

## **Minutes of the Graduate Council**

**Date of Meeting: March 18, 2026**

The March 18, 2026, meeting of the Graduate Council was called to order at 1:02 p.m. via Zoom by Dr. Dayna Averitt, Vice Chair of the Graduate Council.

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

**Substitutes:** Sheila Hyde for Derek Crews, Wonseok Choi for He Ren, Julie Brinzo for Rachelle Campbell

### **MINUTES APPROVED**

- The minutes of the February 18, 2026, meeting were approved.

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

#### **Zoom Sessions**

Last month we had two Zoom sessions titled “Breaking Barriers in Student Recruitment” and “From ABD (All But Dissertation) To PhD.” If you missed either session and would like the recording, please reach out to Danita. We want people to attend the live student sessions, if possible, but we always record them so you or your students can reach out to request the recording.

#### **Graduate Student Appreciation Week**

Graduate Student Appreciation Week is a nationally recognized week during the first full week of April (April 6-10, 2026). I sent out an email about this a few weeks ago and will send an updated email soon. We will continue our most popular events from prior years such as our graduate student photo contest (with winners getting a bookstore gift certificate), solicitation of messages of support from faculty and staff (we compile these in email messages we send throughout the week), and a raffle for eight \$500 scholarships to be applied to summer or fall enrollment. We encourage graduate programs to find their own ways to celebrate their graduate students.

#### **Save the Date: Dissemity Demonstration**

We are particularly excited to explore [Dissemity](#), an AI-based instructional tool designed to help students learn to write for discipline-specific academic research outlets. Developed by [Dr. Stephanie Link](#) at Oklahoma State University with National Science Foundation funding, this tool offers promising writing support for our graduate students.

Please join us for a Zoom demonstration on **Wednesday, April 22, at 1:00 p.m.** Further details and registration links for this Zoom session as well as others will be shared soon.

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

- Catalog updates are in progress. If you see something that requires correction, please notify the assigned person from your area. Initial catalog edits must be submitted by March 31, 2026.
- Minors
  - Minors are currently not available in the CIM system and are not on the same deadline as the catalog.
  - Information about minors needs to be submitted to me, as I am working to ensure consistency before adding it to the CIM system.
  - Minors can only be associated with degree programs and are covered by Financial Aid (unlike certificates).
- Graduate Student Appreciation Week--April 6-10, 2026
  - I am looking forward to traveling to the Houston campus on April 6 and will meet with faculty. On Tuesday, April 7, we will celebrate Graduate Appreciation week on the Houston campus.

## **GUEST SPEAKER**

- Christine Torres, Director, Academic Success Initiatives (Houston)  
Pioneer Center for Student Excellence

## **SUMMARY REPORTS FROM STANDING COMMITTEES**

Executive Committee – Vice Chair: Dr. Dayna Averitt

- Elections for Chair and Vice Chair will be held at the April meeting. Please submit your nominations prior to the meeting by emailing the nominee's name to Danita. Be sure to confirm with the individual you are nominating that they are willing to serve, if selected.

Research Committee – Dr. Catalina Pislariu

- The committee is currently evaluating 48 nominations with 9 for the Graduate Council Award for Exceptional, Original Scholarship and the remaining nominations for the Chancellor's Award.

- The proposal for the Outstanding Thesis and Dissertation Awards, which are scheduled to be initiated next fall, has been completed. This is the final document requiring a vote. Dean Kapinus was invited to provide information regarding funding for these two awards. Pending approval, funding will be available for these awards. After benchmarking the award amounts, the proposed funding is \$1,000 for the Outstanding Dissertation Award and \$750 for the Outstanding Master's Thesis Award. Following discussions with both University Advancement and the Provost's Office, funding is expected to be in place for next year.
  - A suggestion was made to include Outstanding Doctor of Nursing Practice Capstone Projects. The committee discussed this and agreed to revisit the potential addition of this award next year.
  - The Outstanding Thesis and Dissertation Awards was voted on and approved.

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

- Update on the Graduate Council Policy that was voted on: We will continue to follow the provisions of the current policy until the updated version is approved by the university. Dean Kapinus added that the policy must go through several approval steps, including Cabinet, General Council, the Provost, and the Chancellor, as it falls under Academic Affairs. This is something to keep in mind, as the policy should be updated every three years.

#### Academic Programs Committee – Dr. Zhen Li

- We will be discussing seven proposals today under new business.

#### 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 2 of the agenda and page 4 of these minutes) were voted on and approved.
  - Reminder to have applications approved and submitted before the next deadline. There is only one meeting left until the fall.
  
2. Academic Programs Committee – Dr. Zhen Li
  - Request to Amend - History MA Propaper & History MA Thesis - MA in History
  - New Request - Graduate Certificate in Nursing Education
  - New Request - MLS with Certificate in Library Administration
  - New Request - Accelerated BA in History MA in History
  - New Request - Accelerated BS in Biology MS in Biology
  - New Request - Accelerated BS in History MA in History
  - New Request - Graduate Certificate in Applied AI in Health Care Practice

**All proposals were voted on and approved.**

## OLD BUSINESS

1. Research Committee – Dr. Catalina Pislariu
  - Outstanding Thesis and Dissertation Award - Voted on and approved during the summary reports from standing committees.

## ADJOURNMENT

- The meeting adjourned at 1:50 p.m. - The next Graduate Council meeting will be held on Wednesday, April 15, 2026.

## MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE

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

Name	Component	Recommendation
Rivers, Alannah Shelby	School of Social Work, Psychology & Philosophy (SWPP)	Full with Dissertation Chair Endorsement
Gardner, David	Computer Science	Full