
**GRADUATE STUDIES COUNCIL
Minutes of 23 October 2025**

Call to Order

The regular meeting of the Western Michigan University Faculty Senate Graduate Studies Council was called to order at 3:01 on 23 October via Webex by Marcellis Zondag, Chair.

Members Present: Upul Attanayake, Claire Binford, Christine Byrd-Jacobs, Micky Carignano, Lisa DeChano-Cook, Kristhyna Fermin, Jennifer Fiore, Michael Harnar, Michelle Hrivnyak, Cindy Linn, Larry Simon, Marcellis Zondag

Members Absent: Lori Gray, Peter Gustafson

Advisory Members Present: Carrie Cumming

Ex Officio: Laura Teichert

Guest(s): Melia Roberts, Graduate College; Kelly McDonnell, Counselor Education Counseling Psychology

Quorum

A quorum was present with 12 members in attendance, of the nine members needed to establish a quorum.

Agenda

Chair Zondag moved New Business to the beginning of the agenda.

[MOTION] It was moved by DeChano-Cook, seconded by Linn, to accept the agenda as amended. With one abstention, the motion carried.

Minutes

[MOTION] It was moved by DeChano-Cook, seconded by Linn, to approve the 25 September 2025 minutes, as presented. With two abstentions, the motion carried.

[MOTION] It was moved by Zondag, seconded by Simon, to elect Michael Harnar as Vice Chair. The motion carried unanimously.

New Business

DeChano-Cook introduced MOA-25/12: *Establish Cross-Listed Courses Policy*. This MOA impacts 5000-level courses that are cross-listed. The titles, descriptions, learning outcomes, restrictions, and prerequisites need to be the same for both courses, and it is preferred for the course numbers to be the same, if possible. Any cross-listed courses need to be taught in the same semester, and any changes that happen to one cross-listed course need to occur in the other. DeChano-Cook will work with programs to resolve any current issues. This MOA will need to be approved by both the Undergraduate Studies Council and the Graduate Studies Council, requiring the Graduate Studies Council to vote on it at its November meeting.

Chair Zondag introduced MOA23/02: *Drop/Withdrawal Extension*. Other institutions have delayed drop dates, with Michigan State University extending the deadline to the last day of the term, effective fall 2024. Previous discussion had involved issues with clinicals, internships, and other experiential learning courses. Faculty Senate may have comments regarding these issues in its files. There must be one policy for all students, despite program level. Currently, students must withdraw by the Monday of the 10th week. Other institutions range from the ninth week to the day before finals. It was shared that if a Graduate Assistant (GA) withdrew from a course after the refund time, it would require the GA to pay back the tuition. Based on the previous response and discussion, the MOA would need revision.

Melia Roberts joined the meeting at 3:26 pm

[MOTION] It was moved by Simon, seconded by Fiore, to approve the Master of Arts in Applied Economics for both the Economic Development and the Statistics and Econometrics programs. With two abstentions, the motion carried.

[MOTION] It was moved by Linn, seconded by Zondag, to approve the Ph.D. in Aerospace Engineering program. With one abstention, the motion carried.

Reports of Officers

Chair Zondag did not provide a report.

Ex Officio Teichert did not provide a report.

Reports of University Representatives

Byrd-Jacobs reported that the Graduate Student Research and Travel Grants, with 21 applications for research and 51 for travel, are currently under review. Office hours in various locations were held across campus to help students with their applications. Thesis and Dissertation formatting workshops were recently held, and there will be a Dissertation Writing Workshop on 10 November to discuss time management, planning the dissertation, and individual sessions with the writing coach. There was a call for Midwestern Association of Graduate Schools (MAGS) teaching excellence awards at the master's and doctoral level. Last year a WMU doctoral student was the regional winner. The Graduate College has new Centering on Membership, Professionalization, and Student Success (COMPASS) details on its website, to assist graduate studies navigation.

DeChano-Cook reported there is only one curriculum proposal that will be coming before the Graduate Studies Council next month beyond those being discussed today.

Fermin provided the Graduate Student Association report. The Montgomery Essential Needs collected over 12,000 items. Acceptance emails went out to the Three-Minute Thesis participants. There will be an additional competition in the spring. There is an upcoming General Assembly meeting, and they are looking for the newly created position, Chief of Justice for Graduate Student Association. Results from the outreach survey with 170 responses is available, if interested. The next cycle for Graduate Student Association awards will be in November.

Announcements

Discussion was held regarding the MOA-23/02: *Drop/Withdrawal Extension*, with information shared that pushing back the midterm grades by a week would help faculty submit midterm grades since some midterms haven't occurred by the current deadline. Then the drop date could also be extended by a week, so advisors would have two weeks in between midterm grades and the drop deadline to work with students.

Adjournment

[MOTION] It was moved by Teichert, seconded by Fiore, to adjourn the meeting at 4:03 p.m. The motion carried unanimously. The Graduate Studies Council will meet next on 23 November in-person at Walwood Hall-Bertha Davis Room-111W at 3 p.m.

Approval

Submitted by Jennifer Fiore, Secretary

Minutes were approved on 20 November 2025.