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**GRADUATE STUDIES COUNCIL**

Minutes of 23 April 2026

**Call to Order**

The regular meeting of the Western Michigan University Faculty Senate Graduate Studies Council was called to order at 3:00 on 23 April 2026 via Webex by Michael Harnar, vice chair.

**Members Present:** Upul Attanayake, Claire Binford, Lisa DeChano-Cook, Jennifer Fiore, Lori Gray, Michael Harnar, Michelle Hrivnyak, Cindy Linn, Daria Orłowska (substitute for Micky Carignano), Melia Roberts (substitute for Christine Byrd-Jacobs), Larry Simon

**Members Absent:** Kristhyna Fermin, Peter Gustafson, Marcellis Zondag

**Advisory Members Present:** Carrie Cumming

**Ex Officio:** Laura Teichert

**Guests:** Kelly McDonnell, LP Professor and Training Director for Counseling Psychology

**Quorum**

A quorum was present with 13 of the 15 members needed to establish a quorum.

**Agenda**

**[MOTION]** It was moved by DeChano-Cook, seconded by Teichert, to accept the 23 April 2026 agenda. With 3 abstentions, the motion carried.

**Minutes**

**[MOTION]** It was moved by Gray, seconded by Linn, to accept the minutes from 26 March 2026 as presented. With 3 abstentions, the motion carried.

**Reports of Officers**

Chair Harnar had no report.

The Ex Officio Teichert reported she will facilitate the nominations for the chair, vice chair, and secretary positions in the fall.

**Action Items**

1. MOA-26/06: *Revision of the Undergraduate Catalog and Addition to the Graduate Catalog Extension of the Drop/Withdrawal Period* — Cumming and Teichert
  - a. Teichert and Cumming reviewed the issue related to extending the drop/withdrawal period from Monday of the 10<sup>th</sup> week to Monday of the 12<sup>th</sup> week. The midterm grade deadline could also be extended, as that is coordinated with the drop/withdrawal deadline. A consistent drop/withdrawal deadline is required for both the undergraduate and graduate levels. Student clinicals and the impact on the clients if the student drops may be an issue. It was also noted that the students would still be responsible for any tuition for dropped courses, and that the GA tuition stipend only relates to completed courses.

**[MOTION]** The amendment to MOA-26/06 to include a statement specifying that students on assistantships are still responsible for tuition if they drop a course was moved by DeChano-Cook, seconded by Teichert. With 10 in favor, 1 against, and 2 abstentions, the motion carried.

**Reports of University Representatives**

Graduate College Dean Roberts reported that the Graduate College funded approximately 75% (21 of 28) of graduate research grant applications and 72% (45 of 61) of graduate travel grant applications. Six dissertation completion fellowships were awarded from a pool of 26 applicants, and six Thurgood Marshall Fellowships were awarded from 46 applications. Roberts also noted that 30 student posters were presented at the Research and Innovation Creative Scholarship Day, with 28 faculty and staff

serving as judges. The Graduate Student Association (GSA) awarded prize funding, including a top prize of \$500 and thirteen additional prizes of \$250 each. Additionally, the All-University Awards were held on April 13.

Ex Officio Teichert left the meeting at 3:35

DeChano-Cook reported that the Graduate Student Association (GSA) had already reviewed the proposal that was expected to be considered in May. DeChano-Cook also indicated plans to invite the GSA Chair to speak at a Faculty Senate meeting to provide an overview of the organization's work.

Binford reported that the Graduate Student Association (GSA) leadership is beginning the transition to a new executive board. GSA awarded over \$83,500 for student support and event funding, reflecting increased engagement. Additionally, GSA provided 44 sets of master's regalia to Montgomery Essential Needs for student use. Binford noted that the GSA Gala was held on April 17, 2026. The Hilltop Review will return in the fall and is currently seeking editors and peer reviewers; interested individuals are encouraged to contact GSA.

### **Unfinished Business**

1. Committee Updates
  - a. Prior Learning Assessment—DeChano-Cook
    - i. DeChano-Cook reminded members to send any revised Prior Learning Assessment (PLA) plans to Adriana Cardosa for the Higher Learning Commission (HLC).
  - b. Graduate Artificial Intelligence Use Policy—Harnar
    - i. The committee will continue working on the Graduate Artificial Intelligence Use Policy in the fall.
2. Update on 5000-level Course Issue Definition—Zondag
  - a. Harnar and Zondag will review data on 5000-level courses over the summer and report back in the fall.

### **New Business**

None.

### **Announcements**

None.

### **Adjournment**

**[MOTION]** It was moved by Simon, seconded by Linn, to adjourn the meeting for sub-committee work at 4:47 p.m. The motion carried unanimously. The Graduate Studies Council will meet next in the Fall 2026 semester.

### **Approval**

Submitted by Jennifer Fiore, Secretary

Minutes were approved on 25 September 2025