**Graduate Council Meeting Minutes**

**September 10, 2025**

**J. O’Brien-Brown, A. Ruzsinszky, M. Cunningham, R. Chavez, C. Beasley, S. Berry, S. Meadows, A. West, K. Sparks, G. Morris, B. McFadden, D. Omerbasic, S. Overstreet, S. Montes, D. Shantz, V. Subramaniam, D. Smilde (guest), N. Nguyen, D. Pociask, M. Kohler, L. Lukkarila, D. Lowell, K. Haugeberg, A. Leguizamon (guest), K. Andrinopoulos, A. Anagnost, K. Jack (guest), T. Rosensteel, C. Stieber, S. Bernhard, R. Stivers, A. Schumacher, C. Richard**

1. Meeting called at 8:31
2. Approval of May Minutes, motioned by B. McFadden, seconded by V. Subramaniam
3. Grad Council Meeting Dates for Fall 2025
	1. Program proposals and major changes must reach the Grad Council stage in CIM by the first Wednesday of the month. Email notice to Mike and Jennifer is greatly appreciated.
	2. New programs and significant changes must have all approvals by early spring to be included in next year’s catalog.
	3. October 8
	4. November 12
	5. December 10
4. Announcements
	1. Had our first welcome event for new graduate and professional students – had approximately 180 students from all schools
	2. National Postdoc Appreciation Week is next week (September 15)
	3. Overview of Grad Council, rights and responsibilities of members – presentation by M. Cunningham
		1. Overview of graduate and professional education at Tulane. Services provided around the university for students, such as OISS, CELT, Health Center, Student Affairs
		2. Decentralized graduate studies at Tulane can help schools to plan and budget, but does mean that we don’t always have a good picture of what other graduate/professional units are doing around the university. Admissions is handled within the schools and it is generally not questioned by central administration. Likewise, we don’t get too deeply involved in decisions of who stays, though we set the policies about tenure, etc. We approve certain changes, particularly in research based programs, and get notifications from professional programs
		3. Policies about TAs and RAs, versus GAs who might be student workers and not on a stipend
		4. Different places where the line between graduate and professional students is drawn. Federal government only counts JDs and MDs as professional
		5. Can the programs or schools answer the questions that we suggested? It’s hard to evaluate things too far outside of their field
		6. Significant changes to credits in a professional school should be presented to Grad Council
		7. Changes need to be out of the schools and to the provost/GC by late February
	4. PhD reviews in 25-26
		1. Anthropology
		2. Latin American Studies
		3. Latin American Art History
		4. Next year will be BMS, SPHTM, Aging Studies
5. Proof of Bachelor’s Degree for Graduate Program Admission/Enrollment Policy – vote, 18 in favor, 3 abstentions, motion passes
6. BMS
	1. Biomedical Informatics and Genomics MS – vote, passed unanimously
	2. This is a lot of coursework for one year, but most BMS MS programs are similar and students finish
7. SLA
	1. Sociology PhD – vote, 18 in favor, one abstention, motion passes
	2. Masters requirement – do students do a thesis? Yes, it is a thesis based program. Master’s degree en route to the PhD, particularly for students who don’t finish. Students in CCC felt that by the time they got to the dissertation that they didn’t have experience with research. There will be a thesis bootcamp for the MA thesis to help them get started. Recommendation for students to get the thesis started by the second semester of the first year so that time to degree is preserved.
8. Discussion of part time PhD in SSE
	1. Currently, no PhD programs have part-time programs. Tulane employees who have wanted to pursue a PhD have started as “special studies” to take courses with the tuition waiver until they are at a good point to start the PhD and finish within 7 years
	2. The particular situation is to work with an employee who just finished their MS and will be a fellow within an institute at Tulane. Computer Science seems particularly amenable to this kind of expansion of the PhD
	3. SSE wants to have a sunset clause in case this isn’t actually popular
	4. Will borrow from peer institutions to see how they handle it
	5. River-Coastal Science and Engineering has partnerships with industry and may have some elements that can be cribbed
9. New business
	1. GRE optional policy needs to be revisited as there was a 5 year sunset on it. Plan to discuss next meeting. Compare how many students applied, yield, etc
	2. Election of Vice Chair will be handled in October. Vice Chair runs GC if Mike is unavailable, produces an executive summary of PhD reviews
	3. How are programs handling the changes to programs to manage the changes to the federal loan program. Jessica Shedd may have some input. Federal government only considers JDs and MDs as professional students, hard to figure out how this will work. MSW has to be 60 hours, so they’re having trouble figuring out how to adjust things to accommodate issues with financial aid
	4. Government affairs asked deans/associate deans to provide comments when the change was open for comments
10. Motion to adjourn at 9:28, K. Andrinopoulos, seconded by D. Shantz