

Graduate Council Meeting Minutes

Tuesday October 6, 2026

Members/Alternates Present:

Lipford, Heather, Interim Chair – Human-Centered Computing and Education
Barto, Jeff - Applied Physiology, Health, & Clinical Sciences
Browne, Aidan - School of Energy
Christou, Eliana - Mathematics and Statistics
Cox, Kyle - Educational Leadership
Faklaris, Cori - Human-Centered Computing and Education
Hayes, Nathan - Management
Hultquist, Lauren - Graduate & Professional Student Government
McCormick, Liz – Architecture
Moller, Stephanie - Sociology
Moore, Abby - Atkins Library
Tolone, Bill – Dean of the Graduate School

Also Attending: Coffey, Lauren - Graduate School
Hall-Hertel, Katherine – Graduate School
Wyse, Matt – Academic Affairs, Faculty Governance Assistant

Absent: Lachance, Joan - Middle, Secondary, and K-12 Education
Murtha, Timothy – Anthropology

I. Report of the Chair – Heather Lipford

A. Approval of the September 1, 2026, minutes.

Hayes motioned to approve the September 1, 2026, minutes and Moore seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

II. Report of the Dean – William Tolone

Dean Tolone presented several strategic goals for the Graduate School, including enrollment of 7,000 graduate students, 20 graduate programs ranked in the top 50 programs in the country, and 5,400 online students, both undergraduate and graduate.

III. Discussion Topics

A. Updated Accelerated Pathways Proposal

The update Accelerated Pathways proposal, previously presented to the Council, was brought up for discussion and vote by Chair Lipford. Katherine Hall-Hertel of the Graduate School

noted that the Graduate School's role was to make it possible for programs to adopt the updates presented in the proposal, not to push them to change their programs.

Hall-Hertel noted that these changes will disadvantage any of our current programs.

The first new item in the proposal is the nanocertificate, a 6-credit hour program that can be stacked with other nanocertificates towards a certificate or master's program. Students will receive a transcript notation when they complete the nanocertificate.

Chair Lipford noted that for Computer Science, it is a way to attract students already in the industry who want to scale up without getting another degree, and she added that these competencies are not available from a professional school.

Students interested in a nanocertificate will apply for the certificate and indicate in the application that they are interested in the nanocertificate. The nanocertificate courses will be credit bearing, and they will be eligible for financial aid.

Browne asked if other universities have nanocertificates and if it would be better to call it nanocredential. Hall-Hertel said they went with nanocertificate to distinguish it from microcredentials. Browne called for a vote to rename nanocertificate to nanocredentials. McCormick seconded the motion. Four members voted in favor of the rename while 6 opposed the rename. The motion did not pass.

Browne motioned to approve this section and McCormick seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

The second change in the proposal is establishing a 60-credit hour minimum for doctoral degrees, including PhDs and professional doctorate degrees such as EdD, DBA and DNP. As Hall-Hertel noted, this gives programs flexibility in line with recent federal policies. Dean Tolone said that programs do not have to change, but this new policy gives them options. He also assured the Council that funding will not change.

Moore motioned to pass the proposal. Faklaris seconded the motion. 6 voted to approve the proposal, 1 was opposed, and 3 abstained. The motion was approved.

IV. Other Business

Chair Lipford reminded the Council that the November meeting was moved to November 10 due to election day on the 3rd.

The meeting adjourned at 2:00 PM.

The next meeting is scheduled for November 10, 2026.

Respectfully submitted,

Daniel Jones

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