Minutes of the Graduate Council
Date of Meeting: September 16, 2026

The September 16, 2026, meeting of the Graduate Council was called to order at 1:01 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, Dayna Averitt, Della Molloy-Daugherty, Derek Crews, Emma Camp, Faheemah Hannah, He Ren, Helen Everts, Hope McCarroll, Hyuk-Jin Lee, Huizhi Yu, Jennifer Quong, Kimberly Mory, Kristen Becker Schneider, Lamar Muro, Nerissa Gillum, Pat Driscoll, Paula Clutter, Rachelle Campbell, Sharon Wang-Price, Sofia Rubinstein, and Zhen Li

MINUTES APPROVED

- The minutes of the April 15, 2026, meeting were approved.

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

Key Shifts in the Higher Education Landscape

- Dr. Kapinus stated key shifts in higher education that included significant updates that are underway regarding federal financial aid, borrower defense regulations, and international student visa duration limits. Strict data reporting is now required for student costs and post-graduation outcomes; poor debt-to-earning ratios can jeopardize a program's financial aid eligibility.

Strategic Priorities

- Proactively work to make sure graduate offerings meet both evolving job market demands and regulatory standards.
- Focus on setting transparent expectations about graduate education, removing operational barriers, and supporting timely degree completion.

The Role of The Committee

- Representatives have an obligation to report council discussions back to their respective areas, collect feedback, and actively participate in committee deliberations.
- Delegates from each of the five colleges, the Council of Chairs, Faculty Senate, Deans, and student body serve as full voting members.
- Dr. Johnson and Dr. Kapinus serve as ex-officio members. This means they serve in a non-voting, advisory capacity to provide guidance on policy and compliance.
- Program policies are strictly faculty-driven—this is crucial and explicitly evaluated during institutional accreditation reaffirmations.

- Dr. Kapinus explained the vital role the Graduate Council plays in shaping the policy that affects graduate students and ensures that we are responsive to changes in the landscape of higher education.
- Dr. Kapinus expressed her enthusiasm for having a productive year.

Key Links:
Financial Aid Changes:
https://twu.edu/finaid/news--announcements/federal-loan-updates-for-2026-2027/
Borrowers Defense to Repayment:
https://studentaid.gov/manage-loans/forgiveness-cancellation/borrower-defense
Fixed admission period for F-1 international students (scroll down):
https://twu.edu/international-student-scholar-services/prospective-students/
Financial Value Transparency & Gainful Employment Act:
https://help.studentclearinghouse.org/compliancecentral/knowledge-base/gainful-employment-financial-value-transparency-faqs/

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

- Dr. Johnson welcomed everyone to the meeting. She stated she is recovering from recent knee surgery and will be working remotely for most of September but is fully accessible for questions, training, and general support. She encouraged faculty and staff to reach out at any time with questions.

GUEST SPEAKERS

- Rebecca (Becca) Patterson, Assistant Director for Compliance, Financial Aid
  - Federal Loan Updates for 2026-2027 | Texas Woman's University
- Dr. Joshua Adams, Vice Provost for Student Success
  - Website: Student Success

SUMMARY REPORTS FROM STANDING COMMITTEES

Executive Committee – Chair: Dr. Ann Wheeler & Vice Chair: Dr. Dayna Averitt
- No Report.

Research Committee – Dr. Catalina Pislariu
- **Committee Scope & Spring Awards:** Dr. Pislariu provided an overview of the committee's scope, which primarily involves evaluating spring scholarship and award applications, such as the Chancellor's Student Research Scholars and the Graduate Council Award for Exceptional, Original Scholarship.
- **Outstanding Thesis & Dissertation Awards:** Dr. Pislariu discussed the newly approved Outstanding Thesis and Dissertation Awards, which will be awarded this fall. The

recognition will honor one master's student and one Ph.D. student with a proposed submission deadline of **October 19**.

Academic Standards Committee – Dr. Sharon Wang-Price

- Dr. Wang-Price provided an overview of the committee, noting that its primary role is reviewing the effects of a new policy and updating outdated academic policies, particularly those requiring alignment with state changes. She explained that the committee meets independently to discuss and formulate policy revisions, which are then formally submitted to the Graduate Council for review and approval.

Academic Programs Committee – Dr. Zhen Li

- Dr. Li provided an overview of the committee, explaining that its primary role is reviewing proposals for new and revised academic programs. She noted that proposal deadline dates can be found on the Graduate School's website.

Membership Committee – Chair Nominee: Dr. Helen Everts

- Dr. Everts provided an overview of the committee, explaining that this committee reviews graduate faculty status applications for Full or Full with Dissertation Chair Endorsement and provides a list to the Graduate Council for full council approval. Each application is assigned to two reviewers.

NEW BUSINESS

Membership Committee

- Election of 2026–2027 Membership Committee Members and Chair
    - Recommendations listed on page 2 **– Voted on and approved.**

Academic Standards Committee – Dr. Sharon Wang-Price

- Master's Level Course Revalidation Policy- Consider eliminating the 9 and 12 credit hour maximums and deferring to programs – **Discussion Only.**

OLD BUSINESS– None

ADJOURNMENT

- The meeting adjourned at 2:13 p.m.
- The next Graduate Council meeting will be held on **Wednesday, October 21, 2026.**

MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE NOMINATIONS

Membership Committee 2026-2027		
Della Molloy-Daugherty	CAS	Music Therapy
Helen Everts (chair)	CHS	NFS
Jennifer Quong	COPE	School of Education
Huizhi Yu	COB	Finance
Andrea Brooks	NURS	NURS