

Meeting Minutes
Graduate Studies Executive Committee
Tuesday, March 31, 2026, at 3:00pm
Provost's Conference Room, Derryberry

Members Present

Dr. Julie C. Baker—Executive Officer
Dr. Alice Camuti—Ex-Officio
Dr. Steve Isbell—Chair
Dr. Ashley Akenson
Dr. William Eberle
Dr. Mike Gotcher
Dr. Rachel Hall
Dr. Katherine Hermann-Turner
Dr. Samantha Hutson
Dr. Barbara Jared
Dr. Alfred Kalyanapu
Dr. Hayden Mattingly
Dr. Allan Mills
Dr. Thomas Payne
Dr. Julie Pharr
Dr. Michael Phillips
Dr. Darron Smith
Dr. Jeremy Wendt
Dr. Kit Wheeler
Dr. Karen Wright (non-voting)
Dr. Lisa Zagumny
McKenna Stevens
Braxton Westbrook
Michele Niec

Members Absent

Dr. Bedelia Russell (non-voting)
Dr. Joseph Slater
Dr. John Zhu
Kashaina Nucum

Other Attendees

Lucinda Morabito
Stephanie Flores
Tammy Dodson
Dr. Michael Nattrass
Dr. Dennis Tennent
Dr. Steven Thomas
Dr. Chris Wilson

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1. Approval of the agenda.

Motion to approve the agenda: Dr. Zagumny

Seconded by: Dr. Smith

Comments/Amendments: None

The Committee voted and the motion was: Approved by: All Opposed by: None

2. Approval of the minutes from the March 3, 2026, meeting.

Motion to approve the minutes: Dr. Zagumny

Seconded by: Dr. Smith

Comments/Amendments: None

The Committee voted and the motion was: Approved by: All Opposed by: None

3. Proposal by the Office of International Programs to revise Policy 240

Comments/Amendments: REMOVED

4. Proposal by the College of Emerging and Integrative Studies, School of Professional Studies. Effective Fall 2026.

- a. Add course PRST 5310 Ethics and AI: The Good, The Bad, and the Unknown.
- b. Add course PRST 5310 as a core course option to PRST 6100 in all master's degree programs of study.

Motion to approve the proposal: Dr. Zagumny

Seconded by: Dr. Smith

Comments/Amendments: Dr. Dennis Tennant proposed adding PRST 5310, a cross listed course with a popular undergraduate course, Ethics and AI. This course will then be added as an option to all MPS core course PRST 6100.

The Committee voted and the motion was: Approved by: All Opposed by: None

5. Proposal by the College of Agriculture and Human Ecology, School of Agriculture to add AGR 6990 Research & Thesis. Effective Fall 2026

Motion to approve the proposal: Dr. Zagumny

Seconded by: Dr. Smith

Comments/Amendments: Dr. Michael Nattrass stated that upon review of the Agriscience degree requirements, it was noted that a research course needed to be added to available courses.

Dr. Mattingly asked about the course being used for both thesis/non-thesis and the limitation per semester. Dr. Nattrass stated that while research will be similar for both, the department will submit a new project course for the non-thesis majors.

Discussion continued about the program research being a minimum of 6 credit hours but additional hours may be taken and the course being repeatable.

Friendly Amendment: course will be allowed up to 6 credit hours per semester and be repeatable.

The Committee voted and the motion was: Approved by: All Opposed by: None

6. Proposal by the College of Agriculture and Human Ecology, School of Human Ecology to update admission requirements in the catalog for the Child Life graduate program. Effective Fall 2026.

Motion to approve the proposal: Dr. Zagumny

Seconded by: Dr. Smith

Comments/Amendments: Dr. Hutson stated that the program combined the two courses into a new course for the undergraduate coursework requirement. The catalog needed to be updated.

The Committee voted and the motion was: Approved by: All Opposed by: None

7. Proposal by the College of Agriculture and Human Ecology, School of Human Ecology to update the program of study and catalog wording of the admission requirements for the Community Health and Nutrition graduate program.

Motion to approve the proposal: Dr. Zagumny

Seconded by: Dr. Smith

Comments/Amendments: Dr. Hutson stated that the department switched the order of courses for summer 1 and Fall 2 Experiential Learning Credits to better suit the needs of students. Admission requirements still list student health forms, which is no longer an admission requirement. Last item is to update the DICAS website link for applications.

The Committee voted and the motion was: Approved by: All Opposed by: None

8. Proposal by the College of Arts and Sciences, Department of English to update the admission criteria wording in the graduate catalog for applicants for MA in English. Effective Fall 2026.

Motion to approve the proposal: Dr. Zagumny

Seconded by: Dr. Smith

Comments/Amendments: Dr. Thomas stated that the language in the catalog needs to be updated regarding the writing samples for the admission applications for the English programs. Creative Writing prose is different than poetry. Application deadlines were also listed.

The Committee voted and the motion was: Approved by: All Opposed by: None

9. Proposal by Whitson-Hester School of Nursing. Effective Fall 2026

- a. Add a Fast Track option. ***AC**
- b. Decrease credit hours for Adult Gerontology Acute Care Nurse Practitioner, MSN to DNP only with removal of course NRSE 6021. ***AC**
- c. Increase credit hours for MSN Nursing Education program with addition of course NURS 6102. ***AC**
- d. Change admission deadlines and clarify required prerequisite courses in all post graduate certificates.

Motion to approve the proposal: Dr. Zagumny

Seconded by: Dr. Smith

Comments/Amendments: Dr. Jared stated the department is excited to participate in Fast Track. It would allow for 6 credit hours of graduate coursework. They must have completed 90 credit hours and a 3.25 GPA to participate.

Dr. Hall proposed to remove NRSE 6021 as it is a certification course which the MSN to DNP students already achieved.

Dr. Hall stated that NURS 6102 was previously removed but has not been beneficial and would like to put it back into the program.

Dr. Hall stated the department would like to update the deadlines as the current deadlines are too short to complete all the necessary steps to start the program which causes students to postpone admission.

The Committee voted and the motion was: Approved by: All Opposed by: None

10. Proposal by the College of Education and Human Sciences, Department of Exercise Science to add EDUH 7030 Grant Writing and Scholarly Publication in Exercise Science and EDUH 7310 Advanced Studies in Health Behavior and Health Behavior Change. Effective Fall 2026.

Motion to approve the proposal: Dr. Zagumny

Seconded by: Dr. Smith

Comments/Amendments: Dr. Phillips stated that the department has limited courses and the addition of the two courses would allow for more options and include relevant content. Spoke with current and graduated students to assess needs and wants.

Dr. Gotcher asked about using similar existing courses from other departments or colleges. Dr. Phillips responded that the department wanted the courses to focus on Exercise Science aspects.

Dr. Kalyanapu asked if grant writing would be required. Dr. Phillips responded that it will not be a requirement at this time.

The Committee voted and the motion was: Approved by: All Opposed by: None

11. Proposal by the College of Engineering, Department of General and Industrial Engineering. Effective Fall 2026.

- a. Add a cross-listed course ENGR 5510 Engineering Management.
- b. Edit three course titles in conjunction with adding a new graduate certificate, Engineering Project Management. *AC

Motion to approve the proposal: Dr. Zagumny

Seconded by: Dr. Smith

Comments/Amendments: Dr. Wilson proposed the addition of a cross-listed course requested first year graduate students. The three courses' titles need to be updated to reflect the content of the courses. These courses will be the foundation of a new graduate certificate. The certificate would be a nice addition to Engineering degrees as most engineering take the course already.

The Committee voted and the motion was: Approved by: All Opposed by: None

12. Proposal by the College of Education and Human Sciences, Department of Curriculum and Instruction to Edit six courses, Add CUED 7005 Autoethnography, and Delete SPED 6810. Effective Fall 2026

Motion to approve the proposal: Dr. Zagumny

Seconded by: Dr. Smith

Comments/Amendments: Dr. Wendt stated that the changes are to keep current with certification requirements.

The Committee voted and the motion was: Approved by: All Opposed by: None

13. Proposals by the College of Education and Human Sciences, Department of Curriculum and Instruction.
Effective Fall 2026.

- a. To elevate the M.A. in Curriculum and Instruction with a concentration in Secondary Education to a stand-alone degree. ***AC**
- b. To elevate the M.A. in Curriculum and Instruction with a concentration in Elementary Education to a stand-alone degree. ***AC**

Motion to approve the proposal: Dr. Zagumny

Seconded by: Dr. Smith

Comments/Amendments: Dr. Wendt stated that the elevation of the degrees would strengthen the weight of the degree in the real world and be more visible outside of Tennessee Tech.

The Committee voted and the motion was: Approved by: All Opposed by: None

14. Informational Items: Graduate catalog is being updated. Items of note: cross listed courses ART4170/5170 (inactive, 2022) and AGRN4110/5110 (inactive, 2017) were both still active in graduate catalog, have been made inactive. Economic courses were listed under the Department of Business and has been corrected to Department of Economics.

15. Other Matters:

- a. The use of AI in dissertations/theses and admission material.
Nursing raised the topic of applicants using AI for their application materials. Discussion followed about the use of detection software and the establishment of department guidelines. There are many types and levels of AI. This is an ongoing issue with no clear answer. The library or CITL may offer resources about Academic Integrity. University policy requires syllabi to have a statement about the use of AI.
- b. Nomination of a new Chairperson: Dr. Allan Mills was nominated and approved.

16. Adjourn

Motion to approve the agenda: All

Comments/Amendments: None

The Committee voted and the motion was: Approved by: All Opposed by: None

Minutes prepared by S. Flores, reviewed by Dr. A. Camuti, approved by GSEC on July 7, 2026.