

# Graduate Council Meeting Minutes

Thursday, September 18, 2025 – Zoom

## MEMBERS PRESENT:

Annette Barnes, DNP, MSN  
Jennifer Bergner, MSME  
Joshua Bolton, PUBCOM  
Melissa Bugdal, At-Large Perdue School Rep  
Ryan Conrath, ENGL  
Maida Finch, EDD  
James Fox, EDLD  
Clifton Griffin, Dean of Graduate School  
Aston Gonzalez, HIST  
Elizabeth Kressin, Registrar  
Art Lembo, GIS  
Eric Liebgold, BIO  
Scott Mazzetti, HHPF  
Ruth Malone, CURRMED  
Stephen Oby, MSW

Jessica Scott, OGS

Mark Shaffer, CHHS Rep  
Ignaciyas Soosaipillai, CADR  
Brian Steigler, MED Higher ED  
Holly Thompson, GSC  
Star Weaver, MAT

## MEMBERS ABSENT:

Yvonne Downie-Hanley, MBA  
Allen Koehler, AVP Enrollment Management  
Heather Porter, Seidel Rep

### I. Call to Order – 3:30pm.

### II. Good News

- A. Barnes - The new FNP Concentration had seven new students for Fall 25.
- M. Finch – Ed.D had 38 students successfully defend
- J. Bergner – There is lots of interest from Elementary Education teachers. A December MSME graduate was accepted to several Ph.D. programs
- M. Bugdal – Writing Center is seeing a lot of appointments for grad students in summer and fall.
- A. Lembo – Record number of SU students came into GIS program. Have completed forms to move forward with accelerated program option.
- B. Steigler – Trying to establish a relationship between Seidel and Honors College. Looking at new Post-Masters in Higher Education Leadership.
- J. Fox – Higher number of students taking non-degree courses for administration certification.
- R. Malone – Working towards a complete online CURRMED program.
- K. Soosaipillai – CADR has moved fully online. Goal was 15 new students but satisfied with the 12 new students.
- J. Bolton – PUBCOM is in first year of accelerated program and already has interest.
- S. Weaver – Working to get accelerated option for all M.A.T. tracks.
- S. Oby – Got site visit coming.
- R. Conrath – Accelerated options are in the works for ENG. The Creative Writing M.A. launched in Fall 25
- A. Gonzalez – HIST had five new students in Fall 25. History SCED accelerated program in the works.

### III. Minutes

- May minutes were submitted and unanimously approved without corrections.

### IV. Elections

- Vice Chair
  - A. Barnes volunteered to serve as Vice-Chair. She was elected unanimously.
- Graduate Curriculum Committee
  - A. Barnes and J. Bergner returned to the committee. B. Stiegler will join as the 3<sup>rd</sup> voting member.

### V. GSC Update – Holly Thompson

- First Assembly meeting is scheduled for 9/29. Goal is to have two students from each program. It's never occurred but group is optimistic. Please review students in programs and send any interested student to Holly.
- Participated in Fun Fest in the Nest.
- Upcoming ideas: Grad picnic on the lawn, CV workshop, Executive Meet & Greet, Graed Students in the box for a sporting event.
- Meetings are in person but can zoom in students as needed.
- Meeting times will be rotated to accommodate students' schedules.

### VI. Marketing & Recruitment – C. Griffin

- Sent out an update on marketing efforts.
  - Many are very holistic. Some have multiple focus such as graduate and online.
  - Doing social media campaigns based on regions with ads targeted to those areas.
  - Jessica and Katie are updating email campaigns
- Funds
  - OGS has a minimum of \$3K for programs to use (ads, printed materials, events, etc.)
- Very impressed with number of accelerated programs and those in the planning stages.
- Direct Admissions
  - Doing a pilot program with HHPF beginning with December 25 grads.
  - Will have a stripped-down application with no application fees or letters of recommendation.
  - Interested programs should establish criteria on capacity and eligibility (U/G degree, GPA, etc.)

### VII. Dean's Remarks – C. Griffin

- Update from USM Dean's Meetings
  - There is much concern about program duplication and there is expectation that getting new programs approved will become more challenging.
  - Initial letter of intent will be more detailed than before and require a lot more data earlier in the process.
  - MHEC is considering making a modality change a substantial change.
  - Lots of concern about F1 visa status. Current students have a set amount of time to be in the U.S. to finish studies. That time may be shortened.

- SU must be diligent about enrollment numbers. Starting to see programs end due to low numbers.
- Hood University is addressing loss of Grad Plus loans. They're doing outreach with local banks to research opportunities for grad loans for their students. We have significant number of grad students in this program.
  - $23-24 = 175$     $24/25 = 167$     $25/26 = 122$
- Good progress on Teams/Zoom.
  - Aurora asked IT to be thorough about users and their needs.
- Will be following up with Grad Strategic Planning Group
- No update on backfilling Liz's position

#### VIII. Provost Comments – J. Clark

- Congratulations enrollment numbers

Meeting was adjourned at 4:52 p.m.

Submitted by Jessica Scott