



Graduate School

Date: March 17, 2025
To: Members of the UAMS Graduate Council
From: Dr. Brooke Montgomery, Chair
Subject: Graduate Council Meeting Minutes – March 17, 2025

Members Present: Drs. Lisa Jansen, Angela Odle, Sayem Miah, Jacob Painter, Jure Baloh, Brian Fairman, Lin-Xi Li, Zhiqiang Qin, Patricia Wight, Abdel Fouda, Mick Tilford, and Martha Rojo

Members Absent: Drs. Brooke Montgomery, Mathias Brochhausen, Horacio Gomez-Acevedo, and Sam Atcherson

Non-voting Members Present: Dr. Sean Taverna, Dr. Latrina Prince, Reham Sewilam and Charlotte Gass

Approval of Minutes from the Previous Meeting: Dr. Latrina Prince started the meeting by requesting approval of the February 2025 minutes. The minutes were 1st approved by Dr. Patricia Wight and 2nd approved by Dr. Lisa Jansen.

GSA Report

Reham Sewilam was present for the GSA report.

In August 2024, the Graduate Student Association (GSA) set a plan for the year. The plan included having a movie night, educational workshops, and foundation fellowships. The GSA was able to host all planned events.

1. GSA General Meeting and Movie Night
2. Foundation Fellowship Workshop hosted by Dr. Fouda and Carol Morris on October 14, 2024. The workshop had 25 registered participants (students and staff) and the GSA received feedback from 7 students.
3. F31 Fellowship Workshop hosted by Dr. Delgado-Calle and Hayley Sabol on November 4, 2024. The workshop had 19 registered participants (students and staff) and the GSA received feedback from 8 students.
4. GSA General Meeting and Awards Ceremony was held to recognize students and staff for their extra work. The Community Impact Award was awarded to Kathy Carlson. The Outstanding Volunteer Award was awarded to Madeleine Scott. The Exemplary Volunteer Award was awarded to Lokesh Akana.
5. Cancer Institute Membership & Funding Opportunities for Graduate Students meeting was on February 14, 2025, by Dr. Antiño Allen. The meeting had 32 registered participants (graduate students, post docs, and staff) and the GSA received feedback from 19 students.
6. HSIE Postdoctoral Fellowship meeting hosted by Dr. Escapita on March 3, 2025. The meeting had 12 registered participants (graduate students, post docs, and staff) and the GSA received feedback from 8 students.



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7. Turning your Research into Impact meeting hosted by Dr. Kennon-McGill on March 17, 2025. The meeting had 22 registered participants (graduate students, post docs, and staff).
8. Upcoming Events: GSA Elections will be conducted on April 1, 2025 for the 2025-2026 academic year. The GSA will be having a social event at the Little Rock Zoo on April 5, 2025. The GSA will be hosting a workshop (The AHA Predoctoral Fellowship) by Dr. Mu and Katie Deck on April 7, 2025. The GSA Newsletter will be sent on April 15, 2025. The GSA will be having a social event at Escape the Room on May 1, 2025. The GSA Closing Ceremony will be on May 19, 2025.

Administrative Items

Dr. Sean Taverna

Dr. Taverna thanked Reham Sewilam for her leadership on the Graduate Student Association (GSA). Dr. Taverna stated that she has done some incredible things and have led a great organization. He also congratulated Reham on her upcoming fellowship. Reham received a fantastic score for NCI F99/K00 award of 15. The F99/K00 is the most competitive fellowship for pre-doctoral and post-doctoral transition award.

Dr. Taverna reported that the UAMS Graduate School will be hosting a monthly even “Lunch with the Dean” or “Pool with the Dean” series in the Graduate School – Student Lounge.

Dr. Taverna brought up the topic of AI Usage. The topic was brought up and discussed at the previous Council of Deans meeting. He wanted to bring this up to the Graduate School. One question or topic to discuss would be how much you could use AI in terms of your exams, oral board exams, and constructing the document for second year exams. Also, on the same lines, the topic to discuss of what is the AI stance on composing your thesis or dissertation.

If people can use AI to compose manuscripts as long as it is disclosed, and then you use the manuscripts in your thesis, is this violating the policy? Dr. Taverna doesn't have an answer but wanted to bring it up for discussion. Dr. Prince stated that the topic to discuss and obtain feedback on using AI in the thesis or dissertation. There is an UAMS AI policy and Dr. Prince sent it out a week before the meeting. In the UAMS Graduate School Handbook and UAMS Academic Catalog, it states that AI is considered plagiarism. Dr. Taverna confirmed this is an on-going discussion and it is developing and is more something to keep on our radar. Dr. Miah stated that he is highly supportive of using technology in academic, but would need to train the faculty, staff, and students on how to use it. Dr. Miah mentioned that an Introduction to AI Course could be helpful to educate the students. Dr. Taverna stated that maybe the topic could be integrated in the Introduction to Sci Comm course and what the boundaries are.

The UAMS Graduate School will be holding its own graduation ceremony this year. This is the first year for the UAMS Graduate School to host the event. The UAMS Graduate School will hooding the Master and Doctoral students at the graduation ceremony. The graduation ceremony will be on Thursday, May 15, 2025, at 6 pm in the Fred Smith Auditorium located on the 12th Floor of Spine Center on the UAMS Main Campus. We are developing a program structure. We will have the appropriate music lined up and ready to go. Dr. Taverna thanked



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anyone at the meeting that has agreed to participate on the new Graduation Planning Committee (one representative from each program).

Dr. Taverna would like to change how the student speaker and the faculty of the year are selected. Dr. Taverna would like the graduating students to nominate the student speaker and the faculty of the year. The selected student speaker and faculty of the year will speak at the graduation ceremony on May 15, 2025. The UAMS Graduate School will send out a request for graduating students to nominate for each category with a justification (4 sentences). Dr. Jansen likes the write in option for the nomination is good idea for representation purposes. Dr. Fouda stated that he liked this idea.

Dr. Taverna wanted to everyone to know that the UAMS Student Research Day has been rescheduled for 2:30 pm on April 17, 2025, in the I. Dodd Wilson Building on the UAMS Little Rock campus. Dr. Prince confirmed that the UAMS Student Research Day will have a poster session. However, the McGehee Lecture **will not** happen on April 17, 2025. It will be rescheduled for a separate time. The 3MT Finals will be held on April 17, 2025. The Awards Ceremony will be after the 3MT session that will include the poster sessions, 3MT, and Graduate School – Spring Awards. April 17, 2025, was already a blackout day on the 2024-2025 UAMS Graduate School academic calendar.

Dr. Taverna stated that he created a team for the Race for a Cure: cancer walk on May 3, 2025, at 8 am.

Dr. Latrina Prince

Dr. Prince wanted to remind the Graduate Council about the new tuition policy. Tuition payments must be made by a certain date, or the student would be withdrawn from classes. Dr. Prince confirmed this policy does not affect our graduate assistants or students who have a third-party payment. This semester we have had approximately seven students who have not paid, but they have not been withdrawn yet. If the students are withdrawn from their courses for non-payment, they will still have a balance to pay.

Dr. Prince said there has been an update on grades. When grades are not submitted by a certain timeframe, it could negatively impact a student. It could create a barrier for students to receive financial aid or make them ineligible. It is important for our faculty and programs to make sure to submit grades on time.

Summer 2025 class schedules are now open. Dr. Prince stated that she sent an email to all faculty. Please remind your faculty and program to make sure to complete and submit their course requests to Dr. Prince. Unlike previous years, the summer schedule did not roll over in GUS. Dr. Prince stated that she will have to schedule each course manually.

On Friday, April 4, 2025, UAMS is hosting a Pre-Health Recruitment Summit on campus from a grant obtained by Regional Programs. As of today, the number of students registered is 76 undergraduate students from Arkansas. The UAMS Graduate School will have a table, conduct breakout sessions, and have student representatives from various programs. It will be an all-day event. Food will be available for participants (breakfast and lunch). Dr. Prince stated that she will be attending Bryant High School for an event. At high school events, Dr. Prince stated that she promotes our summer undergraduate research program(s).



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Dr. Prince confirmed that we will have one more meeting in April for the Graduate Council. The Graduate Council does not meet in the summer. If the May meeting gets cancelled, the Graduate Council will reconvene in August 2025.

Other Administrative Items

There were no other administrative items to discuss, so the meeting moved to the committee reports.

Committee Reports

Curriculum Committee – No Chair

Dr. Latrina Prince provided the report since there is currently no committee chair.

The curriculum committee reviewed grading change for the MD/PhD dual degree program. The grading basis changed from a letter grade to pass/fail. The curriculum committee voted to approve this change, and it will go into effect the spring semester.

Faculty Committee – Dr. Patricia Wight, Chair

The faculty committee voted to approve two faculty appointments for the Graduate School. Dr. Prince stated that the faculty committee is busy. They receive a lot of faculty applications.

Academic Senate – Drs. Lin-Xi Li and Martha Rojo, GS Representatives

Dr. Lin-Xi Li reported that leadership overview referencing the current environment and concerns happened and it was good. The Academic Senate is planning to have a pickleball tournament.

Other Items

Dr. Taverna stated that the UAMS Graduate School will not be rescinding any admission offers. The UAMS Graduate School is looking to keep our current levels and actually increase the number of stipends available across the campus.

Dr. Prince opened the meeting for any questions or topics before we adjourn. Dr. Miah had a question about admission acceptances for the Fall 2025 cohort of GPIBS. Dr. Taverna stated we previously had nine accept, but also hosted a GPIBS Recruitment Day on Monday, March 11th. We had 18 applicants attend. The deadline for acceptance is April 15, 2025.

Closing

There was no other business to discuss; therefore, Dr. Latrina Prince motioned to end the meeting.

The meeting adjourned at 1:44 p.m.