

Graduate and Professional Council Meeting Minutes

Thursday 7 August 2025

Nagle 113; Zoom Link

Meeting ID: XXX XXXX XXXX

Passcode: GPCXXXX

ATTENDEES

In-Person

Marck C. Gleason (Graduate and Professional School), *Administrative Assistant*

Voting: Mary Bryk (Agricultural and Life Sciences), Adam Seipp (Arts and Sciences), Beverly Irby (Education and Human Development), Duncan “Hank” Walker (Engineering)

Non-Voting: Charles Criscione (Graduate and Professional School), David Kessler (Arts and Sciences), Trent Smith (Graduate and Professional School)

Online

Fuhui Tong (Graduate and Professional School), *Chair*

Voting: Katherine “Katie” Reed (Architecture), Reginald Taylor (Dentistry), Michelle Taylor-Robinson (Government and Public Service), Gillian Bartlett-Esquillant (Medicine), Matthew Sorenson (Nursing), Charlotte Ku (Law), Donald “Don” House (Performance, Visualization, and Fine Arts), Rhonda Rahn (Public Health), Gregory “Greg” Johnson (Veterinary Medicine and Biomedical Sciences), Tamra Walderon (Graduate and Professional Student Government)

Non-Voting: Angel Carrizales (Curricular Services), Lara Chenault (Curricular Services), Alicia Dorsey (Provost), Stephanie Graves (University Libraries), Bridgette Ingram (Provost), Frank North (Pharmacy), Griselda Portales (Curricular Services), Chris Reed (Provost), Rachel Walton, Sandra Williams (Registrar), Marissa Winking (Veterinary Medicine and Biomedical Sciences)

DISCUSSION ITEMS

1. Graduate Loan Caps (Provost’s Office)

- [Reed] Introduction
 - Loan caps on graduate students will not affect current students, will apply beginning Fall 2026
 - Some programs will benefit while others will not
- Discussion
 - Graduate students will remain capped at \$20,500 unsubsidized direct loans
 - Juris doctor and other professional practice doctoral students will be capped at \$50,000
 - Graduate PLUS loans will be phased out

- More specifics will be available as of the first Graduate Operations Committee meeting of the 2025-2026 academic year
- 2. College/School Representation for 2025-2026 Academic Year** (Graduate and Professional Council)
 - [Gleason] Annual calendar finalized and will be provided
 - All meetings will be first Thursday each month
 - Only January will be second Thursday due to Christmas/New Year Break
 - Calendar invites will be provided through Outlook within the coming week
 - [Gleason/Tong] GPC Administrative Assistant will request confirmation of continuation with GPC from all members; any changes to college/school representation should be communicated to the GPC Administrative Assistant as soon as possible
 - [Tong/Dorsey] Changes to approval processes may be coming considering changes to Faculty Senate in the coming months
- 3. [Update] Graduate Student Advisory Committee Member Requirements** (Graduate and Professional School)
 - Introduction
 - [Tong] Minimum Advisory Committee Requirements discussed in June 2025 with proposal to develop official policy regarding minimum number of advisory committee members for each degree/thesis option type
 - [Gleason] Two outlier programs were found
 - MS-SDSC was made in error and will be fixing Program Requirements to align with proposed policy (three members for thesis option, one member for non-thesis)
 - MS-ATTR does not offer thesis option and so will remove that language from Program Requirements
 - With correction of those two programs, all graduate programs are in line with proposed policy
 - [Tong] Proposal will be made to GOC at September meeting
 - Discussion
 - [House/Gleason] External Member Requirement will not affect colleges/schools without official degree-granting departments
 - [Tong] Those colleges/schools are required to internally monitor and enforce External Member Requirement
- 4. Standardized Test Score Requirement Removal (Mathematics) – *Attachment 1***
 - [Tong] Introduction
 - Since the university removed the standardized test score requirement, requests to require applicants to submit test scores must be approved by the GPC, but only notification is needed for removal of requirements

- Mathematics has decided to remove the requirement for the distance MS-MATH beginning Summer 2026
- Notification Received
- 5. Degree Equivalency Request (Soil and Crop Sciences) – *Attachment 2***
 - [Tong] Introduction
 - Student already enrolled in 96-hour PHD-SCSC program
 - Department provided thorough review of student's academic career to request equivalency of student's Bachelor's and Master's degrees to permit student change to 64-hour PHD program
 - Documents provided to Graduate and Professional Policies and Standards Committee
 - Discussion
 - [Reed/Walker/Bryk] Student completed three-year Bachelor's, but Master's degree had additional coursework which may be considered over a traditional American Master's and may be considered as supplementing the three-year Bachelor's
 - [Walker/Bryk/Tong] Student's academic performance thus far, in both undergraduate-level and graduate courses, has demonstrated a high quality of preparation
 - [Tong] Request for clarification of evaluation procedures can be sent to Admissions
 - Tabled for further evaluation with eVote in coming weeks

CONSENT AGENDA (*Approved*)**1. Course Changes**

[ECEN 723: Introduction to Formal Verification](#)

[ECEN 772: Introduction to Microelectromechanical Devices and Systems](#)

[NURS 670: Introduction to Psychopharmacology](#)

[RWFM 625: Contemporary Issues in Water Resource Management](#)

[VTPB 691: Research](#)

2. New Courses

[BMEN 639: Engineering the Immune Response to Biomaterials](#)

[BMEN 656: Clinical Engineering for Cardiac Rhythm Management and Ablation](#)

[CHEN 680: Fundamentals of Heterogeneous Catalysis](#)

[GENC 601: Genetic Counseling Principles I](#)

[GENC 602: Genetic Counseling Principles II](#)

[GENC 604: Psychosocial Genetic Counseling I](#)

[GENC 605: Psychosocial Genetic Counseling II](#)

[GENC 606: Embryology, Teratology, and Prenatal Genetics](#)

- [GENC 607: Clinical Genetics I](#)
 - [GENC 608: Clinical Genetics II](#)
 - [GENC 609: Molecular and Human Genetics](#)
 - [GENC 610: Cancer Genetics](#)
 - [GENC 611: Genetic Counseling Peer Insight](#)
 - [GENC 612: Laboratory and Industry Genetics](#)
 - [GENC 613: Genetic Counseling Skills Practicum](#)
 - [GENC 614: Genetic Counseling Professional Development I](#)
 - [GENC 615: Genetic Counseling Professional Development II](#)
 - [GENC 616: Precision Health and Healthcare Delivery](#)
 - [GENC 617: Legal and Ethical Issues in Genetics](#)
 - [GENC 684: Professional Internship](#)
 - [GENC 725: Graduate Capstone Project](#)
 - [HMGT 604: Food Service Delivery Systems in Hospitality, Tourism and Recreation Management](#)
 - [HMGT 605: Managing Resources and Development of Destination Communities](#)
 - [HMGT 645: Revenue Management in Hospitality, Tourism and Recreation Management](#)
 - [SCSC 652: Weed Molecular Physiology](#)
 - [SCSC 662: Agricultural Remote Sensing](#)
 - [VSCS 684: Professional Internship](#)
- 3. Course Inactivations**
- [ALEC 646: Institutions Serving Agriculture in Developing Nations](#)
 - [MSEN 659: Materials Design ePortfolio](#)

CURRICULAR ITEMS

- 1. Course Changes**
- ~~SCSC 613: Ethical Aspects of International Agricultural Systems (Withheld)~~
 - ~~SCSC 627: Nutrients in Soils and Plants (Withheld)~~
- 2. New Courses**
- ~~FSTC 649: Microbial Detection and Genomics in the Food Industry (Withheld)~~
 - ~~MGMT 631: Business Acumen for Managers (Withheld)~~
 - ~~NUTR 636: Nutritional Physiology of Vitamins and Minerals (Withheld)~~
 - ~~POSC 607: Gut Microbiome - Impact on Poultry Hosts and Modulation Strategies (Withheld)~~
- 3. Program Changes**
- ~~GERT-MDSC: Medical Sciences - Certificate (Returned)~~
 - [MFT-FTCL: Master of Food Technology and Leadership in Food Technology and Leadership \(Approved\)](#)
 - ~~MS-HTRM: Master of Science in Hospitality, Tourism and Recreation Management (Returned)~~
 - [MS-SOSC: Master of Science in Soil Science \(Approved\)](#)
 - [PHD-SOSC: Doctor of Philosophy in Soil Science \(Approved\)](#)

4. New Programs

[MS-CYBR: Master of Science in Cybersecurity](#) (**Approved**)

[MS-GENC: Master of Science in Genetic Counseling](#) (**Approved**)

Attachment 1

Changes in Graduate & Professional Loans

Current Graduate & Professional Loan Programs:

Unsubsidized Direct Loans

- Capped at \$20,500 for graduates and JD
- Capped at varying limits for Vet Med and Health Professions but the highest is \$47,167 this year

Veterinarian & Health Professions			
Loan Limit break down for Pharmacy and Public Health Grads (G7 & G8)			
<u>9 months</u>	<u>10 months</u>	<u>11 months</u>	<u>12 months</u>
\$33,000	\$34,388	\$35,777	\$37,167
Loan Limit break down for Vet Med, Dental, and Medical			
<u>9 months</u>	<u>10 months</u>	<u>11 months</u>	<u>12 months</u>
\$40,500	\$42,722	\$44,944	\$47,167

Graduate PLUS Loans

- Pass a simplified credit check. The Department of Education doesn't specify a credit score but requires the absence of an adverse credit history.
- No cap, up to COA (COA can be found here: tuition.tamu.edu)

New Legislation effective July 1, 2026:

Unsubsidized Direct Loans

- Capped at \$20,500 for graduates
- Capped \$50,000 for professionals. JD are now listed as an “example” of a professional program

Graduate PLUS Loans

- Eliminates Grad PLUS (has legacy phase-out provision)
- Alternative loans may be limited option as most require good credit or a cosigner

Attachment 2

DEPARTMENT OF MATHEMATICS



Memorandum

TO: Dr. Fuhui Tong *Fuhui Tong*
Associate Provost and Dean (Graduate and Professional School)

THROUGH: Dr. Adam R. Seipp *Adam R. Seipp*
Graduate Operations Committee Dean & Graduate Instruction Committee
Chair (College of Arts and Sciences)

FROM: Dr. Peter Howard *Peter Howard*
Head (Department of Mathematics)

SUBJECT: Request to Remove GRE Requirement for Distance Master's Program in Mathematics Admissions starting Summer 2026.

Dear Dr. Tong,

As Head of the Department of Mathematics, I respectfully request approval to remove the GRE requirement for applicants to our Distance Master's Program, effective with the Summer 2026 admission cycle.

Currently, our department requires the general GRE test for all M.S. applicants (both traditional and distance), and the GRE Mathematics Subject Test for Ph.D. applicants. This request applies only to the Distance M.S. Program.

We present the following reasons in support of this change:

1. **Limited Predictive Value:** Experience shows that GRE scores are not reliable predictors of student success in the Distance M.S. Program. Academic transcripts, prior coursework, essay, recommendation letter, and relevant work experience provide more meaningful indicators.
2. **Accessibility, and Administrative Burden:** The GRE presents financial and logistical obstacles for many applicants, especially working professionals and international students. We have seen a steady increase in the number of applicants requesting GRE waivers, which has created additional administrative work and difficulty in maintaining consistent, fair criteria for granting waivers. Removing the requirement altogether would streamline the admissions process and promote equitable access.
3. **Alignment with Peer Programs:** A similar online M.S. program offered by the Department of Statistics does not require the GRE. Removing our requirement would bring us into alignment with comparable programs within the university, ensuring we remain competitive and consistent in our admissions practices for professional master's degrees.
4. **Program Scope and Goals:** Our program is not intended as a preparation for a Ph.D. in pure mathematics. As stated in our program description, it may serve as a foundation for doctoral work in mathematics education, but not pure mathematics — where GRE performance might otherwise be more relevant.

5. **Academic Support Structures:** We have developed a bridge course to address any academic gaps among admitted students. Furthermore, starting last academic year, we implemented a conditional admission option for applicants who show strong potential but require additional preparation.
6. **Alternative Pathways for Admission:** Students may initially enroll in the program as non-degree-seeking and, upon successful completion of 12 credit hours, apply to the degree-seeking track. For these students, a GRE requirement is redundant, as they have already demonstrated their capability for graduate-level work in mathematics.
7. **Expanding Access Without Compromising Quality:** We believe this policy change will help us reach a broader, more diverse applicant pool while maintaining the academic integrity of the program.

We appreciate your consideration of this request. Please let me know if any additional information or documentation is needed.

Received and acknowledged by the Graduate and Professional Council on Thursday
7 August 2025.

A handwritten signature in red ink, appearing to read "Mark C. Howard", is written over the acknowledgment text.

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Email: phoward@tamu.edu

1 July 2025

TO: Fuhui Tong
Associate Provost and Dean, Graduate and Professional School

THRU: Mary Bryk
GOC Dean, College of Agriculture and Life Sciences 

FROM: Wayne Smith
Professor and Associate Head for Graduate Programs, Soil and Crop Sciences 

RE: Request for Review of Degree Equivalency, [REDACTED]

The Department of Soil and Crop Sciences' admission committee, chaired by Dr. Wayne Smith, conducted an extensive review of Ms. [REDACTED]'s transcripts from the Chhatrapati Shahu Ji Maharaj University in Kanpur, India (formerly known as Kanpur University) and Mount Carmel College in Bangalore, Texas A&M University (TAMU) Rule 11.03.99.M1 "Definition of a Credit Hour," and various undergraduate and graduate life sciences curricula in the TAMU catalog for comparison. The committee is of the opinion that Ms. [REDACTED] completed the equivalent of a BS and MS degree before enrolling in the Agronomy PhD program. Texas A&M University Graduate Admissions does not agree with our determination. Ms. [REDACTED] is currently in the 96-hour PhD program in Agronomy. The Department of Soil and Crop Sciences' admission committee requests that the Graduate and Professional School review and reconsider the equivalency of [REDACTED]'s BS and MS degrees to standard BS and non-thesis MS degrees earned in the U.S. If you agree, we request that she be enrolled in the 64-hour Agronomy PhD program at TAMU.

Ms. [REDACTED] earned a Bachelor of Science degree from Chhatrapati Shahu Ji Maharaj University in Kanpur, India (formerly known as Kanpur University) in 2015. The program was a 3-year degree and the university's attendance/grading system was based on 6-month semester cycles with courses that were not assigned semester credit hour units as in the U.S. It is obvious that Ms. [REDACTED]'s UG degree is not a broad-based academic BS degree because it does not have the arts and social sciences courses typical of bachelor's degrees in the U.S. However, Ms. [REDACTED]'s undergraduate studies were steeped in science and reflect a depth not typically found in college-level coursework in the U.S. (**Appendices A and B**). Ms. [REDACTED]'s undergraduate BS program concentrated on three of the hard sciences: Botany, Chemistry, and Zoology. **Appendix C** provides an example syllabus for the botany portion only. The syllabi for the zoology and chemistry portions exhibit depths of subject matter similar to that of the botany syllabus. Despite the depth of coverage in the three subject areas, in 2015, Chhatrapati Shahu Ji Maharaj University had a NAAC rating of B, and Ms. [REDACTED]'s degree was earned in Division II, not Division I. For these reasons, we conclude that Ms. [REDACTED]'s BS degree is equivalent to three years of study in the U.S.

Ms. [REDACTED] earned a Master of Science (MS) degree in Life Sciences from Mount Carmel College in Bangalore in 2017. The transcript from her MS Life Sciences program reflects a more "western" format graduate program, but with more courses and more in-depth coursework, given that the semesters were 6 months in length compared to less than 4 months in the U.S. [REDACTED] took 29 academic courses plus a project to earn her MS degree. While Ms. [REDACTED]'s project was not equivalent to a master's thesis in the U.S. (**Appendix D**), her MS Life Sciences degree program at Mount Carmel College in Bangalore required more courses than a master's thesis in the U.S. We reviewed the coursework for her MS Life Sciences using the current syllabus for the MS Life Sciences at Mount Carmel College (**Appendix H**).

Comparing Ms. [REDACTED]'s transcript to the current syllabus for the MS Life Sciences, we propose that much of the curriculum is the same as the current Mount Carmel curriculum. Referring to **Appendix E**, Ms. [REDACTED] completed 265 hours of coursework in Semester I, 298 hours in Semester II, 310 hours in Semester III, and 291 hours in Semester IV. Based on the current syllabus for the MS Life Sciences at Mount Carmel College, our estimate is that Ms. [REDACTED] completed 1,164 hours of study to earn a MS in Life Sciences from Mount Carmel College in 2017, which is more than 600 hours greater than the hours required for an MS in Biology program at TAMU (**Appendix F**), which requires 540 hours of study. Our admissions committee considers the coursework taken by Ms. [REDACTED] while earning her MS in Life Sciences degree may be considered equivalent to a fourth year of coursework she would have received in a traditional 4-year BS program and a standard non-thesis MS program in the U.S.

The response from Catherine Roueche-Herdman with TAMU graduate admissions dated 20 March 2025 (**Appendix G**) ruled that Ms. [REDACTED]'s degrees were not equivalent to BS and MS degrees earned in the U.S. We propose that the additional hours of coursework taken by Ms. [REDACTED] to earn an MS in Life Sciences from Mount Carmel College are equivalent to hours she would have taken in a fourth year of undergraduate coursework.

Currently, in her PhD program at Texas A&M University, Ms. [REDACTED] has completed 20 graded SCH and carries a 3.7 GPA. Her dissertation research is progressing on schedule. The Department of Soil and Crop Sciences is requesting acceptance of [REDACTED]'s BS and MS as equivalent to those of a U.S. institution or a degree equivalency exception that would allow Ms. [REDACTED] to change from a 96-hour PhD program to a 64-hour PhD program.

I appreciate your time in considering this request.