



Graduate School

Date: February 12, 2026

To: Members of the UAMS Graduate Council

From: Dr. Latrina Prince

Subject: Graduate Council Meeting Minutes – January 26, 2026, 1:00-2:00

Members Present: Drs. Jure Baloh, Mathias Brochhausen, Ann Chou, Brian Fairman, Abdel Fouda, Horacio Gomez-Acevedo, Lisa Jansen, Lin-Xi Li, Brooke Montgomery, Sayem Miah, Jacob Painter, Patricia Wight

Non-voting Members Present: Dr. Sean Taverna, Dr. Latrina Prince, Lokesh Akana

Members Absent: Drs. Sam Atcherson, Lu Dai, Martha Rojo, Angela Odle

Non-voting Members Absent: Nadine Ledet

Approval of Minutes from the Previous Meeting: Dr. Latrina Prince started the meeting by requesting approval of the October 2025 minutes. Dr. Patricia Wight approved the minutes. Drs. Lisa Jansen and Lin-Xi Li seconded the approval.

Graduate Student Association Report

Lokesh Akana, GSA President

1. At last week's GSA meeting there was discussion about upcoming events for graduate students. There are several events planned, including three educational events and a fun event as well. Dr. Taverna suggested more than one fun event would be good.
2. Question regarding proposed free health insurance for graduate students: Lokesh asked Dr. Taverna whether there are any updates on Dr. Gardner's proposal for free health insurance for graduate students. Dr. Taverna stated there are no updates at this time, and this is something he has asked for since taking the Dean position. Dr. Gardner will likely put this in the budget, but it must go through an approval process.
3. Art From the Heart event- Dr. Taverna asked if there was more information on GSA's participation. Lokesh stated there is no update today, but he will discuss it with the other GSA officers.

Administrative Items

Dr. Sean Taverna

1. Recruitment efforts and candidate selection: Dr. Taverna thanked everyone for their recruitment efforts, and for travelling to surrounding areas and nationwide conferences to find the best candidates. Graduate School has been recruiting, interviewing, and selecting candidates these past few months.

2. Student Emergency Fund is still available per Dr. Gardner: The monetary amount s \$1400-1500 per student awarded, courtesy of a couple of nice donors. Graduate students who need financial assistance can send a request to Dr. Taverna or Dr. Prince, and it will be forwarded to Dr. Gardner. Faculty is encouraged to share names of any students who are experiencing financial issues.
3. Spring Awards Reception is Wednesday, April 15th, 3:00-6:00 pm in the Atrium. Student accomplishments have been requested.
4. Graduate student's listserv issue: Dr. Taverna shared there is an issue where some students were not receiving Graduate School email, and IT is working to resolve the issue.

Dr. Latrina Prince

1. Dr. Prince welcomed Dr. Ann Chou to the Graduate Council.
2. Program Director's Meeting will be scheduled for this semester. An email will be sent to all program directors to determine the best day and time that is convenient for everyone. Dana will also ask program directors for suggestions of topics for discussion.

Other Administrative Items

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

Committee Reports

Curriculum Committee – Dr. Angela Odle

Dr. Prince gave the report in Dr. Odle's absence.

1. HSSR program- changes were reviewed and approved, and will be included in the next academic catalog
2. HPPR program- added a new course and revised the program planner to include the new course
3. Biomedical Informatics- 3 course changes and 1 new course current in review

Dr. Prince reminded everyone that February 1 is the deadline for curriculum changes for the next academic year.

Faculty Committee – Dr. Patricia Wight, Chair

1. Dr. Wight reported that the Committee has approved 10 new faculty, and Miranda Wallace is in review.
2. Dr. Prince thanked everyone for reviewing the curriculum changes and faculty appointments.

Academic Senate – Dr. Martha Rojo, GS Representative

1. Dr. Prince shared that Dr. Li's term has expired and another representative needs to be chosen to represent Graduate school at Academic Senate.
2. Dr. Li gave an overview of the role: the role can either be nominated or voted. The commitment is for 2 years to attend monthly meetings online and share Graduate Council significant concerns. Dr. Prince added that the person in the role would also be responsible for voting on proposals on behalf of the Graduate school, and anyone interested should reach out, especially junior faculty to add to your CV.
3. Dr. Lisa Jansen nominated herself to serve alongside Dr. Martha Rojo as GS representative. Dr. Prince accepted the nomination.

Concerns/Discussion:

Dr. Taverna opened the floor for questions:

- Dr. Abdel Fouda asked whether there is a website or email to inform students about the student emergency fund. Dr. prince replied that she will be sending another email out to students.
- Dr. Sayem Miah asked about requirements for the emergency fund, GPIBS program application numbers and whether new students would be limited to four years of study. Dr. Taverna shared there were hundreds of GPIBS applicants, and only 45 interviewed. No limitations have been implemented affecting the number of years of study. There are some travel bans in place.
- Dr. Jure Baloh asked about application deadlines and shared that revisiting the application deadline for his program could allow more applicants. Dr. Taverna shared that Graduate School was trying to make the application deadlines more uniform. Dr. Prince shared application deadlines were standardized to make it less confusing for applicants and to make it manageable administratively. In addition, the earlier deadline gives admitted students time to have visas issued and complete compliance requirements. Dr. Prince stated an extension may be permitted on a case-by-case basis. Another option offered is to have a deadline for international and a deadline for domestic applicants.
- Dr. Brian Fairman suggested deadlines be updated on the COPH website as well. Dr. Ann Chou agreed COPH must review and match information on the Graduate School site for shared programs.

Closing

The meeting adjourned at 1:39 PM