

Oakland University
Graduate Council Minutes

Monday, January 12, 2026

1:30 – 3:30pm

In-person and Online

Graduate Council Member Attendees: Brandy Randall (Chair), Darrin Hanna, Anne Hranchook (Co-Chair), Linda Hutcheson (Secretary), John Krauss, Joanne Lipson-Freed, Victoria Lucia, Paul Weinberg

Guests: Neil Baumgartner, Nicole Boelk, Helen Levenson, Kristin Landis-Piwowar, Tricia Westergaard

Members Absent: Henry Aigbedo(sabbatical), Daniel Llamocca Obregon, Claire Rammel (Ex Officio), Meir Shillor, Thandi Sulé

REPORT FROM THE CHAIR

- Graduate School is short handed
 - Absent over 20% of staff due to either FMLA or open positions.
 - Two of three open positions were recently posted. The third should be posted today.
- Enrollment report
 - Many students that registered for Fall 2025, have not yet applied for Winter 2026.
 - Graduate School Dean Brandy Randall reached out to departments with high numbers of doctoral students in this situation.
- OU Basketball Graduate School Day
 - Graduate Council members are encouraged to attend the game on Sunday, Feb 22, at 3pm
- Three Minute Thesis (3MT®) & Graduate Student Showcase (GSS)
 - Council members are asked to encourage colleagues and students to attend and participate.
 - These events have been shown to be a great way to show undergraduates, high school students, and the broader community what graduate education is about in a fun way.
 - OU's 3MT winner will be sent to represent OU in the Midwestern Association of Graduate Schools 3MT competition.
 - Deadline to register to participate is January 20, 2026.
 - Events will take place in the Oakland Center during the afternoon on February 20, 2026.
- Graduate Student Research Conference
 - Oakland usually has about seventy students participating.
 - Deadline to submit an abstract is January 12, 2026.
 - The conference will be held in the Oakland Center on March 13, 2026.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Joanne Lipson-Freed introduced a motion to approve the minutes for the December 8, 2025, meeting. Anne Hranchook seconded. The minutes were approved by acclamation.

CONTINUING BUSINESS

1. Biomedical Sciences: Medical Physics, PhD, graduate program modification and name change, Department of Physics, College of Arts and Sciences (Andrei Slavin, Beth Dawson, Yang Xia)
Reviewers: Victoria Lucia, Paul Weinberg

Victoria Lucia moved to approve. Paul Weinberg seconded. The motion was approved unanimously.

NEW BUSINESS

1. Mechanical Engineering, Combined B.S.E./M.S., combined degree program modification to change the catalog language to clarify the coursework-only track option, Department of Mechanical Engineering, School of Engineering and Computer Science (Sarah Beetham, Laila Guessous)
Reviewers: Daniel Llamocca, Anne Hranchook
 - Graduate Council members would like the proposal to note that this is adding a coursework only track, and to be edited to revise the Catalog copy discussion the thesis track to be clear that it is a track not a program.

Anne Hranchook moved to waive the second reading and to approve the proposal pending the revisions noted above. Joanne Lipson-Freed seconded. The motion was approved unanimously.

DISCUSSION ITEMS

1. 2026 Outstanding Graduate Mentor Award – nominee selection, (Graduate Council)
 - Subcommittee members were not all present. Dean Randall and Linda Hutcheson will work with them by email.
2. Reducing minimum number of PhD program credits + related Graduate Transfer Credit
 - Newly announced federal guidelines effective beginning with the 2025-2026 AY, mandate that full-time enrollment must be defined the same way for all students in the same program. This means we will not be able to create an enrollment status of full-time at 1 credit for students working on a dissertation.
 - Items that Graduate Council has reached consensus on are to lower the minimum number of credits for a PhD to 60, to allow students earning their masters at Oakland University to have a credit reduction of up to 32 credits, whereas students with masters from other institutions would be eligible for a reduction of up to 30 credits. The Graduate Transfer Credit policy must be amended to allow this to happen.
 - Graduate Council members discussed the potential minimum number of credits of graduate coursework required to be taken at Oakland for students entering with a masters, including what portion of those 24 being at the 6000 level or above, as well as a minimum of 30 doctoral program credits for students coming to Oakland with a master's degree.
 - Council members agreed that the percentage of credits required for the credential that must be earned at Oakland University be lowered from at least 51 to at least 50 in the Graduate Transfer Credit graduate policy.

Joanne Lipson-Freed moved to waive second reading and to approve the Graduate Transfer Credit modification noted above. Paul Weinberg seconded. The motion was approved unanimously.

Items 3 – 6 were not discussed due to lack of time and will be moved to the next agenda.

3. Dissertation Format Requirements: dissertation subcommittee report
4. Graduate Course Instruction by Programs Not Authorized to Offer a Graduate Degree: review of further revision done per discussion that led to November 3, 2025, approval.
5. Program Review: Rubric, Subcommittee report

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 3:30pm.

