



GRADUATE COUNCIL MINUTES

August 25th, 2025

The Graduate Council met in person on Monday, August 25th, 2025, at 2:00 pm in the Executive Room #1, 8th Floor, Close-Hipp Building.

Graduate Council members present: Dr. Terrance McAdoo, Chair; Drs. Sourav Banerjee, Rachel Bush, Ashley Gess, Andrew Graciano, Bill Hauk, David Mott, Kirk Randazzo, Jill Stewart, Ari Streisfeld, Sanjib Sur, Sriram Venkataraman, Weaver-Toedtman, Kristen, Jing Wen, Mark Yancey, and Arunav Das (GSA).

Graduate Council members absent: Drs. John Doering-White, Lorie Donelle, Carolyn Harmon, Daniel Kilpatrick (excused), Kevin Lu, Nick Watanabe, and Rachel Williams (excused),

Graduate School Representatives: Dr. Ann Vail, Dr. Lingyu (Lucy) Yu, Dr. Angelina Sylvain, Dr. Matt Klopfenstein, Dale Moore, Barbara Foster, Heidi Conte, and Wanda Barr (excused)

Provost Office Representatives: Trena Houpp and Dr. LaTrice Ratcliff-Small (excused)

Guests: Harlan Smith (ISSS)

NOTE: These minutes will become final on September 22, 2025, if not challenged.

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

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

2. Election of New Chair (Terrance McAdoo)

Dr. McAdoo stated an important piece of unfinished business from the Graduate Council meeting in May which was to elect a new chair for the new academic school year. He opened the floor for nominations. Dr. Kirk Randazzo nominated Dr. Bill Hauk. Hearing no additional nominations, Dr. McAdoo closed nominations. A vote was taken, and Dr. Bill Hauk was elected as the new Chair of the Graduate Council for the 2025-2026 academic year.

Dean Ann Vail presented Dr. McAdoo with a plaque and thanked him for his hard work and service as the outgoing chair for 2024-25.

3. Approval of the Minutes from May 12, 2025. 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 May were unanimously approved.

4. Report of the Chair (Bill Hauk)

Dr. Hauk welcomed everyone to the meeting. He reviewed the functions of the Graduate Council for

the benefit of the new members and thanked all members for their services.

5. Report of the Dean of the Graduate School (Ann Vail)

Dean Vail echoed Dr. Hauk's welcome and thanks. She invited Harlan Smith, Director of International Student and Scholar Support, to share data of new international student arrival numbers for Fall 2025, late arrivals advisement, and key updates regarding program deferrals for Spring 2026. Both handouts are attached.

Dean Vail introduced two new staff members of the Graduate School:

- **Heidi Conte** joins us from BlueCross BlueShield of South Carolina, where she served as Senior IT Manager for 13 years. During her tenure, she oversaw more than 250 IT initiatives, including system upgrades, cloud migrations, web development, telephony, infrastructure, financial system conversions, disaster recovery, and regulatory compliance. Her depth of expertise will be instrumental in leading the implementation of our new enrollment management system.
- **Barbara Foster** is in a new Graduate School role—Chief of Staff. As the first Chief of Staff in The Graduate School, Barbara will serve as a senior executive leader with a primary focus on coordinating strategic initiatives, overseeing cross-unit projects, and facilitating decision-making processes of The Graduate School. Barbara has extensive experience at McKinsey & Company, a global management consulting firm, Schweitzer Engineering Laboratories, and Nova Southeastern University.

During academic year 2024-2025, The Graduate School received 12,719 applications (6,249 were PhD applications and 6,470 were master's applications). Collectively, we admitted 1,005 doctoral students and 2,881 master's students. To date, 1,787 admitted students have enrolled.

USC has selected Element451 as our new enrollment management system. With the implementation of USC's **Element1801**, we will streamline operations, accelerate application processing, track student progression, improve communications, and empower our faculty and staff with the tools they need to support graduate student success. We invite you to join us for the official **Element1801 Kickoff** on **September 9 at 10:00 AM** via Teams. This will be the first of many opportunities to learn more and get involved.

The Graduate School, in collaboration with the Graduate Student Association, will host the Graduate Student Expo 2025 on Friday, September 5, 2025, from 9:00 AM to 12:00 PM in the Russell House Ballroom. This will be an important opportunity for our new and returning graduate students to connect with resources, services, and organizations that can enhance their academic and student life experience at the University of South Carolina.

By April 27, 2026, all public entities that provide services and/or resources online must meet accessibility requirements as per the Americans with Disabilities Act Title II Web and Mobile Application Accessibility Rule. To meet these federal requirements, electronic theses and dissertations (ETDs) must adhere to accessibility standards. The Graduate School has modified the thesis and dissertation template to ensure that students using the template will be compliant with the new requirement.

The Graduate School will launch the new online Program of Study form on September 2, 2025. This automated form will use Dynamic Forms program to automate the submission and approval process. Beginning January 2, 2026, The Graduate School will no longer accept paper submissions of the

Program of Study form.

With the onboarding of Chat GPT from Open AI to all students and faculty this Fall, The Graduate School received multiple requests to clarify the role of AI in graduate education. The Ethical and Responsible Use of GenAI in Graduate Education Task Force was initiated to clarify our position. The purpose of the Task Force is to develop a graduate education position statement and guidelines for using the ChatGPT Enterprise. We have no preconceived notions of what this will look like but are responding to requests and questions we have received from graduate students and faculty. The task force will not duplicate the work of other campus groups but rather enhance the work of others with the graduate student experience and graduate education being the central and common focus. We will address the unique challenges of ChatGPT transforming the very nature of discovery, knowledge creation, and scholarly practice of graduate education. Our goal is to reduce the risks of students unknowingly crossing ethical lines through improper use of ChatGPT or underutilizing the potential of these tools by being fearful of their use. We hope the Task Force will assist The Graduate School in establishing expectations and reducing confusion.

6. Report of the Graduate Student Association (Arunav Das)

Arunav shared the newly elected executive committee of the Graduate Student Association (GSA):

- Anthonia Awhinawhi, President
- Aishneet Juneja, Vice President
- Ariful Islam Sanim, Treasurer
- Arunav Das, Graduate Council Representative

The GSA executive members have participated in twenty-three orientation programs for graduate students from diverse departments across USC, representing the GSA and its activities to the incoming students. We extended invitations to new students to join the GSA and to learn more about the issues that the GSA advocates for. We believe that this initiative will enhance future participation and engagement.

The GSA is collaborating with the Graduate School to host the Graduate Student Expo 2025 on September 5th. Graduate students can connect with fellow graduate and professional students across disciplines and discover over 30 campus resources and organizations. There will be free food, door prizes, and more.

The GSA's Strategic Priorities for 2025-26 are attached.

7. Report of the Academic Policy and Practices Committee (Kirk Randazzo)

Dr. Randazzo reported that his committee will continue to work on the proposal regarding regular and associate membership of graduate faculty that was tabled from the last meeting in May. They will submit a recommendation when applicable. In addition, the graduate handbook is almost 10 years old, and it is time for an update. They will bring these items to your attention when they are ready.

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 August 2025 Grad Council

(CCP = Course Change Proposal; NCP=New Course Proposal). Total: 0

9. Associate Graduate Faculty Nominations. Total: 10 (Ann Vail)

Name: **Yasha Becton (PhD)**
Program: College of Education
Term: Summer 2025 – May 2031

Name: **Matt Cunningham (PhD)**
Program: College of Education
Term: Summer 2025 – May 2031

Name: **Elizabeth Currin (PhD)**
Program: College of Education
Term: Summer 2025 – May 2031

Name: **Leigh D’Amico (PhD)**
Program: College of Education
Term: Summer 2025 – May 2031

Name: **Jamil Johnson (PhD)**
Program: College of Education
Term: Summer 2025 – May 2031

Name: **Rebecca Morgan (PhD)**
Program: College of Education
Term: Summer 2025 – May 2031

Name: **William Morris (PhD)**
Program: College of Education
Term: Summer 2025 – May 2031

Name: **Charles Thompson (PhD)**
Program: College of Education
Term: Summer 2025 – May 2031

Name: **Jeffrey Eargle (PhD)**
Program: College of Education
Term: Spring 2025 – Spring 2031

Name: **Victoria Oglan (PhD)**
Program: College of Education
Term: Fall 2025 – Summer 2031

These nominations were unanimously approved by Graduate Council.

10. Fellowships and Scholarships Committee (Matt Klopenstein for Daniel Kilpatrick)

No report.

11. Report of the Graduate Curriculum Committee (Andrew Graciano)

Dr. Graciano reported that at this meeting of the Graduate Council, there are no proposals up for approval. Currently, there are 57 proposals in the review queue: 17 new course proposals, 30 course

change requests, 1 course inactivation, 8 program change requests, and 1 program inactivation.

Of special note, this year marks the consolidation of the two standing curriculum committees—the Committee on Science, Math, Engineering, Health Sciences, and Related Professional Programs and the Committee on Humanities, Social Sciences, Education, and Related Professional Programs—into one unified **Graduate Council Curriculum Committee**.

This change was made for several reasons. First, the volume of proposals has been steadily increasing, and a larger, unified committee is better positioned to manage the workload effectively. In the past, the distribution of proposals across the two committees was uneven, sometimes leaving one committee with an unmanageable number of items while the other had very few. Moreover, if multiple members of one committee were unable to complete their duties, progress on proposals could stall entirely.

While graduate faculty are eligible to serve on either committee, the split often caused confusion for members serving on committees outside their disciplinary area. Moving to one large committee also brings us in line with Faculty Senate practice, where curriculum review is managed through a single, broad-based committee.

We believe this new structure will lead to clearer expectations for committee members, more balanced distribution of work, and a stronger, more operationally efficient review process in support of maintaining the quality of graduate programs.

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

Program Dismissal Petition Case review.

- 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 this student's petition was unanimously upheld.

13. Other Committee Reports

None.

14. Old Business

None.

15. New Business

- Discussion: Publication of Degree Requirements (Angelina Sylvain)

Dr. Sylvain discussed that as part of our ongoing efforts to ensure financial aid compliance, update DegreeWorks, and prepare for the launch of the new enrollment management system, they identified 117 graduate programs that need updates to their degree requirements. The most common gaps are missing or have incomplete prescribed course lists—many either provide no detail at all or list only “700-level and above” without specifying categories or courses.

To align with compliance and system needs, degree requirements should:

- Provide a prescribed course list for each requirement. If there is flexibility, programs may instead list the most common courses (with a note that the list is not exhaustive) or identify specific course categories (e.g., PHPH, BIOS, CHEM 700-level and above).

These updates will ensure consistency, transparency, and accuracy in our Bulletin, financial aid

processes, and enrollment systems, while making program expectations clearer to students.

16. Good of the Order

Reminder Dates:

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| September 5: | Graduate Student Expo, Friday, September 5, 9:00am to 12:00pm, Russell House Ballroom |
| September 22: | Next Graduate Council meeting on Monday, September 22 at 2:20pm, Close Hipp, Room #351. |
| October 24: | 3MT Competition Training, Friday, October 24, 1:00pm to 3:00pm, with Dr. Jon Edwards, Room #583, Close-Hipp Building |
| November 7: | 3MT Competition--Preliminaries and Finals, Location TBA |

17. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 3:40p.m.

Ann Vail, Dean

CC: Michael Amiridis, President
Mary Anne Fitzpatrick, 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