



GRADUATE COUNCIL MINUTES

October 27th, 2025

The Graduate Council met in person on Monday, October 27th, 2025, at 2:20 pm in Room #351, Close-Hipp Building.

Graduate Council members present: Dr. Bill Hauk, Chair; Drs. Rachel Bush, Ashley Gess, Andrew Graciano, Daniel Kilpatrick, Kevin Lu, Terrance McAdoo, Kirk Randazzo, Jill Stewart, Ari Streisfeld, Kristen Weaver-Toedtman, Sanjib Sur, Rachel Williams, Jing Wen, and Arunav Das (GSA).

Graduate Council members absent: Drs. Sourav Banerjee, John Doering-White, Lorie Donelle, Carolyn Harmon, David Mott, Sriram Venkataraman, Nick Watanabe, and Mark Yancey.

Graduate School Representatives: Dr. Ann Vail, Dr. Lingyu (Lucy) Yu, Dr. Angelina Sylvain, Dr. Matt Klopfenstein, Dale Moore, Barbara Foster (excused), Heidi Conte, and Wanda Barr

Provost Office Representatives: Trena Houpp and Dr. LaTrice Ratcliff-Small

Guests: Harlan Smith (ISSS)

NOTE: These minutes will become final on November 24, 2025, if not challenged.

1. Call to Order and Approval of Agenda (Bill Hauk, Chair)

The meeting was called to order at 2:21p.m., and the Agenda was approved.

2. Approval of the Minutes from September 22, 2025. Approved actions by Graduate Council become effective 30 days after posting. A copy is available on the Graduate School website at: <https://bit.ly/3SvPO0E>.

The minutes from September were unanimously approved.

3. Report of the Chair (Bill Hauk)

No report.

4. Report of the Dean of the Graduate School (Ann Vail)

Dean Vail thanked Mr. Harlan Smith for his availability and frankness in his advisement regarding international students and the immigration rules and laws that are constantly changing.

Final enrollment numbers for Fall 2025 have not been released yet, but it looks like we have come out better than she anticipated. Our master's students this fall numbers are at 4,196—up by 136 students. We desperately need our master's programs to grow. On this date last year, we were at 2,449 doctoral students. Ironically, we are at the exact same number this year thus far—no growth, no decline. Regarding applications coming in, we currently have 1,669 applications which is down 14% from this

time last year. Most of those applications are from international students (1,134). We don't yet know the percentage of the applications from travel-banned countries, but we must still make decisions on these applications. We will continue to talk about this topic.

Dean Vail reiterated that at the direction of the Provost the Graduate School has announced the following changes for applicants to graduate education programs at the University of South Carolina. The graduate application fee will be reinstated effective August 1, 2026. The Graduate School application fee is \$50 and was temporarily waived in Fall 2023. The Graduate School is working with CollegeNet and TouchNet to finalize activation of the reinstated fee. An announcement will be made when the system is updated. Once that occurs, applicants will be required to submit the fee with their application. As with prior application cycles, programs/departments may purchase fee waivers for applicants to their programs. The Molinaroli College of Engineering and Computing has purchased fee waivers for all applicants to their college.

International applicants submitting international academic credentials must have their credentials evaluated for equivalency to U.S. accredited coursework on a course-by-course basis by a member of the National Association of Credential Evaluation Services (NACES). A list of NACES members can be found at this website: [Members – NACES](#). The evaluation and proof of degree should preferably be submitted with the USC graduate application and is required prior to admitted students registering for courses.

A note of clarification will go out to the graduate directors this week that states that if students were fully admitted prior to September 19, 2025, they will not be required to submit certification of their international documents. If not fully admitted by September 19, 2025, these students will need to submit their certification. Students who were admitted for Spring and Summer 2026 will immediately have their registration placed on hold until the certification of their international documents has been received. If an international student arrives without their certification documents, they will have to leave the country within 15 days (it used to be 30 days). There will be no exceptions to this policy. There will be no more one semester grace periods. Students with F-1 and J-1 visas will be impacted by this new policy.

5. Report of the Graduate Student Association (Arunav Das)

Mr. Das reported that GSA hosted their Fall Social on October 17th, bringing together more than 80 graduate students, along with GSA executives and secretaries, for an afternoon of community and connection. The event featured great food, engaging conversations, and an introduction to the Graduate Student Association. They shared their initiatives, advocacy efforts, and opportunities for student involvement. Attendees joined in fun activities like *"How Much Do You Know GSA?"* and *"How Much Do You Know USC?"*, which sparked friendly competition and laughter. It was a warm and welcoming gathering that celebrated our graduate community and set a positive tone for the rest of the semester.

To better understand graduate students' needs, GSA will conduct a Cost-of-Living Survey. They plan to conduct the survey at the beginning of November. To ensure that their survey meets institutional standards, they met with Dr. Angelina Sylvain, Vice Dean for Graduate Education. They also held meetings with the First Gen Center, the Career Center, the Student Success Center, and the Gamecock Community Shop. In addition, they have reached out to graduate coordinators across most departments to gather feedback on the survey form and to strengthen their advocacy efforts.

An international student luncheon will take place on October 31st, in the Russell House, Room #205. They are hoping that at least 50 participants will attend the event--including campus leaders, students, and faculty.

A Graduate Student Town Hall will be held on November 14th from 3-5pm. Key issues such as parking (Master Mobility Plan) and other student priorities will be discussed.

6. Report of the Academic Policy and Practices Committee (Kirk Randazzo)

No report.

7. Report of the 500/600 Level Courses (Angelina Sylvain)

This report is presented to Council for informational purposes only; no action is necessary.

500/600 Courses for October 2025 Grad Council

(CCP = Course Change Proposal; NCP=New Course Proposal). Total: 3

ECIV 535 (3) Pavement Analysis and Design, (CCP; Fall 2026)

ITEC 541 (3) Network Intrusion Detection and Prevention (NCP; Spring 2026)

MUED 568 (2) Organization and Administration of Music Programs (CCP; Fall 2026)

8. Associate Graduate Faculty Nominations. Total: 5 (Ann Vail)

Name: **James Risk, PhD**
Program: History Department
Term: Fall 2025 – Fall 2031

Name: **Kelly Evans Grieshaber, PhD**
Program: School of Journalism and Mass Communications
Term: Fall 2025 – Summer 2031

Name: **Nina Brook, PhD**
Program: School of Journalism and Mass Communications
Term: Fall 2025 – Summer 2031

Name: **Catherine Studemeyer, PhD**
Program: Department of Geography
Term: Spring 2026 – Spring 2032

Name: **Yingxiao Qian, PhD**
Program: Department of Leadership, Learning Design, and Inquiry
Term: Fall 2025 – Fall 2030

These nominations were unanimously approved by Graduate Council.

9. Fellowships and Scholarships Committee (Daniel Kilpatrick)

No report.

10. Report of the Graduate Curriculum Committee (Andrew Graciano)

Below is a list of proposals reviewed by the Committee. Total: 14

- **ARTE 740** (3) Art Program for Schools, (CCP: Fall 2026)
- **ARTE 740P** (1) Art Program for Schools Practicum, (CCP: Fall 2026)

- **ARTE 760P** (1) Secondary Pedagogy Methods for Art Instruction Practicum, (CCP: Fall 2026)
- **ARTE 771** (12) Art Education Internship, (CCP: Fall 2026)
- **GRAD 700** (1) Grad Launch, (CCP: Spring 2026) - Online Delivery Only
- **IBUS 738** (3) Global Sustainability Strategy, (CCP: Fall 2026)
- **ISCI 707** (3) Information Organization and Retrieval, (CCP: Fall 2026)
- **ISCI 719** (3) Preservation Planning and Administration, (CCP: Fall 2026)
- **ISCI 728** (3) Public Library Systems, (CCP: Fall 2026)
- **ISCI 731** (3) Subject Analysis and Classification, (CCP: Fall 2026)
- **ISCI 750** (3) Information and Records Management, (CCP: Fall 2026)
- **ISCI 767** (3) Management of Public Library Youth Services, (CCP: Fall 2026)
- **ISCI 776** (3) Web Technologies for Information Specialists, (CCP: Fall 2026)
- **ISCI 796** (1-6) Independent Study in Library and Information Science, (CCP: Fall 2026)

These proposals were unanimously approved by Graduate Council.

- 11. Report of the Grievances, Appeals and Petitions Committee** (Lucy Yu for Sriram Venkataraman)
Dr. Yu has met with the Grievances, Appeals and Petitions (GAP) committee chair and co-chair to discuss a task for this subcommittee on developing a procedure framework for grievance and appeals processes.

12. Other Committee Reports

None.

13. Old Business

None.

14. New Business

Harlan Smith, Director of ISSS

Update on International Graduate Students and Recent Visa Changes

Please see attachment.

- Ongoing federal rulemaking could change visa/immigration processes; a proposed rule with many public comments is under review.
- Visa interviews are now mandatory (no waivers); interviews must occur in country of citizenship or legal permanent residence.
- New social-media vetting being implemented for visa interviews and U.S. ports of entry.
- Possible 2026 changes for F-1/J-1: proposed four-year entry period regardless of program length — may complicate long programs and require documented academic justification + USCIS approvals/fees for extensions.
- CPT is likely to be limited to credit-bearing courses; OPT may face greater oversight; STEM OPT under review — recruitment impact a concern.
- Travel and re-entry could become more difficult; grace periods may shorten (e.g., 60 → 30 days).
- H-1B: extensions/transfers functioning; new H-1B filings abroad uncertain due to litigation.
- Guidance: do not exclude candidates for visa reasons; contact ISSS early for travel, extension, and hiring planning.
- ISSS will offer college-specific advising assignments when a new system launches in January; faculty are encouraged to set up briefings.

15. Good of the Order

Reminder Dates:

- November 7: Three (3) MT Competition--Preliminaries, Close-Hipp, Rooms 436, 450, 451, 534, and 535 from 10am to 11:30am. The finals will take place in Close-Hipp, Room 750 at 3pm.
- November 24: Next Graduate Council meeting on Monday, November 24th at 2:00pm, Close Hipp, Room 583.

Although there are no classes this week due to the Thanksgiving Recess for faculty and students, we must have quorum for this meeting to approve proposals and program changes to meet the December 2nd deadline. If Graduate Council members will not be on a flight, please make every effort to attend this in person meeting.

16. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 3:22p.m.

Ann Vail, Dean

CC: Michael Amiridis, President
Mary Anne Fitzpatrick, Provost
Ann Vail, Dean of the Graduate School
Deans
Department Chairs
Graduate Directors
Aaron Marterer, University Registrar
Elaine Belesky, Office of the Registrar
Malia Kiehl, Office of the Registrar
Ed Short, Office of the Registrar



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October 2025

International Graduate Students

Div. of International Student & Scholar Support

Global Carolina

Harlan L. Smith, Director



International Student and Scholar Support

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Reminder from the TGS and ISSS

On-campus employment for international students is limited to 20 hours per week during the Fall and Spring semesters.



Recent Changes

- Visa interviews are now required.
- Visa interviews must take place in the home country.
- Visa interview waivers are no longer allowed.
- Visa application slots have been reduced.
- Social Media Vetting: occurs at the visa application/interview stage and at the U.S. port-of-entry.

Expected Changes: 2026

- Federal regulations for F-1 and J-1 students are expected to change.
- Changes may determine visa/program validity length, program extension eligibility, OPT/CPT eligibility and duration, and travel requirements.
- Some campus-based requests may require USCIS review and adjudication w/fee.

ISSS will provide updates and guidance as new rules are finalized.

Proposed Rule: Elimination of Duration of Status (D/S)

- F-1/J-1 initial period of study may be limited to a fixed 4-year term.
- Students may need USCIS approval for program extensions.
- Graduate students may be ineligible to change academic program or program objective.
- Students may be ineligible to transfer to another school within the first year of study.
- Graduate students may be ineligible for lateral or reverse matriculation.
- F-1 grace period may be reduced from 60 to 30 days after program completion.

Program Extension Process

- Program extensions must be recommended by an academic authority.
- USCIS approval may be required for program extensions.
- Program extensions may require financial re certification.
- Processing may require USCIS fees.
- Students should plan for program extension early with the Program, TGS, and ISSS.

Training Eligibility: OPT and CPT

- Future changes may alter application timing, duration, and eligibility.
- Future F-1 OPT STEM participation may be limited.
- Future CPT eligibility will require a direct connection to (ex: course registration) and proof that the experiential learning endeavor is “integral” to the academic program.

Key Takeaways

- Regulatory changes may impact F1 & J-1 students and J-1 postdoctoral appointees.
- Regulatory changes may impact campus-based travel permission requirements, visa renewal processes, and timeframes.
- Future travel mobility may be altered by new visa/immigration requirements.

Next Steps

- Contact ISSS early with questions about program extensions, international travel, or employment authorization eligibility.
- Invite ISSS to speak with your departmental faculty colleagues and international students.
- USC should plan for greater government oversight and more stringent compliance requirements in the coming months.

The H1B Proclamation:

- Will change how and when USC will use H1B visa category (ex: for postdoctoral training).
- H-1B extension, amendment, and change-of-status petitions continue; new petitions (from abroad) are not being submitted to USCIS.
- Court challenges to the Proclamation are ongoing.
- **H1B employees must discuss international travel with the ISSS.**



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Contact Information

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International Student and Scholar Support

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