

Minutes of the Graduate Council
Date of Meeting: January 21, 2026

The January 21, 2026, meeting of the Graduate Council was called to order at 1:02 p.m. via Zoom by Dr. Ann Wheeler, Chair of the Graduate Council.

Members in Attendance: Alexandra (Ale) Babino, Amanda Arnold, AnaLouise Keating, Ann Wheeler, Brigitte Vittrup, Catalina Pislariu, Chanam Shin, Daniel Newmire, Daniela Ventura, Dayna Averitt, Della Molloy-Daugherty, Derek Crews, Faheemah Hannah, Helen Everts, He Ren, Hope McCarroll, Hyuk-Jin Lee, Jennifer Martin, Jennifer Quong, Kanchan Budhathoki, Kimberly Mory, Laura Trujillo-Jenks, Mikyoung Lee, Nerissa Gillum, Paula Clutter, Pat Driscoll, Rachele Campbell, Sharon Wang-Price, and Zhen Li.

Substitutes: Tushar Shah for Derek Crews and Wonseok Choi for He Ren

MINUTES APPROVED

- The minutes of the November 19, 2025, meeting were approved.

ANNOUNCEMENTS AND REPORT BY DR. CAROLYN KAPINUS, DEAN OF THE GRADUATE SCHOOL

I hope your spring semester is off to a good start!

Enrollment

The 7th day report indicates that spring graduate student enrollment is up 2.9% from 2025 – 150 students. This is due to continued enrollment as new enrollment is down slightly – 46 students.

As of this week, summer and fall accepted students are up slightly compared to last year.

Financial Aid

How changes to Federal Student Loans affect graduate students at TWU:

Professional Program Declassification

You may have heard about the declassification of certain professional programs. This change does not impact TWU graduate students. According to our Financial Aid Office, none of our graduate programs were classified as professional programs for financial aid purposes. Students have always been eligible to receive up to \$20,500 annually in Federal Unsubsidized loans under standard graduate student parameters, and this remains unchanged. Our low cost tuition will help us in light of these changes going forward.

Grad PLUS Loans

Starting July 1, 2026, new students will no longer be able to take out Graduate PLUS Loans. There is a legacy provision to this and information about it can be found on the Financial Aid webpage.

New Lifetime Borrowing Limits

Beginning July 1, 2026, the lifetime borrowing limit for Federal Unsubsidized Direct Loans will decrease from \$138,500 to \$100,000 for graduate students who have not yet borrowed for their current degree program. Very few TWU graduate students have borrowed more than \$100,000 in financial aid. Roughly 1/3 of our graduate students do not borrow any money to fund their education.

If you want to learn more, the Financial Aid Office has a section on their webpage that outlines the federal loan changes.

Graduate Student Appreciation Week

Nationally recognized week during the first full week of April 6-10. The Graduate School will be planning ways to celebrate this week but we encourage academic units to start thinking about this as well. More to come!

ANNOUNCEMENTS AND REPORT BY DR. RUTH JOHNSON, ASSOCIATE DEAN OF THE GRADUATE SCHOOL

- Graduate Catalog: Updates are in process for changes and corrections.
- Minors: I encourage programs to have minors because students can take courses to meet a minor, and financial assistance can be applied to that. That is not the only reason, but it would also help low-enrolled courses
- Welcome to Spring 2026. If there is anything that I can do to assist you, please let me know.

GUEST SPEAKER

- Dr. Gray Scott - Associate Vice Provost for Accreditation/ SACSCOC Liaison
 - Discussion on the ongoing course review process (due Mar 1) and the appropriate possible use of AI in supporting SLO updates

SUMMARY REPORTS FROM STANDING COMMITTEES

Executive Committee – Chair: Dr. Ann Wheeler

- No report.

Executive Committee – Vice Chair: Dr. Dayna Averitt

- No report.

Research Committee – Dr. Catalina Pislariu

- Outstanding Theses and Dissertation Award proposals will be discussed.

Academic Standards Committee – Dr. Sharon Wang-Price

- Graduate Faculty Status policy will be discussed under new business.

Academic Programs Committee – Dr. Zhen Li

- The committee will be discussing 1 proposal today.

Membership Committee – Chair Nominee: Dr. Helen Everts

- No Report.

NEW BUSINESS

1. Membership Committee – Dr. Helen Everts

- Recommendations for Graduate Faculty Status (listed on page 3)
- **Voted on and approved**

2. Academic Programs Committee – Dr. Zhen Li

- New Request - Post-Masters Certificate in Library Administration - **Voted on and approved**

3. Research Committee – Dr. Catalina Pislariu

- Outstanding Thesis and Dissertation Awards (**Discussion only**)

OLD BUSINESS

1. Academic Standards Committee – Dr. Sharon Wang-Price

- Revisions to the Graduate Faculty Status policy – **Voted on and approved pending minor grammar modifications to be confirmed by the Executive Committee**

ADJOURNMENT

- **The meeting adjourned at 2:08 p.m.** - The next Graduate Council meeting will be held on Wednesday, February 18, 2026.

Membership Committee –

- Faculty Recommendations: 1 - Full / 03 - Full with Dissertation Chair Endorsement
Voted on and approved

Name	Component	Recommendation
Gumienny, Tina	Biology	Full with Dissertation Chair Endorsement
Menn, Mindy	Health Promotion & Kinesiology	Full with Dissertation Chair Endorsement
Johnson, Gretchen	OT	Full
Armstrong, Erica	Communication Science Oral Health	Full with Dissertation Chair Endorsement