

APPROVED Minutes

**Graduate Programs Committee**

Date: February 9, 2024 | 2 - 3pm | Darland 520

Approval Date: February 23, 2024

Present: Jay Austin, Alyssa Boardman, Erik Brown, Dana Collins, Pedro Fernandez-Funez, Karen Gran, Alison Hoxie (*Chair*), Harsh Jain, Johanna Jernberg, Nathan Johnson, Arshia Khan, Josie Manning, Melissa Maurer-Jones, Nomi Ostrander, Catherine Reich, Michael Rother, Katherine Schofield, Kathryn Schreiner, Ariuna Taivan, Hua Tang, Rebecca Webster, Sara Zimmer ([List of programs represented](#))

Absent: David Beard, Julie Ernst, Alec Habig, Stanley Sujith Nelavala

Called to order at 2:00pm.

Approval of the January 26, 2024 meeting minutes.

A motion to approve the minutes with corrections of a typo and a bad link was made, seconded, and passed by a majority vote.

[Committee reports](#) (as needed, for **information** related to grad ed)

- See linked document for shared governance committee updates.
- Graduate Student Association updates - Johanna Jernberg, Josie Manning, Stanley Sujith Nelavala

The GSA leaders presented a funding request for \$2050 to the Student Government Association to support GSA-sponsored events. Use of funds from the SGA is more restricted than funds from the Student Services Fee (SSF) Committee, but groups receiving SGA funds (called Student Org Grants - SOG) can provide programming to more targeted student audiences. Programming supported by SSF must be open to all students. The GSA will need to come up with some different approaches to events to stay in compliance with SOG rules.

Topics for review/discussion/action

1. APAA Action Planning meetings

There was a general consensus that programs are getting the information and assistance needed from meetings hosted by AVC Jen Mencl and their collegiate deans.

2. AI in Graduate Education (Nate)

The use of generative artificial intelligence (GAI) in graduate education is under discussion by the Graduate School Advisory Board. [Suggested language for syllabi](#) allowing for different levels of adoption of AI was presented at the November meeting. The GSAB discussed the following questions, and Grad Programs Committee members provided feedback that Nate will share back with the GSAB:

- a. What are the commonalities and differences between graduate students/postdocs and undergrads related to using GAI in an academic & scholarly context?

Grad students are asked to write more in depth, create new knowledge rather than learn existing knowledge. If writing grants for NSF, use of GAI must be reported, but there's no policy prohibiting it. Undergrads write to practice the skill of writing; graduate students write to produce knowledge and articulate ideas that will be preserved.

It was remarked that teaching students how to use GAI could be viewed similarly to teaching them how to use a calculator. ChatGPT could be used for generating ideas. A student rep reported having a course in which the standards for using and citing the use of AI were clearly spelled out.

- b. Beyond the classroom, what other spaces and circumstances do we need to consider when thinking about GAI for graduate education and postdoctoral training?

It was mentioned that AI has many uses in coding. Concerns about training AI using personal information, health or otherwise, were mentioned. This would be particularly of concern in a clinical or research setting, and it was asked whether there were any IRB policies around the use of AI. Proprietary information (patents, etc.) can't be put into AI. It also can't be used for grant or manuscript reviews.

- c. What other issues or concerns should inform our discussions on this topic moving forward?

It's important to consider what information is given up when training AI (personal or proprietary information, for example). Users should be mindful of whether they are putting any personal information into an AI system, e.g., for the purpose of generating letters of recommendation.

This might also be of concern if AI were used for grading.

Nate will share this feedback with the GSAB. The general conclusions of the group are that it would be good to draw a clear line between appropriate and inappropriate uses of AI, and to educate graduate students on the downfalls of relying on AI, recognizing that there may be some discipline-specific variance. A section of the Twin Cities Chemistry [graduate program handbook](#) contains recommendations for the use of AI, summarized from a 2023 article in the *ACS Nano*.

3. [Academic policies for review](#) - [comment period](#) closes Feb 19. All are invited to provide feedback.

The Excused Absence policy includes absence for health reasons - no documentation is required for such absences, due to concerns about private health information. Faculty should not ask for documentation, but there are questions about what to do in cases of extended absences.

4. [Graduate Student Recruitment](#) - GEM Scholarships

Funding for GEM scholarships to help offset the difference between resident and non-resident tuition has been identified for **this year only**. [Nominations](#) will be accepted until the funds are exhausted. DMS programs and students from reciprocity states/provinces are not eligible.

GCTF/GSSF/DSF Round 1 - A representative from an SCSE program is needed to serve on the review committee. They may serve even if they have nominated some candidates. Karen Gran agreed to serve. Round 2 nominations, due March 11, are to accommodate programs with later rounds of recruitment.

#### Updates/Announcements

1. Commencement - Please have graduating students **RSVP by March 8**. Information is available on our [Graduate Commencement](#) page.
2. GPAS reminder - Anyone initiating or approving exceptions in GPAS must complete [exceptions training](#) in order to access the system.

3. Status of Grad Ed reports in Reporting Center:

**Reports moved to new platforms and available in Reporting Center:**

- Major/Minor Roster
- Eligibility for lower tuition fringe rate assistantship (advanced status)

**Reports with work currently in progress:**

- Anticipated deployment in February 2024 (subject to change)
  - GE Student Non-Graded Course Enrollments (Grad 999, thesis credits, advanced status, etc.)
- Anticipated deployment in late February/early March 2024 (subject to change)
  - Graduate Education Student Report for Majors/Minors
  - Degree Applicants

4. [Research Ethics Week](#) | February 26 - March 1

There will be two presentations in-person at UMD on Friday, March 1 (Danielle Rintala (RIO) Hot Topics in Research Integrity and Ilana Cohen (IACUC Director) Ethical Issues in Research with Animals).

There was a question about the ethics requirement for all grad students - it is still required and is generally covered in graduate seminar or professional issues course. Ethics training is required by the federal government for grant eligibility.

If anyone has an ethics-related topic they want to present, the Research & Innovation Office (RIO) has a [form](#) to collect entries each year. Contact Danielle Rintala, Director of Research Integrity and Compliance ([rinta015@umn.edu](mailto:rinta015@umn.edu)) with any questions about Research Ethics Week.

5. EVCAA Research and Scholarship Grants

The RSCA has established seed grants to encourage interdisciplinary collaboration that could lead to external funding. A solicitation will come out later today.

Next meeting: Friday, February 23, 2024 | 2 - 3pm | Darland 520

Adjourned at 3:00pm