



GRADUATE COUNCIL MINUTES

August 26th, 2024

The Graduate Council met on Monday, August 26, 2024, at 2:00P.M. in Room #583, Close-Hipp Building.

Graduate Council members present: Dr. Terrance McAdoo, Chair; Mr. Hassan Anderson; Drs. Sourav Banerjee, John Doering-White, Lorie Donelle, Jing Fang, Ashley Gess, Edie Goldsmith, Andrew Graciano, Carolyn Harmon, Bill Hauk, Daniel Kilpatrick, Sanjib Sur, Sriram Venkataraman, Nick Watanabe, Jing Wen, Neal Woods, and Hannah Malcom (GSA).

Graduate Council members absent: Drs. Sheri Silfies (excused), Rachel Williams (excused), and Mark Yancey(excused)

Graduate School Representatives: Dr. Ann Vail (excused), Dr. Murray Mitchell (Secretary), Dr. Angelina Sylvain, Dale Moore, and Wanda Barr

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

Guests: Dr. Michael Bizimis (Earth, Ocean and Environment), Dr. Casey Giraudy (HPEB), Dr. Sherry Warren (Global Carolina), Sandra Rhyne (HSPM), and Gaurav Harshe (GSA)

NOTE: These minutes will become final on September 23, 2024, if not challenged.

- 1. Call to Order and Approval of Agenda** (Terrance McAdoo, Chair)
The meeting was called to order at 2:03p.m., and the Agenda was approved with amendments from Dr. Mitchell. Specifically, four nominations for Associate Graduate Faculty status were added to agenda item 9.
- 2. Approval of the Minutes from May 13, 2024.** 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 May were unanimously approved.
- 3. Report of the Chair** (Terrance McAdoo)
Dr. McAdoo welcomed everyone to the meeting and asked everyone to introduce themselves.
- 4. Report of the Dean of the Graduate School** (Angelina Sylvain for Ann Vail)
Dr. Sylvain presented a power point presentation entitled “Strengthening Graduate Admissions at the University of South Carolina.” This presentation was also presented to the Associate/Assistant Graduate Deans Council on Tuesday, August 27th. Please see attachment.

Dean Vail hopes to fill the position of Director for Professional Development soon. There is a new position of IT Business Analyst, Assistant Dean level that will oversee the technology aspects of the new admissions system. The 3MT (3 Minute Thesis) Competition will now be headed by Dale Moore. This competition will take place on Friday, November 8th. The 3MT (3 Minute Thesis) Training will take place on Friday, October 25th. The time and location for both will be announced soon. Anyone interested in assisting as a judge is welcome to contact Dale directly.

On behalf of Dean Vail, Dr. Sylvain indicated that future agendas would include an appendix to announce upcoming proposals under consideration by the two curriculum committees; a sample will be attached to these minutes.

5. Report of the Secretary of the Graduate Council (Murray Mitchell)

Dr. Mitchell welcomed everyone back to campus for the Fall semester. He asked for nominations for Vice Chair for the Graduate Council. Hearing none, the search will continue.

6. Report of the Graduate Student Association (Hannah Malcom)

Hannah reported on the following for GSA:

Graduate Student Expo

- Friday, September 6 in the Russell House Ballroom from 9 am – 12 pm with check-in starting at 8:30 am
- Over 35 on-campus organizations registered to be at the resource fair
- Breakout sessions offered
 - GSA “Town Hall”
 - Surviving Grad School (student panel)
- 3 out of 4 GSA Executive Board members worked as Graduate School Ambassadors (paid position) since May to plan this event
- For info on the virtual resource fair, email Erin Looney at looneye@email.sc.edu or Kesha Clavon at keshha@mailbox.sc.edu
- All graduate students should have received an email for this event. There will be a Blackboard, but no synchronous access for totally online students.

Executive Cabinet

- 34 total applicants
 - Worked hard to allow everyone a position when occasion permitted
- Interviews held in July and offers sent out in the beginning of August
- Implemented efforts to seek representation from all colleges
- Cabinet Orientation
 - Tuesday, September 3 from 1:30 – 4:30 pm

College/Department Orientation Visitations

- GSA Executive Board members were able to visit 8 different college/department orientations
- Please reach out to the GSA Executive Board if you would like GSA representatives at your college/department orientation in the future

GSA Special Elections

- VP, Erin Looney, has decided not to pursue her graduate education at USC

- Per the GSA Constitution, the Treasurer will take the position of the VP. Thus, Iftakhar Ahmad is now the GSA VP, and there is a vacancy in the Treasurer position
- Elections Timeline:
 - August 26: Nominations Open
 - September 6: Nominations Close
 - September 7-8: Campaigning
 - September 9-10: Voting Ballot Open
 - September 12-13: Run-off Election (if required)

GSA Executive Board Strategic Planning

- Held August 15-16
- Primary areas of concern:
 - Financial Resources
 - Transportation & Parking
 - Meal Plans & Food Insecurity
 - Housing

7. Report of the Academic Policy and Practices Committee (TBA)

Nominations are still being accepted for Chair of this committee.

8. 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 August 2024 Grad Council

(CCP = Course Change Proposal; NCP=New Course Proposal). Total: 5

CSCE 584 (3) Neural Networks and Their Applications, (NCP: Spring 2025)

HIST 504 (3) Spatial Approaches to Historical Research, (NCP: Spring 2025)

JOUR 517 (3) Advertising Campaigns: From Development to Pitch, (CCP: Fall 2025)

JOUR 521 (3) Digital Advertising Certifications, (CCP: Fall 2025)

JOUR 594 (3) International Public Relations, (NCP: Spring 2025)

9. Associate Graduate Faculty Nominations Total: 4 (Murray Mitchell)

Name: **Xioaming Yang, PhD**
 Program: Pathology, Microbiology & Immunology
 Term: Fall 2024 – Fall 2030

Name: **Philip Brandon Busbee, PhD**
 Program: Pathology, Microbiology & Immunology
 Term: Fall 2024 – Fall 2030

Name: **Abrish Kumar, PhD**
 Program: Cell Biology and Anatomy (School of Medicine)
 Term: Fall 2024 – Fall 2030

Name: **Fernanda Bruschi Marinho Priviero, PhD**
 Program: Cell Biology and Anatomy (School of Medicine)
 Term: Fall 2024 – Fall 2030

These nominations were unanimously approved by Graduate Council.

10. Fellowships and Scholarships Committee (Edie Goldsmith)

No report.

11. Report of Science, Math, and Related Professional Programs Committee (Sourav Banerjee)

None at this time.

12. Report of the Humanities, Social Sciences, Education, and Related Professional Programs Committee (Angelina Sylvain)

None at this time. Nominations are still being accepted for Chair of this committee.

13. Report of the Grievances, Appeals and Petitions Committee (Sriram Venkataraman)

No report.

14. Other Committee Reports

None.

15. Old Business

None.

16. New Business

None.

17. Good of the Order

Reminder Dates:

- | | |
|---------------------|--|
| September 23, 2024: | The next scheduled meeting of the Graduate Council will be in person on Monday, September 23 rd , 2024, at 2:00 pm in Room #583 in the Close-Hipp Building. |
| October 25, 2024: | 3MT (3 Minute Thesis) Training, Friday, October 25 th . Time and location to be announced. |
| November 8, 2024: | 3MT (3 Minute Thesis) Competition, Friday, November 8 th . Time and location to be announced. |
| December 16, 2024: | Doctoral Hooding, Monday, December 16 th , 10am to 1pm in the Koger Center. |

18. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 2:54p.m.

Murray Mitchell, Secretary

CC: Michael Amiridis, President
Donna Arnett, 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

Appendix of Upcoming Proposals

- **New Dual Degree:** MIB with Audencia Business School with their Master of Science in Financial Markets & Sustainable Investments, Responsible Procurement and Supply Chain Management, Data Science for Marketing, Business Strategy & Consulting, Food & Agribusiness, Sustainable Luxury, Cultural & Arts Management, and the Master in Management.
- **New Program:** Master of Science in Quantitative Economics
- **New Dual Degree:** MA or MMC Journalism and Mass Communications with the School of Journalism and Information Communication at Huazhong University of Science and Technology (HUST)

Strengthening Graduate Admissions at the University of South Carolina

Associate/Assistant Graduate Deans Council

August 27, 2024



Background

- **Graduate Admissions Improvement Process**

Collaboration between The Graduate School and Office of Organizational Excellence

- **Review of current application process** (within The Graduate School)
- **Extensive feedback** from customers, partners, other stakeholders (+700 respondents to survey in early 2024)
- **Working sessions to identify high-impact improvements**



Findings

- **Limited Integration:** The current system is limited in its ability to exchange data with other systems both on and off campus.
- **Inefficiencies:** These integration limitations result in fewer opportunities to streamline processes, more manual work, complex workarounds, increased work hours, greater costs, and longer processing time.
- **Increasing Volume:** Graduate applications grew from 5,353 in 2023 to 14,764 to date in 2024. This unprecedented volume is having a multiplier effect that makes current system inefficiencies more obvious and the impact more severe.



Recommendations for Actions

- **Systems Optimization**
- **Criteria, Processes, and Workflow**
- **Selection**



Systems Optimization Task Force

- **Leaders:** Angelina Sylvain, Vice Dean & Tom Vrana, Executive Director of Enterprise Applications
- **5-6 members**
- **Questions to answer:**
 - What application systems are available and appropriate for USC consideration?
 - What criteria should be used to evaluate these application systems?
 - What system is recommended and why?
 - What are the technology and software implications of recommendation?
- **Target completion: November 2024**



Criteria, Processes, and Workflow

- **Overall aim:** Examine university-wide graduate admissions criteria, processes, and workflow.
- **Improvement:** Identify where we should modernize our approach before implementing new technology, to better leverage new features and functionality
- **Participants:** Discussions will involve college, school, and department faculty and staff with The Graduate School



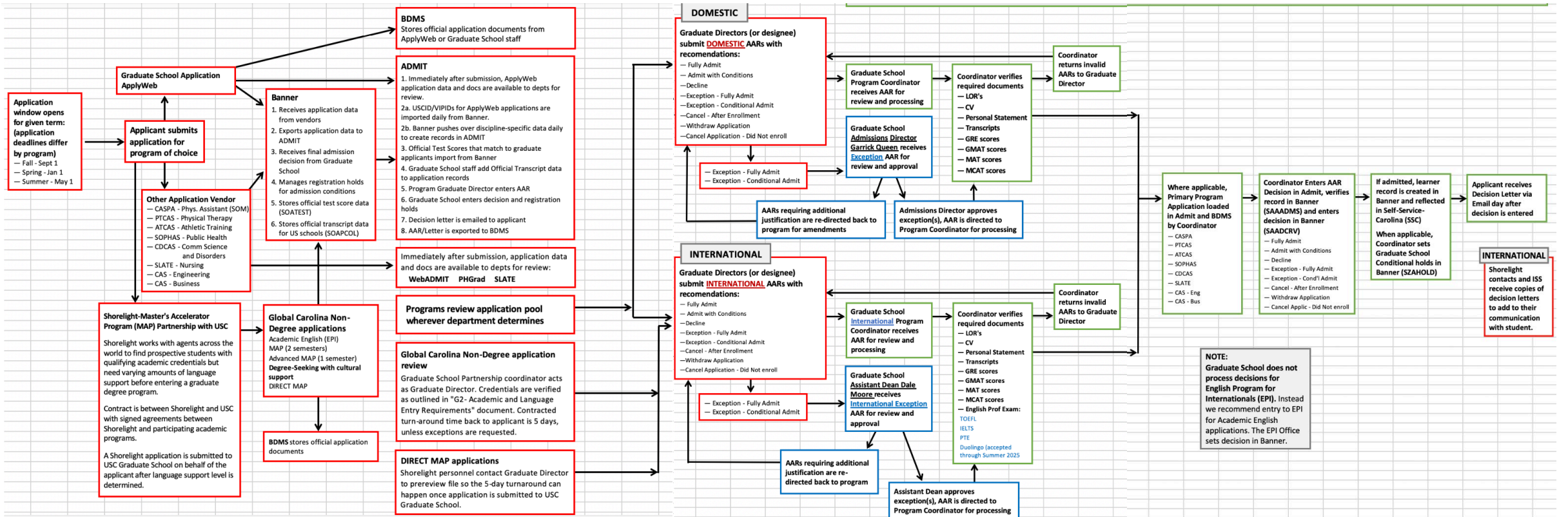
Criteria

Questions to answer:

- What is the role of each admission requirement/criteria?
- Can we establish minimum university criteria? What should they be?
- What documentation do we need?
- Under a new system can we have a modified, federated environment with programs maintaining necessary additional criteria?
- Do we have enough information to make a good decision in most cases?
- Can we communicate admissions criteria easily?
- Can we respond quickly to candidates?
- Have we eliminated unnecessary hurdles?



Workflow: Current



Workflow

Questions to answer:

- What workflow will reduce inefficiencies?
- What workflow will reduce the burden on program staff?
- What workflow will reduce the burden on Graduate School staff?
- How can workflow be constructed to reduce time to admission decision?



Processes

Recommendations:

- Single **comprehensive checklist** for all application requirements
- **Communication** plan and system
- Clearer **communication with international students** regarding requirements/conditions (in admission letter)
- Established **timelines** for submission of accurate AAR program recommendations that cite any transcript, test score or other conditions.
- How-to **manual for Graduate School Coordinators**



Processes

Questions to answer:

- What processes can be automated?
- What processes can be eliminated?
- Who should perform each process?



Selection for Graduate Admissions

Review graduate admissions research

- The book *Inside Graduate Admissions* (Julie Posselt) will serve as a focus, with additional relevant readings made available.
- The discussion approach will mirror the “**reading group**” format used last academic year with book *The New PhD*.
- Graduate Directors and Graduate Faculty will be invited to **four sessions**: August 29 (intro), September 26, October 31, November 21



Why This Is So Important

- This will be the **first time in 20 years** that the University of South Carolina has comprehensively examined and redesigned graduate admissions.
- We can **position the university for the changing demands** of future students and the need for an agile, responsive admissions process.
- By **working together** on this, we can surface great ideas and build them into the new approach to achieve sustainable progress.



Thank You!

Ann Vail

Dean, The Graduate School

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