

*Graduate Council*  
**GRADUATE COUNCIL**  
**MINUTES**

Friday, February 28, 2025 • 11:00 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.  
Faculty Center

**Members of the Graduate Council Present:**

Dennis LaJeunesse, Chair	Christian Moraru
Ben Dyson	Salih Rakap
Diane Gill	Aileen Reid
Lakshmi Iyer	Robert Wells
Brad Johnson	Melody Patterson Zoch
Marianne LeGreco	Terry Chavis
Vladislav Maksimov	

**Members of the Graduate Council Absent:**

Gwen Schug	Yolanda Ikazaoboh
Wanda Williams	

**Ex Officio & Non-Voting Members Present:**

Greg Bell	Graduate School
Lisa Henline	University Registrar's Office
Jodi Pettazzoni	Office of Assessment, Accreditation, and Academic Program Planning

<u>Time</u>	<u>Agenda Item</u>
11:00 a.m.	<p><b>I. Approval of Minutes from January 31, 2025</b></p> <p>Motion to approve January 31, 2025 minutes (Johnson, Dyson). Minutes approved.</p>
11:03	<p><b>II. Report of the Chair—Dennis LaJeunesse</b></p> <p>Chair LaJeunesse shared that he has enjoyed serving as chair of the Graduate Council but will be stepping back from serving as chair (likely at the end of the semester) due to health challenges. The Council will hold a special election for a new chair/chair-elect during the meeting.</p>
11:13	<p><b>III. Report of the Dean of the Graduate School – Greg Bell</b></p> <p>Dean Bell reported that he attended the Research Advisory Council and shared that there are currently two orders that allow higher education to continue as usual. However, there are 4 grants at UNCG that have been stopped. Per Vice Chancellor for Research and Engagement Sherine Obare, funding is not available to cover the lost grant funding. Although UNCG receives most of its graduate student funding from state funds, this presents concerns regarding recruiting and funding graduate students.</p> <p>Chair LaJeunesse mentioned that he has heard concerns from other schools and programs not accepting students and inquired if this could be a concern at UNCG. Dean Bell stated that he has met with the graduate deans of the UNC System institutions and that they are emphasizing that</p>

funding is contingent upon budgets, which may be a good practice for UNCG to adopt as well. Dean Bell stated that UNCG may need to be more cautious in language regarding funding but that he does not foresee rescinding offers of admission.

Dean Bell also discussed the Tripp memo from the UNC System regarding DEI courses. UNCG was required to remove all DEI content from the general education program and removed the Diversity and Equity MAC competency. All major programs were also required to remove all requirements of DEI courses. Chancellors are able to ask for exemptions. Andrew Hamilton has identified undergraduate and graduate courses of concern, which he shared with deans and General Counsel. The course review was based on course title, then course description, and syllabi were requested as needed. Only about a dozen courses have been determined to be subject to the memo and many are tied to accreditation. They will ask the Chancellor for an exemption for these courses. Undergraduate students who were affected have been contacted but as long as the exemptions are approved it is not expected that graduate students will be affected.

Chair LaJeunesse inquired whether the Graduate Curriculum Committee will need to consider DEI content in future courses and programs. Jodi Pettazoni stated that program and unit committees should be reviewing courses and programs with this in mind. It is uncertain whether any further waivers would be available. Marianne LeGreco discussed that courses could have optional content that includes DEI topics, and Jodi stated that as long as the content is optional it would be okay. Lakshmi Iyer expressed concern that some students may complain if they encounter DEI content, and Dean Bell stated that those types of complaints would go to the Chancellor, Provost, Andrew Hamilton, and himself.

Dean Bell reported that the Strategic Plan includes a goal to modernize graduate education, and he encouraged the Council to familiarize themselves with the Strategic Plan. Dean Bell also shared that the Graduate School is doing better in terms of admissions metrics than this time last year: up 749 applications (20%), 106 admissions (10%), and 92 students who have confirmed intent to enroll (11.99%).

11:28

#### **IV. Report of the Graduate Student Association – Terry Chavis**

Terry reported that the professional development funding window will be open until March 21. The GSA was able to save funds for the spring funding window in anticipation of additional requests.

Terry stated that Dean Bell's email to faculty regarding senate representation was helpful and that only 4 departments were not represented at the last Senate meeting. The GSA approved a constitutional change to hold a staggered elections cycle to avoid having the full executive board graduate at the same time.

Terry shared that he has been meeting with Dean Bell, Dr. Akens, and Chancellor Gilliam regarding graduate student concerns. One of the main concerns was regarding the lack of increases in GA stipends. Other concerns include advocating for international students and students in Integrative Community Studies.

Terry reported that Graduate Student Appreciation Week will be held

April 7-11, and the list of events is being finalized.

Aileen Reid asked whether professional development funds could be used for DEI related activities, and Terry and Dean Bell stated they would look into it. Lakshmi Iyer stated that the Bryan School previously participated in a conference to recruit diverse PhD candidates but that they are no longer participating due to concerns of how it would be perceived. Terry shared that he works with an organization helping indigenous individuals navigating treaty rights with the US government, and indigenous groups are seen as political entities rather than ethnic groups, which means they are treated differently.

The Council discussed that international students are experiencing increased concerns regarding funding and documentation, and that many are concerned about traveling, whether to their home countries or even domestically in the US. The Council also discussed that changes regarding the Department of Education may impact graduate education in the future.

- 11:38      **V.      Report of the Graduate Curriculum Committee – Robert Wells**
- *GCC Information Items (from February 21, 2025 meeting)*
- Chair-elect Rakap reported that the GCC met virtually on February 21 and approved 8 proposals.
- 11:48      **VI.      Report of the Policies & Procedures Committee – Brad Johnson**
- Chair Johnson stated that the committee discussed the proposed Academic Recovery policies at their February meeting. Maria Hayden has since revised the policies and they will be revisited at the March meeting. The committee also plans to discuss graduate student full-time status since some students are not able to enroll in 9 hours each semester based on their program requirements.
- 11:58      **VII.      Report of the Student Appeals Committee—No report**
- 12:00 pm      **VIII.      Report of the Faculty Senate Executive Committee – Dennis LaJeunesse**
- Chair LaJeunesse stated that he did not have a report from the Faculty Senate Executive Committee but encouraged the Council to attend the Faculty Senate meeting on March 5 to stay informed.
- 12:10      **IX.      Special Election of Graduate Council Chair**
- Chair LaJeunesse discussed the duties of Graduate Council Chair, and Ben Dyson volunteered to serve a one-year term and will likely take over for the fall semester. A motion was made for Ben Dyson to serve as Graduate Council Chair (Johnson, Reid). Ben Dyson was approved as chair with 1 recusal.
- 12:30      **X.      Adjournment**

