



Graduate Council Agenda

October 8, 2026

WAB 227 3:00pm CST

- 1) Call to Order:
- 2) Approval of September 10, 2026 minutes (Appendix A)
- 3) Sign-in sheet for attendance
- 4) Executive Committee Notes
 1. Chair: Whitley Stone
 - i. [Link to Senate Committee Master Schedule](#)
 - ii. Update on chat with Provost Fischer regarding PhD program development and Graduate Council's role in process.
 - iii. Motion to charge the Policy Committee with conducting a needs analysis of university policies and procedures governing graduate education as they relate to proposed PhD programs. The committee shall review current graduate requirements, examining Ed.D. and DPT policies and expectations, and identify any gaps or additional standards needed for Graduate Council's academic review of PhD proposals.
 2. Vice-Chair: Daniel Keller
 - i. Reflection from Senate 9/24/26
 3. Secretary: Melissa Tolbert (no report)
- 5) Committee Reports
 1. Research: No report
 2. Policy: Report attached (Appendix B)
 - i. First reading of revisions – vote on revisions in November, if moved.
 3. Curriculum: Report attached (Appendix C)
- 6) Note(s) from Graduate Studies
 1. Jennifer Hammonds and/or Scott Gordon
- 7) Other business
- 8) Adjournment

Appendix A

Graduate Council Agenda

September 10, 2026

Zoom 3:00pm CST

<https://wku.zoom.us/j/96961864622>

Members Present: Missy Travelsted, Jason Bergner, Peter Lin, Jonathan Ross, Alex Cook, Leslee Tarbett, Jeremy Logsdon, Monica Burke, Dan Strunk, Jerry Brotzge, Michael Smith, Dan Strunk, Daniel Keller, Jie-Young Kong, Jessi Thomsen, Debra Murray, Whitley Stone, Erin Warfel, Melissa Tolbert, Jacob Gillespie, Tony Paganelli

Ex-Officio: Jennifer Hammonds, Kirk Atkinson

Guests: Cathleen Webb, Merrall Price, Scott Gordon

9) Call to Order: 3:01 by Whitley Stone

10) Approval of Aug 20, 2026 minutes (Appendix A)

1. 1st: Michael Smith
2. 2nd: Erin Warfel
3. Vote: All approved, unanimously

11) Sign-in sheet for attendance (via chat)

12) Executive Committee Notes

1. Chair: Whitley Stone
 - i. Request for policy to convene and address the following items:
 1. Clean up formatting in bylaws
 - a. Discussion: Stone showcased the formatting issues on a PDF version. Agreement noted amongst members. Jennifer Hammonds was able to share a Google Doc from Oct 2025 that may be one of the latest versions of the bylaws
 - b. Task: Whitley will find a Word document instead of PDF
 - c. Poll: Approved (16/16)
 - d. Question (Kirk Atkinson): Are the Ex-Officio members a defined role within the bylaws?
 - i. Will be researched by GCEC to determine if this needs attention.

2. Create policy regarding vacated seat of elected member when term is not complete.
 - a. Discussion: None
 - b. Poll: Approved (16/16)
 2. Vice-Chair: Daniel Keller (no report)
 3. Secretary: Melissa Tolbert (no report)
 - i. Reminder to sign in via the chat with name, college (member, proxy or guest)
- 13) Committee Reports
 1. Research: No report: Reminded of Oct 1 deadline and that funds cannot be used for reimbursement
 - i. Announcement of Research Grant Deadlines
 1. Fall 2026: October 1, 2026
 2. Spring 2027: February 2, 2027
 - ii. Discussion (C. Webb): OSP updated application. No longer requires a college dean signature. Goes from student to advisor to department chair to Research committee
 2. Policy: No report
 - i. Announcement of first meeting: 9/24/2026
 - ii. Discussion (C. Webb): Bylaws and policy changes are required to have two readings prior to Graduate Council approval.
 3. Curriculum: Report attached (No report)
 - i. Erin Warfel: No updates
- 14) Note(s) from Graduate Studies
 1. Jennifer Hammonds or Scott Gordon: Current 2,197 enrollment
 - i. Reminder to drop non-attendance
 - ii. Beginning fall travel recruitment season (e.g., career fairs)
- 15) Other business
 1. None
- 16) Adjournment
 1. Motion: D. Keller
 2. 2nd: M. Travelsted

Respectfully recorded and submitted,
 GCEC Secretary
 Melissa Tolbert

Appendix B

Graduate Council Policy Committee Meeting Minutes

Date: Thursday, Sept. 24, 2026

Time: 11:00 a.m.–11:40 a.m.

Present: Jieyoung Kong (Chair), Monica Burke, Jonatha Ross, Debra Murray (Student Rep)

Absent: Cy Dixon (Student Rep)

New Business

1. Graduate Council Bylaws

- Members were asked to review the formatting-cleaned draft before the meeting so that any issues or concerns could be raised and discussed.
- The committee approved the formatting-cleaned Bylaws draft.

2. Vacancies in Graduate Council Membership

- Before the meeting, the chair distributed background and discussion materials, including an initial comparison of relevant WKU governance procedures in the Faculty Senate Charter and Colonnade Committee Bylaws, discussion questions, and illustrative draft language. The materials were provided to inform deliberation and were not presented as a final recommendation.
- The committee agreed the following:
 - The Faculty Senate vacancy procedure is a useful reference, but that any Graduate Council policy should be tailored to the Graduate Council's membership structure.
 - The entity that normally selects or appoints a Graduate Council member should fill a vacancy in that seat, and for elected faculty and graduate-student representatives, the represented college should select a replacement through its established process.
 - Replacements should serve the remainder of the unexpired term.
 - An authorized proxy sent by a current member should count as participation for purposes of an attendance-based vacancy standard.
 - A vacant voting-member seat should not be included in the quorum calculation.

3. Outstanding Issue

- The committee did not reach a final recommendation on an attendance or nonparticipation standard for declaring a seat vacant.
- The committee discussed the value of an objective attendance threshold, similar to the Faculty Senate guideline, such as three missed meetings during an academic year without an authorized proxy or alternate.

- The committee agreed that Graduate Council meeting attendance and participation in assigned standing committees should be considered separately. One member suggested thresholds of two missed Graduate Council meetings and three missed meetings of an assigned standing committee during an academic year, without an authorized proxy or alternate.
- The specific threshold and process for evaluating nonparticipation remain to be developed.

Next Steps

- The chair will report the committee's preliminary direction to the Graduate Council Executive Committee.
- If requested, the committee will develop draft Guidelines language, including a proposed standard and process for declaring a vacancy based on nonparticipation.

Adjournment

Attachment: Formatting-Cleaned Draft of the Graduate Council Bylaws ([link](#))

Appendix C

Graduate Council Curriculum Committee

Minutes – September 24, 2026, 2:00 PM (CT)

Voting Members: Erin Warfel, Dan Strunk, Leslie Tarbett, Jessi Thomsen, Jason Bergner, and Eland Jasarevic, Missy Travelsted

Advisory Members: Cate Webb, Jennifer Klemm, LeAnne Coder, Danita Kelley, Mary Jane Gardner, Crissy Priddy, and Jamie DeYoung

Guests: Ray Blankenship and Simran Banga

Approval of Minutes – May 7, 2026 - 1st/2nd: Strunk/Tarbett **Vote:** Approved (6 Yes)

Course Administration:

Graduate Curriculum Committee (6)				
Code	Title	Status	Initiator	Received
Motion to Bundle all BIOL classes – 1st/2nd: Strunk/Thomsen				
Vote to Bundle: Approved (6-Yes)				
Discussion: Banga gave a brief description. Warfel asked about the credit hour changing should the course description be changed as well. Banga agreed and made a friendly amendment.				
Vote: Approved (6 Yes)				
BIOL 404G	BIOL 404G: Electron Microscopy	Edited	smr85629	9/17/2026
Pulled from bundle due to friendly amendment.				
<i>Friendly Amendment: Under the course description list Lecture as 1 hour and Lab as 3 hours.</i>				
Vote: Approved (6 Yes)				

Graduate Curriculum Committee (6)				
Code	Title	Status	Initiator	Received
BIOL 457G	BIOL 457G: Herpetology	Edited	smr85629	9/17/2026
BIOL 470G	BIOL 470G: Pathogenic Microbiology	Edited	smr85629	9/17/2026
BIOL 497G	BIOL 497G: Aquatic Field Ecology	Edited	smr85629	9/17/2026
DATA 711	DATA 711: Programming for Data Research	Added	gng27220	9/17/2026
Motion to Approve – 1st/2nd: Strunk/Thompson Discussion: Blankenship gave a brief description. Vote: Approved (5 Yes)				
DATA 712	DATA 712: Practical Data Structures for Analytics	Added	gng27220	9/17/2026
Motion to Approve – 1st/2nd: Strunk/Tarbett Discussion: Blankenship gave a brief description. Vote: Approved (6 Yes)				

Review Program Changes:

Graduate Curriculum Committee (1)				
Code	Title	Status	Initiator	Received
059	059: Chemistry	Edited	lwr75865	9/17/2026
Motion to Approve – 1st/2nd: Strunk/Tarbett				

Graduate Curriculum Committee (1)				
Code	Title	Status	Initiator	Received
Discussion: Webb gave a brief description. Vote: Approved (6 Yes)				

Informational Item(s): None

Other Business: None

Adjourn at 2:30pm - **1st/2nd** – Strunk/Tarbett

Respectfully submitted,

GCCC Recorder

Jessica Steenbergen