
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 p.m. on 23 April 2026, via Webex, by Michael Harnar, vice chair.

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

Members Absent: Krithyna Fermin, Peter Gustafson, Marcellis Zondag

Advisory Members Present: Carrie Cumming

Ex Officio: Laura Teichert

Guest: Kelly McDonnell, Counseling Psychology

Quorum

A quorum was present with 13 members in attendance, of the nine members needed to establish a quorum.

Agenda

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

Minutes

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

Reports of Officers

Due to Chair Zondag's absence, no report was provided.

Ex Officio Teichert reported that the council's ex officio will facilitate the elections for the chair, vice chair, and secretary positions in the fall.

Action Items

Ex Officio Teichert and Cumming reviewed issues related to MOA-26/06: *Revision of the Undergraduate Catalog and Addition to the Graduate Catalog Extension of the Drop/Withdrawal Period*. The midterm grade deadline would need to be extended, as it is coordinated with the drop/withdrawal deadline. A consistent drop/withdrawal deadline is required for both the undergraduate and graduate levels. Student clinicals and potential impact on clients if a student drop may create a concern. It was also noted that the students would still be responsible for any tuition for dropped courses, and that the Graduate Assistant (GA) tuition stipend only relates to completed courses. An amendment was offered to include a statement specifying that students on assistantships are still responsible for tuition if they drop a course.

[Motion] It was moved by DeChano-Cook, seconded by Teichert, to approve MOA-26/06 as amended. With one against, and two abstentions, the motion carried.

Reports of University Representatives

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 13 additional prizes of \$250 each. Additionally, the All-University Awards were held on 13 April 2026.

Ex Officio Teichert left the meeting at 3:35 p.m.

DeChano-Cook reported that the council has already reviewed the previously mentioned proposal that was expected to be considered in May. DeChano-Cook also indicated plans to invite the GSA President to speak at a Faculty Senate meeting to provide an overview of the organization's work.

Olvera reported that 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. Olvera noted that the GSA Gala was held on 17 April. 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

DeChano-Cook provided the Prior Learning Assessment Committee report, reminding members to send any revised Prior Learning Assessment (PLA) plans to Adriana Cardosa for Higher Learning Commission (HLC) reporting.

Vice Chair Harnar reported that the committee will continue working on the Graduate Artificial Intelligence Use Policy in the fall.

Harnar reported that he and Zondag will review data on the 5000-level Course definition concern and report in the fall.

New Business

None.

Announcements

There was encouragement for Harnar to run for GSC Chair next year.

Adjournment

[Motion] It was moved by Simon, seconded by Linn, to adjourn the meeting 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 10 September 2026.