

Minutes of the Graduate Council

Date of Meeting: February 18, 2026

The February 18, 2026, meeting of the Graduate Council was called to order at 1:03 p.m. via Zoom by Dr. Dayna Averitt, Vice Chair of the Graduate Council.

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

Substitutes: Dan Chen for He Ren

MINUTES APPROVED

- The minutes of the January 21, 2026, meeting were approved.

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

- Introducing new graduate school employees: Tanya Vasquez and Laurie Hensel
- Upcoming Zoom sessions
 - "Breaking Barriers in Graduate Recruitment" on February 24, 2026 at 4:00 p.m.
 - "From ABD to PhD: Advice from Recent Doctoral Graduates on the Dissertation Process" on February 26, 2026, at 6:00 p.m.
- Change to the dissertation review process: The Graduate School will no longer be reading dissertations from cover to cover. We lost our formatter, and it is not an easy position to fill. Since the dissertations are already being read by the departments/divisions, we will honor it. Dr. Max McComb will be reviewing everything and working specifically on the formatting part of the dissertation.
- Dissemity-exploring new assistance for students
 - Dissemity provides evidence-based instructional content and state-of-the-art AI-powered resources to make research writing easier and faster, helping students write for publication within their specific disciplines.
 - Dissemity demos will be available soon and Dr. Kapinus plans on scheduling some demo sessions for interested faculty.
 - Website Link: <https://dissemity.com/home/index.php>
- Graduate Enrollment
 - Master's summer enrollment +11%

- o Doctoral summer enrollment -7%
- o Master's fall enrollment -10%
- o Doctoral fall enrollment -1%

- Minors
 - o Business minors are complete; they took all their electives and put together minors. Students are required to take three courses in each of their areas.
 - o Kinesiology is another program with minors.
 - o Minors are encouraged for areas that are capable.
 - o I can assist with setting them up, and they do not have to be anything elaborate.
 - o Minors are separate from the degree area.

- Grades
 - o The Graduate School does not accept "P" (pass/passing) as a grade.
 - o We accept letter grades and (for theses and dissertations) grades of PR/CR/LP/NP.

- Certificates
 - o Requests to add a certificate to an existing program must be submitted using the "Adding a Graduate Certificate to a Graduate Degree in Progress" form. The request should be submitted as soon as the student decides to pursue the certificate and no later than the semester prior to the student's final class for the certificate.
 - o When the student has completed a certificate, the "Completion of Graduate Certificate" form should be submitted to the Graduate School no later than the week after the semester so that the certificate can be posted to the student's transcript.

GUEST SPEAKER

- Nancy Chick, Executive Director of Teaching, Learning, & Scholarship (The Faculty Commons), Professor of English

SUMMARY REPORTS FROM STANDING COMMITTEES

Executive Committee – Vice Chair: Dr. Dayna Averitt

- No report.

Research Committee – Dr. Catalina Pislariu

- Welcome to new member Dr. Kristen McDaniel who is taking the place of Dr. Jaesin Sa.
- Outstanding Theses and Dissertation Award proposals.

Academic Standards Committee – Dr. Sharon Wang-Price

- No report.

Academic Programs Committee – Dr. Zhen Li

- No report.

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**

OLD BUSINESS

1. Research Committee – Dr. Catalina Pislariu
 - Outstanding Thesis and Dissertation Awards (**Discussion only**)

ADJOURNMENT

- The meeting adjourned at 1:52 p.m. - The next Graduate Council meeting will be held on Wednesday, March 18, 2026.

Membership Committee –

- Faculty Recommendations: 4 - Full / 0 - Full with Dissertation Chair Endorsement - **Voted on and approved**

Name	Component	Recommendation
Friesenhahn, Amy	Political Sci	Full
Michael, Jacqueline	Nursing	Full
McManamanBridges, Tracy	Nursing	Full
Aguirri, Amanda	Nursing	Full