

Graduate Council
GRADUATE COUNCIL
MINUTES

Friday, October 31, 2025 • 11:00 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.
Virtual

Members of the Graduate Council Present:

Ben Dyson, Chair	Salih Rakap
Rick Barton	Gwen Schug
Dora Gicheva	Jin Su
Dennis LaJeunesse	Robert Wells
Jocelyn Smith Lee	Melody Patterson Zoch
Marianne LeGreco	Nooshin KianvashRad
Vladislav Maksimov	Sarah Posidis-Kowalski

Members of the Graduate Council Absent:

Brad Johnson

Ex Officio & Non-Voting Members Present:

Greg Bell	Graduate School
Jodi Pettazzoni	Office of Assessment, Accreditation, and Academic Program Planning

Ex Officio & Non-Voting Members Absent:

Lisa Henline	University Registrar's Office
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Guests:

Maria Anastasiou

<u>Time</u>	<u>Agenda Item</u>
11:00 a.m.	I. Welcome from Chair—Ben Dyson Chair Dyson welcomed the Council with a Maori greeting and thanked Maria Anastasiou for joining the meeting.
11:03	II. Approval of Minutes from October 3, 2025 Motion to approve October 3, 2025 minutes (Wells, Barton). Minutes approved.
11:05	III. Maria Anastasiou, Associate Provost for Global Engagement Maria thanked the Graduate Council for their invitation to the meeting and support. She highlighted the following topics: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Time it takes for students to apply for and receive a visa<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ In countries where a lot of students are applying for visas, the wait time can be 4-5 months<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Many UNCG international students come from China, Ghana, Nigeria, India, and South Korea

- If programs can have a rolling admission deadline and offer early admission decisions to students, this is helpful as students can include admission documents when applying for visas
 - Even if there is no funding or if funding has not yet been determined, it is more helpful to international students to admit them early
- You may have heard in the news this week about the elimination of the automatic extension for certain Employment Authorization Documents (EADs)
 - This does NOT apply to EADs for OPT extensions, so it is not affecting UNCG international students
- If a student changes status from OPT to H-1B while in the US, the employer does not have to pay the \$100,000 fee. When the student travels to their home country to get the H1B visa stamp in their passport, they are not subject to the fee.
- SEVIS Updates
 - DHS oversees the SEVIS database that houses J-1 and F-1 visa holders
 - DHS is paying more attention to SEVIS records and still can terminate if they see criminal records for students. We are being asked to report criminal instances we learn and GEO is working with Dean of Students office to determine a process (Maria forgot to mention this in the meeting but alerted us to it afterwards)..
 - DHS is reviewing academic program information in SEVIS more closely
 - Some UNCG programs, such as those established before the SEVIS database was started in 2003, will need to submit additional information. The Global Engagement office held a session on 10/30/2025 that addresses this issue and Maria will share the slides and recording.
 - International students come to the U.S. with a duration of status for their program
 - Previously the student's stay could be extended if needed with the department's approval (government approval was not needed)
 - In August, a change was proposed for this rule
 - The public comment period for the change ended on September 29
 - A decision about this proposed rule may be announced 30-60 days after the public comment period ends but it depends on how long it takes them to review the comments

- There is a lack of clarity on program lengths, but the greatest concern is for doctoral programs since 4 years is shorter than most doctoral programs
 - To extend their stay to finish the program, a student would need to petition the government and pay a fee. Current fees range from \$380-420 but what the fee could be for this rule, has not been shared.
 - It is uncertain whether the new rule will affect both current and incoming students or just incoming students
- International Students Traveling Domestically
 - Some international students have had difficulties flying within the U.S. without a REAL ID
 - Students have used passports but have encountered issues when the passport shows an expired visa, which is an entry to the US requirement and does not indicate legal presence in the US.
 - Global Engagement Office recommends international students obtain a REAL ID and keep their immigration documents with them when traveling

Chair Dyson inquired about UNCG international students applying for jobs at UNCG and other universities and being excluded. Maria reported that labor laws require that international students not be excluded but that UNCG can ask questions about whether applicants need sponsorship. She stated that the challenge is applicants who are not in the U.S. as those are the applicants for whom UNCG would have to pay the \$100,000 fee if hired.

Maria recommended that the Council refer to the [Global Engagement Office website for Alerts and Announcements](#) to stay up to date on relevant information.

Maria also encouraged the Council to follow up with Andrea Whitley in the Provost's Office with any questions regarding H-1B visas.

11:20 **IV. Report of the Dean of the Graduate School – Greg Bell**

Dean Bell thanked the Council for their work and advocacy this year.

He informed the Council of upcoming events:

- 3 Minute Thesis Finals on November 2 at 2 pm in the Oakley Family Room in the Alumni House
- Doctoral Hooding Ceremony on December 11 at 10 am in the UNCG Auditorium
 - Faculty will be seated on the stage again this year
 - Renovations in the Taylor Theatre make it

challenging for faculty and students to line up together and be seated together

- Faculty may be able to be seated with students at the next Doctoral Hooding Ceremony
- Commencement on December 12 at 10 am in the First Horizon Coliseum
 - Master's graduates will be recognized
- NC Council of Graduate Schools hosted at UNCG on November 14
 - Dean Bell and the Graduate School staff will be coordinating the conference

Dean Bell reported that he will meet with the academic unit deans next week to discuss the allocation of tuition waivers. Budget cuts have affected how departments are able to pay graduate students, and Dean Bell wants to ensure the tuition waiver funds are used for the greatest benefit. He expects to allocate the tuition waiver funds by the end of the calendar year.

11:35 **V. Report of the Graduate Student Association – Nooshin KianvashRad**

Nooshin shared that the GSA is inviting alumni and companies for a showcase night in January 2026.

She reported that she has discussed the proposed 3% increase in tuition with Dean Bell.

Dean Bell discussed that when tuition is increased the state often increased tuition waivers and he can advocate for this.

11:45 **VI. Report of the Graduate Curriculum Committee – Salih Rakap**

- *GCC Information Items (from October 17, 2025 meeting)*
 - Chair Rakap reported that 13 proposals were approved at the October 17 meeting, included the Occupational Therapy, M.S.O.T.
 - Request to Establish proposal: Occupational Therapy, M.S.OT.

The Council discussed the proposal and made a motion to approve the Occupational Therapy, M.S.O.T. Motion approved (Wells, Barton).

11:55 **VII. Report of the Policies & Procedures Committee – Rick Barton for Brad Johnson**

- *Updates from October 24, 2025 meeting*
 - Potential revisions to Selective Retroactive Withdrawals for Extenuating Circumstances
 - Rick explained that there are currently two

special occupation designations of H1-B visas.

He also reported that the UNC System has revised faculty workload regulations, and Professional Track Faculty (PTF) who have been on 1 year contracts for 3 years must have an explanation from the Provost for why they are not on a multi-year contract. The new regulation will not apply immediately.

Chair Dyson shared that the DEI Committee for Faculty Senate has been renamed Community and Climate.

12:30

X.

Adjournment