

**GRADUATE COUNCIL MINUTES**  
Thursday, April 9, 2026 – Zoom Meeting

**PRESENT:** Sharon Campbell, Ngan Chau, Bree Dority, Janet Graham, Mary Harner, Angela Hollman, Christopher Strickland, Erin Sweeney, Frank Tenkorang, Laurinda Weisse, Melissa Wuellner, Mariana Paredes, Brenton Keese, and Megan Adkins

**ABSENT:** Naheed Abdulrahim, Torsten Homberger, Whitney Schneider-Cline, Doug Tillman, Michelle Warren, Emily Conrad, Linda Johnson

**GUESTS:** Megan Goeke, Jesslyn Hollar and Tiffany Stoiber

**I. Approval of the March 12, 2026, Amended Minutes – approved via email.** Motion to approve the minutes by Tillman/Wuellner.

**II. Graduate Studies Report**

Interim Dean:

*A. Clifton Strengths*

UNK is in the process of becoming a Clifton Strengths Campus. This initiative is being supported through a fee assessed to undergraduate students, implemented last year. Graduate students are not included in this fee; instead, Graduate Studies & Academic Innovation will cover associated costs to pilot and potentially expand the program for all graduate students.

A pilot program involving a select number of graduate programs will begin in the upcoming fall semester. Beginning in the spring, efforts will focus on integrating students' top five Clifton Strengths as a way to help track graduate student commitment to attending UNK. While Clifton Strengths is currently available to undergraduate students, access for graduate students is still under development. Upon admission, graduate students will receive notification with the opportunity to complete the Clifton Strengths assessment, with specific details still being finalized.

The initiative is intended to provide graduate students with information about Clifton Strengths, including the potential identification of their top five strengths. Plans are also underway to develop both asynchronous and synchronous professional development opportunities related to Clifton Strengths. Implementation for graduate students will occur gradually.

An ad hoc committee will be formed to support this initiative. Interim Dean Adkins asked for volunteers from the Graduate Council to serve on the committee, after no volunteers were identified she shared she will reach out to Graduate Program Coordinators/Chairs and the Graduate Student Association next to identify faculty, staff, and students interested in serving on the adhoc committee. Individuals interested in serving on the committee after further reflection are encouraged to contact Heather via email.

*B. Graduate Enrollment Projections*

Tiffany Stoiber presented several slides outlining current enrollment trends and identifying contributing factors. The presentation was followed by a discussion among council members.

*C. Graduate Research Day*

Student Research Day will take place on Thursday, April 16. Faculty and staff were encouraged to volunteer as judges to support and evaluate student presentations. The Council was provided with a

list of participants, with a total of 27 students presenting as part of Research Day. A schedule of events was also shared with the Council.

*D. Graduate Student Association Representatives*

It was noted that the Graduate Student Association is seeking student representation from the College of Arts & Sciences and the College of Business & Technology to serve on the Graduate Council. Individuals are encouraged to contact Heather with potential nominees. If no nominations are provided, Deans will be contacted to ask for a rotation of programs to begin appointing a student from their program to ensure student voice.

Additionally, the Association is seeking a faculty advisor. Those interested in serving in either role are encouraged to express their interest. Students are also needed to serve on the Executive Board.

*E. GPC Chair Graduate Programs*

The Senior Vice Chancellor has determined that, for programs that are exclusively graduate programs, it is in the best interest of those programs for the Chair to also serve as the Graduate Program Coordinator (GPC). Interim Dean Adkins has requested the development of a list of programs that may be appropriate for this model. Programs identified as potentially eligible will be contacted to begin discussions regarding implementation, which is anticipated to begin in the upcoming fall semester.

GPC appointment forms are due to the Graduate Office by May 1. GPCs will receive a stipend funded by OGSAI for the work completed in the summer. Duties associated with receiving the stipend have been shared multiple ways to ensure understanding.

Assistant Dean:

*A. Program revisions paperwork*

New program forms are required for use. Individuals planning to develop a micro-credential or a new program are asked to notify the Office of Graduate Studies and Academic Innovation. A program revision form must be completed if a program is changing by 25% or more. Those considering program changes are encouraged to consult with Dr. Nita Unruh, Dr. Sweeney, or other members of OGSAI Graduate leadership to determine whether the proposed changes meet the 25% threshold. If it is determined that the changes meet or exceed these guidelines, a revision form will be required.

*B. Program revisions paperwork*

The Registrar's Office contacted Dr. Sweeney and requested that course or program changes not be held but instead be returned to departments for correction. Unless it is a minor syllabus change, all other changes will be rolled back to the Graduate Program Coordinator (GPC) level for revision.

Associate Dean Engagement and Retention:

*A. Update on Graduate Assistant Training Module*

Strickland provided an update on the Graduate Assistant Training Module. The module is currently being developed by an instructional designer, with a target completion date of the end of May. Following completion, departments that mentor graduate assistants will have the opportunity to participate in the training as part of a pilot program. There is also potential to expand access to department chairs and others who work with graduate assistants in the future. Questions may be directed to Strickland.

*B. Academic Analytics*

Strickland shared information regarding Academic Analytics, a software platform that serves as a repository and database to support the identification of funding opportunities for research, grants, and potentially scholarships. Strickland has met with the Research Office, which is currently reviewing the platform while also addressing related considerations.

*C. Center for Teaching and Learning*

Strickland highlighted several professional development opportunities offered by the Center for Teaching and Learning (CTL). Announcements have been distributed via email, and participation is encouraged, particularly in sessions related to Title II and Universal Design for Learning (UDL) practices.

*D. ACCESS Alliance*

Strickland reported that, beginning in the fall semester, ACCESS Alliance will collaborate with the Center for Teaching and Learning to host a symposium focused on advancing campus initiatives. Over the past year, a small ad hoc working group of faculty and staff from across campus has been engaged in efforts to support these initiatives, including ensuring compliance with Title II and promoting the institution’s development as a UDL-focused campus.

**III. Committee Reports**

A. Policy & Planning Committee –

The committee provided final comments on the appeal policy. Graham noted that the policy lacks clarity, and the council was made aware of these concerns.

Adkins reported that the Senior Vice Chancellor is working towards streamlining the process by implementing a single, campus-wide grade appeal policy to improve clarity for students. Relevant documents are currently under review and revision.

It was suggested that the matter be tabled until there is a clearer understanding of the policy being developed by the Senior Vice Chancellor. Adkins, Sweeney, and Graham will revise the existing policy and bring it forward for an email vote to update the graduate policy until the campus – wide grade appeal is finalized.

B. Academic Programs Committee –

**Program Changes**

**Old Business:**

Jesslyn Hollar attended the meeting to help answer some questions on the SPED Master Program.

For Graduate Council Action – motion to take this program off the table by Wuellner/Dority - Motion Carried

Motion to approve by Strickland/Dority. Motion Carried.

Program Name	Purpose	Recommendation
SPED-MAE: Special Education, Master of Arts in Education	We are streamlining an Special Education post-baccalaureate educator certification option that leads to a Master's degree in Special Education. We are also	Approve

	clarifying/reordering our offerings to illustrate that concentrations can include a) initial educator certification/endorsements; b) additional certification/endorsements; or c) supplemental endorsements. Note that TE 883 is coming through workflow to remove TESE 881 as a prerequisite, resolving the hidden prereq issue.	
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**Old Business:**

For Graduate Council Action – motion to approve the revisions by Campbell/Wuellner. Motion Carried

<b>Program Name</b>	<b>Purpose</b>	<b>Recommendation</b>
ENGLISH-MA: English, Master of Arts	Want to add the proposed course, ENG 868: Topics in Shakespeare Studies, to the Literature focus and to Electives in the MA Program. Also want to change catalog from comprehensive exam to portfolio.	Approve
PE-MAE : Kinesiology and Sport Sciences, Master of Arts in Education	Have to hold onto program changes here until new Sport Management master program passes Coord Council.	Rollback

**New Business:**

For Graduate Council Action – motion to approve by Graham/ Dority – Motion Carried

<b>Program Name</b>	<b>Nature of Request</b>	<b>Recommendation</b>
INTICR : Post-Baccalaureate Transitional Certification Program	Updates to this TCP standalone program match the TCP concentration in the Curriculum & Instruction MAE currently toward the end of workflow; however this standalone TCP program does not contain TE 816G, the Curriculum & Instruction Capstone.	Approve

For Graduate Council Action – motion to table this program for clarification by Strickland/ Wuellner – Motion Carried

<b>Program Name</b>	<b>Nature of Request</b>	<b>Recommendation</b>
SCHPSY-EDS : School Psychology, Education Specialist	The current School Psychology program option will remain unchanged. This request is to add a blended Ed.S. program option for	Table for clarification

	<p>individuals with a current teaching certificate and two years of experience in education as a recruitment effort and way to help address the current shortage of school psychologists. Students applying to the blended program option will also need a letter of support from a school district with a certified school psychologist verifying their intent to support and supervise the student in training. The blended program proposal is attached. There will be different application requirements for students applying to the two different options (face-to-face and blended), see attachment. The courses within both program options will be the same in content, however the clinical courses will differ in mode of instruction and students in the new hybrid/blended option will take 2 credit hours of CSP 990 Pre Internship Seminar rather than 3 credit hours due to the training and experiences they already have in the educational setting. Thus, the total number of credit hours for the blended option will be 71 credit hours instead of 72 credit hours. The course change for CSP 990 moving to variable credit hours (2-3 credit hours) was also just submitted in CIM.</p>	
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**Certificates Revisions -**

For Graduate Council Action – motion to approve the certificate changes by Campbell/Strickland. Motion carried.

<b>Certificate Name</b>	<b>Purpose</b>	<b>Recommendation</b>
SPANISH: Spanish, Graduate Certificate	We need to update the admissions/application requirements language in the Spanish certificate to match/correlate to the changes already made in the Spanish Education Master’s Program.	Approve

**Course Changes**

For Graduate Council Information – Motion that the action taken via email regarding April Graduate courses be ratified and entered into the minutes. Motion by Sweeney/Graham

The following courses have been approved, denied, or rolled back to the department by Committee II.

**New Business:**

<b>Course # &amp; Name</b>	<b>Purpose</b>	<b>Recommendation</b>
BIOL 878: Vaccines: Concepts and Controversies	This course has been offered multiple times a topics course and we intend to offer it in the future.	Approve
CDIS 818: Diagnostic Methods	We do not typically offer the undergraduate paired section of this course so we would like to remove the “P” from the course number.	Approve
CDIS 830: Pediatric Swallowing Disorders	An undergraduate section of this course is not typically offered so we would like to remove the “P” designation from the course number.	Rollback
CDIS 840: Augmentative Alternative	We have not been offering the undergraduate/sister course for this class so we would like to remove the “P” designation.	Rollback
CDIS 885: Fluency Disorders	We have not offered the undergraduate paired section of this course so we would like to remove the “P” from the course number.	Rollback
CSP 990: Pre-Internship Seminar	Credit hours are changed to variable (i.e. 2 or 3 credit hours) for students to register for based on student experiences. Grading type is changed to traditional grades instead of credit/no credit to reflect mastery of content covered in the class. Course description is updated to reflect current course content and alignment with updated accreditation standards.	Approve

C. Faculty & Student Affairs Committee –  
Committee III received a grade appeal, met about it and decided on this.

Committee III will be receiving the Reichenbach Scholarships and will decide on these.

**IV. Other Business**

State Department of Education Endorsement and Initial Certification Updates for Graduate Council – No vote required just need to notify the council.

**Endorsement Name Updates:**  
Family and Consumer Science  
Special Ed Generalist 7-12

**Change to:**  
Family and Consumer Science 6-12  
Special Ed Generalist 6-12

World Lang French 7-12  
World Lang German 7-12  
World Lang Spanish 7-12  
World Language

**Initial Certification Name Updates:**

Agricultural Education  
Family and Consumer Science  
Skilled Technical Sciences Ed  
Special Ed Generalist 7-12  
Special Ed Generalist K-6  
World Lang French 7-12  
World Lang German 7-12  
World Lang Spanish 7-12  
World Language

World Lang French 6-12  
World Lang German 6-12  
World Lang Spanish 6-12  
World Language 6-12

**Change to:**

Agricultural Education 6-12  
Family and Consumer Science 6-12  
Skilled and Technical Services 6-12  
Special Ed Generalist 6-12  
Special Ed Generalist K-8  
World Lang French 6-12  
World Lang German 6-12  
World Lang Spanish 6-12  
World Language 6-12

**V. Announcements**

Student Research Day will take place on Thursday, April 16. Faculty and staff are encouraged to volunteer as judges to support and evaluate student presentations.

*Graduate Student Presentations*

- 2 In-Person Oral Presentations
- 1 In-Person Performance
- 21 In-Person Poster Presentations
- 1 Online Oral Presentation
- 1 Online Poster Presentation
- 1 Written Submission

The committee was informed that nominations for the Reichenbach Scholarship are due by April 10, 2026. Each department may nominate one new graduate student and one returning graduate student by submitting the application form. The form has been distributed via email to the Graduate Program Committee (GPC), department chairs, and deans.

Graduate Student Association:

These are the GSA vacancies for next year:

- CBT student rep for grad council
- GSA communication coordinator
- GSA social media chair

Interim Dean Adkins shared her thanks and appreciation for the work completed this past year by the Graduate Council.

A motion to adjournment was completed: Motion Dority/Strickland.

Respectfully submitted,  
Heather Rhinehart

Email vote for the SCHPSY-EDS : School Psychology, Education Specialist Program.

For Graduate Council Action – motion to table this program by Wuellner/Strickland – Motion Carried

Motion to take this program off the table—Sweeney/Strickland- Motion Carried

Clarification was provided and motion to Approve by Sweeney/Strickland - Motion Carried

<b>Program Name</b>	<b>Nature of Request</b>	<b>Recommendation</b>
SCHPSY-EDS : School Psychology, Education Specialist	<p>The current School Psychology program option will remain unchanged. This request is to add a blended Ed.S. program option for individuals with a current teaching certificate and two years of experience in education as a recruitment effort and way to help address the current shortage of school psychologists. Students applying to the blended program option will also need a letter of support from a school district with a certified school psychologist verifying their intent to support and supervise the student in training. The blended program proposal is attached. There will be different application requirements for students applying to the two different options (face-to-face and blended), see attachment. The courses within both program options will be the same in content, however the clinical courses will differ in mode of instruction and students in the new hybrid/blended option will take 2 credit hours of CSP 990 Pre Internship Seminar rather than 3 credit hours due to the training and experiences they already have in the educational setting. Thus, the total number of credit hours for the blended option will be 71 credit hours instead of 72 credit hours. The course change for CSP 990 moving to variable credit hours (2-3 credit hours) was also just submitted in CIM.</p>	