



## Graduate Council Meeting

Minutes: May 5, 2025

**Attendees:** **CART:** Ronald Sharpe, Yi Luo, Scott Richards, marcus d. harvey, **CCHL:** Amanda Birnbaum, Matthew Shurts, Brad van Eeden-Moorefield, Meena Mahadevan, Dana Levitt, **CEEL:** Kayla Cunningham O'Donnell, Sumi Hagawara, Eric Jacobson, **CHSS:** Jessica Brandt, Anna Feldman, Emily Douglas, **CSAM:** Matt Schuler, Scott Kight, Hao Liu, **SBUS:** Rashmi Jain, Betsy Rosini, Dejah Ndiaye, **NURS:** Elizabeth Fitzgerald, **AFT:** Jonathan Howell, **TGS:** Laura Valente, Stefanie Brachfeld, Michael Stuhlmiller, Deborah Reynoso, Chris King, Valerie Sessa, **Grad Adm:** Tim Hart, John Van Brunt, Ginneh Collins, Jennifer O'Sullivan, **Provost:** Junius Gonzalez, Kyle Dobbek, Marc Austin, **President:** Jonathan Koppell

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1. Opening remarks from GC leadership / approval of minutes from the April 23<sup>rd</sup> meeting.

Reminder: nominations for eboard (chair, vice-chair, and secretary)

Voter for approval of minutes. Minutes are approved.

2. Reports: (3-4 minutes each)

- TGS Report

Reminder to attend graduation

- Report from Graduate Admissions

Introducing Associate VP, Graduate Admissions: John Van Brunt

International students issues

- Report from the Curriculum Committee

Nothing to report

- Report from the Policy Committee

Met on Friday after attending curriculum meeting. Stackables—felt that the curriculum committee had done a great start (benchmarking). Discussed some portions. Will keep collaborating with curriculum.

- Report from the Student Affairs Committee

Tarika on sabbatical in the fall. Will need someone else to chair the committee next year.

Birnbaum's department was a recipient of the student project funding—they are thrilled with the result.

Brachfeld—24 projects applied, 12 projects were approved. 2 withdrew for various reasons. Interns have been working on their projects for about a month. International students are particularly interested. Funding approved to do it again.

Question: Changes planned for TGS moving forward. Reorganization (Junius will speak to that when he gets here (\*\*he did not have a chance to, he will now do this during our retreat).

Curriculum committee and policy committee will report to directly to the Provost rather than the grad school.

Public health is being decimated/dismantled. Theatre is being dismantled (Kennedy center, NEA grants are stopped). NPR/PBS. Is this going to affect the number of grad students we support (good news is that grad students are funded differently from InDirectCosts)

Valerie to send out calendar invite to retreat. (Grad retreat on June 2)

3. Discussion on matters related to graduate education with President Koppell and Provost Gonzales (from 2:30 to 3:30)
  - Impressions of current geo-political issues and their impact on international relationships  
-partnerships, exchange programs, international students.

Ability to predict how things play out is limited. The relationship of the US to the world has changed. Implications for the university are hard to capture. Practical issues: 1. the status of our students have leveled off, visas weren't technically taken away (4 students are back in the system and not in danger of something bad happening at this moment). Fulbright and others are interrupted—no idea whether these will continue (even though congress funded). (Test of 1974 impoundment act). Questionable whether the federal government programs to support international students is up in the air. Will the federal government support international students (e.g., visas, no one left to process visas, for example, but maybe visa processing will become more efficient), are international students going to continue to want to come here, demand may lower, students being advised not to come? US is not alone—also Canada, UK, Australia. Other countries such as Japan, China are rising in interest.

Not giving up here at the University. Partnering with universities in other parts of the world. Bi-lateral relationships (e.g., Gras). These can be richer than inviting individual students here, opens up all kinds of opportunities, online, faculty exchanges—deeper and more meaningful. Engagement by universities as source of understanding and connection will become dramatically more important (as government withdraws). Universities historically have remained bridges.

International students are a noticeable part of our community (1000).

**Is your sense that some folks are working on strategy?** Broader question of how is higher ed responding is very coordinated. Depends on the issue what the coordinating body is. Attempt to not divide institutions. Biggest challenge is “red state/blue state” divide.

**Do you see MSU having international presence (MSU international campuses by partnering with other universities)?** Goal of Koppel's (a billion students in India. Can't bring them all to the US. India is wildly in need of teachers (and we are a NORMAL school)). Go into places with exploding numbers of young people. Biggest challenge—we do not have the same financial capacity as places like NYU.

Koppel—wishes all students could do international experiences. He has done this himself.

Gonzalez—also domestic relationships, study away (in country). Also pipelines with baccalaureate institutions (attract graduate students from those—4+1 from HSBUs).

How is this a steady march towards an R1? Koppel: Who knows? What the \$ values of research universities is going to look like? Strongly ambivalent about the production of doctorates as being necessary for R1s. Who knows what R1 and R2 are going to look like-goal posts will move. Q-how do we continually march towards being a research intensive university becomes more present (rather than pursuing R1, external measures).

- Challenges around presentation of DEI (Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion) content and implications for existing and future academic programs

Trying to pay attention to the rhetoric but at the same time paying attention to the law. Reality is that the administration can interpret the civil rights law. Our position—everything we do is open to everyone. Actually little of what we do is directed towards particular groups. Any club, any activity is already open to all students (but it doesn't necessarily say this—we will be adding this). For the most part, it is really about how we describe things. What we have not gotten into the programmatic parts (like evaluations). other “shoe” is accreditation—executive order: An accrediting body cannot make requirements about DEI as part of our accreditation.

**Why does accreditation matter?** In order for an accreditor to operate, they have to be acknowledged by the US as legit. If we are accredited by a recognized accreditation body, we can receive federal financial aid.

Gonzalez—review program descriptions. President—eliminates all federal work study, etc.

For most of us authoritarian regimes are not something we are familiar with. Not used to having the federal govt deciding what to teach. We need to decide what is fundamental to what we are doing and what is not. We are facing an existential crisis. How many fronts can you fight on at once?

Need to maintain professionalism and control in the classroom.

- How Graduate Council can support efforts at the university for the items listed above.

We know that there are graduate degrees that are not worth very much. The best thing we can do is to be laser focused on very high-quality programs that are really meaningful, and valuable to students. Our programs should be of benefit. Link between academic programs and outcomes are really strong.

Gonzalez—now is the time to commit to the collective good. Not to be petty/departmental. Too much at risk for the students. Now is also the time to have a mindset of foresight (scenario planning) and to not being tied to “oh we’ve never done that”.

Koppel—think about ourselves to provide capital as a lender to our own students! Would you lend someone money to get the degree you are offering with the expectation that they can pay us back.

INVITE GONZALES TO THE RETREAT TO TALK ABOUT THE GRADUATE CENTER STRUCTURE.

#### 4. Adjourn

Remaining GC Meetings for AY 2024-25: Graduate Retreat on June 2<sup>nd</sup> (9-4)