

UNIVERSITY GRADUATE COUNCIL

MINUTES

April 16, 2025

10:00 a.m. – 11:30 a.m.

LJH 325

Council in Attendance:

Marc Giullian (Business)
Rollin Beamish (Arts)
Rob Maher (Faculty Senate)
Catherine Dunlop (Letters)
Stephan Warnat (Engineering)
Chris Livingston (Architecture)
Amy Reines (Sciences)
Sweeney Windchief (Education)
Katey Franklin (Health & Human Development)
Molly Secor (Nursing)
Ryan Thum (Agriculture)
Akash Gulati (Student Representative)
Kari Perry (Student Representative)
Anna French (Student Representative)
Brennan Reeves (Office of International Programs)
Sarah Mannheimer (Library)
Deborah Haynes (Dean of The Graduate School)

Also in Attendance:

Emily Peters (Graduate School)
Lauren Cerretti (Graduate School)

Absent

Meeting started at 10:00 a.m.

March 5, 2025 minutes

- Motion to approve by Beamish, Giullian 2nd, unanimous approval, motion passes

Announcements

- Welcome to new member Molly Secor
- Deborah Haynes appointed as permanent Graduate School Dean
 - UGC and Faculty Senate have received concerns that this appointment occurred without a search
 - Graduate Council, faculty, staff, graduate students were not given an opportunity to provide input

- Lack of communication, transparency, shared governance
 - UGC members to write an email to the President and Provost
- Faculty Senate update
 - Agenda items for last meeting of the semester: report from faculty athletic representative and athletic director, parking discussion, pending course approvals
 - Doug Downs selected as chair-elect
 - Suggest faculty senate issue a statement addressing international students
 - A senator can bring this forward as a motion

New Business

- Office of International Programs updates
 - Three student records were terminated in SEVIS last Thursday. President and Provost were immediately involved. Working individually with students to create a path forward. ASMSU legal services and CPS have been made available for all international students, regardless of fee status.
 - Discussion
 - Students can remain enrolled. There is no known intent to deport them. Making plans to help them finish remotely if necessary.
 - Is the university able to offer financial support (e.g., tuition waivers since the students can't remain on assistantships)?
 - Case-by-case basis
 - Dean Haynes to look into options
 - 2 graduate students are being represented by ACLU of Montana
 - Judge in Missoula ordered their SEVIS status must be reinstated. Granted a restraining order that protects students from being detained, deported. Hearing in 2 weeks.
 - Feedback from students: students want stronger message that the university will support them. Lack of information on what to do. Legal services and CPS being made available to international students was only communicated through union, does not go to all students. How do we stay safe?
 - Connected students to immigration attorneys
 - OIP is holding listening sessions twice a week. Communicating directly to groups of international students to attend these sessions.
 - Discussion on general guidance:
 - Avoid international travel
 - Stay out of trouble with the law
 - If approached by someone claiming to be ICE call 911
 - Chief of police will be attending listening sessions
 - Recommend getting individualized advice from OIP
 - International students have expressed concern with the delay in being invited to listening sessions. Mirroring what happened with QSA death threats. Information needs to go out quickly and go out beyond the international student community.
 - Is there any advice to offer departments?

- Meeting with department heads yesterday
 - Advice is case-by-case
 - Would be helpful to send a message with general guidance (e.g., what are your rights)
 - Suggest Faculty Senate could send out a message
 - Discussion on re-entry into the United States for students traveling abroad
 - Notice issued by US Customs & Immigration – will be monitoring social media accounts
 - University support of students is important as ideology of land-grant university. The university should send a general communication that the university supports you and what your rights are.
 - Dean Haynes will talk to Sally Mudiamu and Provost Mokwa about potential communications.
- Graduate Student updates
 - Housing: graduate students met with university housing, Dean Haynes, and Chair Warnat for a listening session and to present housing solutions. Two representatives from HR also were in attendance.
 - Issues discussed: 1) low availability of graduate housing 2) affordability in community and on campus. Recent proposals to increase on campus housing costs 3) conditions of on campus housing
 - Availability: student have been told it is not feasible to build new graduate housing. Students proposed partnering with off-campus housing. Told this is illegal. Would like to continue working with housing on more creative solutions.
 - 30% of enrolled UG and GR students currently in campus housing
 - Suggest creating a housing council. Could have a graduate student representative on the council.
 - Affordability: example of a history graduate student – rent costs 90% of his stipend. BOR decides graduate housing rents. Additional costs for maintenance. 15% increase in rents for this fall and next fall. Graduate students are not getting cost of living increases in their stipends. State mandated to increase housing but not to increase stipends.
 - Dean Haynes is working with alumni foundation on endowment funds for graduate housing scholarships
 - Group of graduate students shared a list of concerns. Graduate students passed a vote of no confidence in the university administration.
 - GRE Discussion
 - Faculty asking for clarification on why GRE was removed as requirement and would appreciate it returning
 - GRE changed during covid, national trend, seen as a biased barrier to entry, removing it is more in line with holistic admissions
 - Suggest programs could decide whether or not to require it

- Most students are in opposition of bringing back the GRE. Diversity, equity, inclusion concerns. Barrier for Nontraditional and international students. These students would be less likely to come to Montana State.
- Continue discussion at next meeting

Public comment

Adjourned at 11:34 am

Next scheduled meeting – April 30, 2025