick in international applicants. Acquiring visas has been challenging.
    - C. Griffin – They can always choose to apply. We should encourage them to complete an application.
    - M. Park – Programs must be cognizant of deadlines for international students as there is an extra element of scheduling interview for visas which can take a month or more then several more weeks to get a response.
        - C. Griffin – We need to recognize that late applications probably won't be able to get necessary documents.
    - B. Stiegler – We should be concentrating on agreements and pipelines. Will share an article regarding international applications.
- J. Bergner – MSME uses a spreadsheet so we can make sure that we don't miss anybody. Sometimes I have advisees which drop.
    - J. Scott – If you ever need a student added to your advisement list, please contact me.
- Pricing Structure Review
    - We have engaged with Encoura to do a review of our pricing structure to make sure or pricing is competitive and effective. Thanks to J. Clark for providing the funds for this important study.

VIII. Update to GA Stipends – J. Clark

- There was a priority to move faculty to PIN positions.
- GA stipend increases have been presented to Cabinet. Perhaps even a partial increase. But need to make sure budget would allow it and future budgets could continue to support it.
- Provost Office provided funds to have a market analysis completed for graduate tuition. This will hopefully provide a good understanding of the value of grad students for the next budget cycle.

IX. GSC Remarks – F. Christ

- Logan Wilson and Farren will be attending the USM launch and will meet with the Student Regent.
- Had 1st Executive Team Meeting and discussed ways to include online students.
- Will be holding a special election for the Chief of Staff position.
- Still need Assembly members.

X. Dean's Remarks

- Thanks to Maida for her excellent leadership and thanks to Rachel for becoming the new Chair.

Meeting was adjourned at 4:54 p.m.
Submitted by Jessica Scott