MU Graduate Council Meeting -October 30th, 2026

MINUTES

Hybrid Meeting—MSC 2W16-B + Teams

Members Present: Richard Egleton, Amanda Meadows, Timothy Bryan, Craig Kimble, Johan Botes, McKenzie Brittain, Monica DellaMea, Tammy Johnson, Yousef Sardahi, Sarah Clemins, Ashley Walters, Julie Snyder-Yule, Sandra Stroebel, Conner Waller, and Huanshu Yuan

Members Absent: Stephen Young,

Ex-Officio Voting Members Present: Rick Gage

Ex-Officio Non-Voting Members Present: Carl Mummert

Ex-Officio Non-Voting Members Absent:

Guests: Allison Carey, Yi-Po Chiu, Anna Mummert, Monica Brooks, Scott Davis, Debbie Lockwood, Susan Tusing, Eryn Roles, Sonja Cantrell-Johnson, Carleen O'Neill, Kelli Adkins, Cicero Fein, Tracy Christofero, Morgan Jennifer, Kelly Bradley, and Vikki Stroeher

Agenda

Egleton	Welcome; Approval of the Agenda
Young	Approval of September Minutes
Yuan	Credentialling (Attachment #1) (GC-26-10-01-GRC)
Stroebel	Planning Committee Report (Attachment #2) (GC-26-10-02-PC-- GC-26-10-03-PC)
Johson	Curriculum Committee Report (Attachment #3) (GC-26-10-03-CC-- GC-26-10-04-CC)
Meadows	Program Review Announcements and Assignments (Attachment #4)
Egleton	Update from the Chair • Discussion about dual mentors in ETDs (Attachment #5) • AI use in Thesis and Dissertation production (Attachment #6) • Request for thoughts from the GC about the role of Graduate Assistants in the University • Please inform your colleges about the deadline of March 1st for new programs to be at the GC level for us to discuss.
Mummert	Graduate Studies Report (Attachment #7)
Gage	Faculty Senate Report (Attachment #8)
Egleton	Wrap up and adjournment

Attachments

Attachment #	Description
1	Credentialling
2	Planning
3	Curriculum
4	Program Review Assignments
5	Dual mentor discussion
6	AI and thesis discussion
7	Graduate Studies Report
8	Faculty Senate Report

Future Meetings 2026 - 2027:

- November 20th – MSC 2W16-b
- January 29th – MSC 2W16-b
- February 26th – Drinko 349
- March 26th – MSC 2W16-b
- April 30th – Drinko 349

Meeting called to order at 1pm

Initial Announcements

- Richard Egleton began the meeting by thanking everyone for attending and updating everyone that the secretary (Stephen Young) could not attend.
- The meeting agenda was approved without amendments
- September meeting minutes were approved without amendments

Credentialling Committee Report (Attachment #1/GC-26-10-01-GRC)

- Provided by Huanshu Yuan
- Provided an update on edits based on previous discussion on duplicates.
- Committee reviewed all new edits and recommended approval of the updated applicant document as listed
- No additional edits or amendments were suggested
- The council approved graduate council status for all those listed on the credentialling report.

Planning Committee Report (Attachment #2/GC-26-10-02-PC and GC-26-10-030PC)

- Provided by Sandra Stroebel
- Planning committee recommended approval for GC-26-10-02-PC
    - No questions or comments
    - GC-26-10-02-PC approved by graduate council
- Planning committee recommended approval of GC-26-10-03-PC
    - No questions or comments
    - GC-26-10-03-PC approved by graduate council

Curriculum Committee Report (Attachment #3/ GC-26-10-03-CC and GC-26-10-04-CC)

- Provided by Tammy Johnson
- Planning committee recommended approval of GC-26-10-03-CC
    - No questions or comments
    - GC-26-10-03-CC approved by graduate council
- Planning committee recommended approval of GC 26-10-04-CC
    - No questions or comments
    - GC-26-10-04-CC approved by graduate council

Program Review Assignments (Attachment #4)

- Provided by Amanda Meadows

- When members are ready to complete program reviews, they will need to go to the "program review team" in Teams.
    - Members will then click on the 26-27 reviews
    - Members should then select shared documents at top of the page to see all necessary documents
- Amanda Meadows then explained the graduate review assignment excel document (see Attachment #4)
- Once members determine which programs they are to review, they need to pay attention to whether their assigned program will also receive a SWOT report.
    - Members can work on assessment and program reports while waiting to receive SWOTs
- Richard Egleton and Stephen Young have been left off assignment list to act as backups as needed
- To access report, members should use the shared Teams documents and the provided password
    - Members were reminded that the password should be in all lowercase
- Member will use the "rubric for reviewer" to complete their reviews
- Amanda Meadows spent time discussing that not all categories on the review rubric are equal
    - The bottom of the rubric document is where you make the final recommendations
- Richard Egleton noted that the undergraduate program rubric looks slightly different, but the graduate rubric remains the same with the intention of making changes in the future
- Amanda Meadows reminded everyone that SWOT reports will be uploaded to the Team as they are received
- Program reviews are due by Friday November 13th, 2026
    - Amanda Meadows will compile all reviews before the November 20th graduate council meeting
- All assessment reports are due by November 30th
    - There is a separate feedback form for the assessments that members should use
    - Assessment reports should be reviewed as part of the overall process but do not need to be submitted before the November 30th deadline
- Allison Carey encouraged that members reach out to her or Adam Russell if there are any issues with any of the review documents.

    - The reasons for the program review deadline being earlier this year was discussed
        - It is a graduate council deadline which was selected due to the council's final meeting being in November
        - January is a hard deadline based on the state

Chair's Report

Provided by Richard Egleton

Discussed dual mentorship being reflected in the ETD (Attachment #5)

- Richard Egelton poised the question: Do we want this to happen?
    - What is the process if the council decides that it should be shown on the ETD form?
- Richard Egelton will talk to someone at the library to find out the mechanism to change the ETD form/process
- Council would need to go through the planning committee to make changes to the graduate catalog
- Decision was made to send ETD document (Attachment #5) to the planning committee to determine the best route forward
    - Planning committee should discuss the document at their next meeting and provide recommendations
    - Members should send any thoughts/comments to the planning committee

Discussion on AI use in thesis and dissertation production (Attachment #6)

- AI Workgroup provided a document discussing the role of a student's thesis/dissertation committee in determining how much AI usage is acceptable as a part of the students completed work
    - Council discussed the possibility of creating a dynamic form stating the committee has discussed acceptable usage for the students' work
- Richard Egleton asked everyone to review Attachment #6 to provide feedback as part of the policy drafting process.
    - Council members should send feedback to him, and he will send all feedback as one document to the appropriate parties

Discussion on Graduate Assistantships and Teaching Assistantships

- There is an action learning team related to graduate various types of assistantships
- Richard Egleton asked the committee to report on the role of graduate assistants in their department (role, importance, etc.).

- No plan to remove graduate assistants but instead the goal is to standardize the roles, stipends, tuition waivers, etc. across the university
    - Make sure the language is correct, so students are not charged income tax
- Council should send any thoughts to Richard Egleton or Carl Mummert

Discussion on program approval deadline March 1st

- Asked council members to remind colleagues that a new program must reach the graduate council by March 1st
    - This includes substantial changes to programs and the creation of new programs

Quick update on Huron

- Nothing has been discussed with Huron other than them asking if they have the correct data

Graduate Studies Report (Attachment #7)

- Provided by Carl Mummert
- Provided an enrollment update (see Attachment #7)
- Enrolments are up about .5% when including staff development/non-degree students but are down about 2% when they are not included
    - We have seen a decrease in master's degree students
    - Carl Mummert has met with each college to discuss context for enrollment numbers
- With regards to the degree awards:
    - Numbers look fine overall
    - Doctoral-Research degree awards need to be 20% to maintain R2 status
    - Should increase when engineering degrees start graduating
- Accessibility guidelines update
    - November 10th is "fix your content day" sponsored by Adobe
    - From 9-4, multiple offices will provide several events geared towards helping faculty with making their courses accessible
    - Link for event is in the attached report (see Attachment #7), and additional emails will be sent out soon
- Blackboard course shells for the spring 2027 semester are scheduled to open before November 10th
    - Opening early will provide faculty more time to work on their courses to make sure all required material meets accessibility standards before the spring semester begins

- Richard Egleton announced that the graduate council minutes are now being uploaded online minus the previous minutes signing page to make them more accessibility
- Carl Mummert also provided an update on the institutional resilience email related to strategic hiring
    - There is an updated hiring review process
    - Hiring proposals will go through a data-focused review
    - This applies to all hires
    - Not a hiring freeze
    - Asking for data about hiring more than the university has in the past
- Related to the student success action learning team email
    - A team met over the summer to discuss best practices for student success
    - Recommendations were sent to the President and Provost
    - The goal of the email was to provide an outline of how recommendations will be used moving forward
    - One goal related to graduate studies is to begin working toward providing each graduate student a documented professional/staff advisor and a faculty mentor
        - This will include separate documentation of a thesis advisor
        - Will likely not have a large impact "on the ground" but this will provide a method to better document each role
        - Carl Mummert does not expect large changes in departments/hiring of additional staff related to this project
        - Will hopefully help students manage the bureaucracy of the university more efficiently
- Carl Mummert ended his report by providing updates on upcoming Graduate Studies related events and important dates (see Attachment # 7)

Faculty Senate Report (Attachment #8)

- Provided by Rick Gage
- Senate met October 22nd
- Review process for Spring Commencement Speaker is underway
    - President Smith has already received a commitment for a speaker
    - Faculty senate will vote on the speaker during executive session of the November meeting
    - Speaker will be announced once approved by the Faculty Senate
- Board of Governors Policy

    - New policy being developed (with accompanying administrative procedure for the university) concerning the honorary degree process
        - The new policy committee is specifically focused on creating a process for cases in which an honorary degree must be rescinded
        - A request was made to have a representative from the registrar's office be made a non-voting member of the committee to make the work related to conferring the degree more efficient
- Faculty senate is going to begin a review of all standing committees
    - Rick Gage wants all standing committees to look at their current responsibilities, membership structure, operating procedures, meeting schedules, etc. to determine if any duplicate work is being done across committees
    - Not about creating more work for committees but instead is looking for efficiencies
    - Will start with a pilot of a small number of committees before rolling out to all committees
- November 9th is the next Executive Council Meeting
- November 19th is the final faculty senate meeting of the fall 2026 semester

Closing Remarks

- Richard Egleton reminded everyone to send comments about various graduate council related policies to various parties:
    - Send comments to Richard Egleton and/or Carl Mummert related to graduate assistantships
    - Send comments about dual mentors to Sandra Stroebel and the planning committee
    - Send comments related to AI usage for student dissertations and theses to Richard Egleton

Meeting adjourned at 2:07pm

Attachment #1

Graduate Council October 30, 2026

Credentialling Committee Report

GC-26-10-01-GRC

Type	Faculty Member	E-mail	College/School	Department/Division	Graduate Faculty Level	Term Start	Term Expires
Add	Agesa, Richard	agesa@marshall.edu	COB	Finance, Economics, and International Business	Graduate	1/10/2028	5/15/2033
Add	Agesa, Richard	agesa@marshall.edu	COB	Finance, Economics, and International Business	Graduate	1/11/2027	5/15/2032
Add	Collins, Tammy	collins@marshall.edu	COB	Doctor of Business Administration	Associate	8/17/2026	12/15/2029
Add	Dudley, Ashlee	fraley@marshall.edu	COHP	Communication Disorders	Associate	8/17/2026	12/15/2029
Add	Gorton, Alice	gortona@marshall.edu	COLA	History	Graduate	8/17/2026	12/15/2031
Add	Green, Todd	green@marshall.edu	SOM	Biomedical Sciences	Graduate	8/17/2026	12/15/2031
Add	Hardesty, Erica	hardesty6@marshall.edu	COHP	Social Work	Associate	1/12/2026	5/15/2029
Add	Johnson, Kaylan	johnson1212@marshall.edu	Please Select	School of Physical Therapy	Associate	8/17/2026	12/15/2029
Add	Kluever, Joshua	kluever@marshall.edu	COLA	History	Graduate	8/17/2026	12/15/2031
Add	Lanham, James	lanham14@marshall.edu	COS	Criminal Justice, Criminology, & Forensic Sciences	Associate	8/17/2026	12/15/2029
Add	Logan, Georgiana	logang@marshall.edu	COHP	Health Science	Graduate	8/17/2026	12/15/2031
Add	Looney, Robin	looney5@marshall.edu	COHP	Social Work		1/10/2028	
Add	Looney, Robin	looney5@marshall.edu	COHP	Social Work	Associate	8/17/2026	12/15/2029
Add	Lyvers, Riley	lyvers4@marshall.edu	COHP	School of Health and Movement Sciences	Graduate	1/10/2028	5/15/2033

Add	Lyvers, Riley	lyvers4@marshall.edu	COHP	School of Health and Movement Sciences	Graduate	8/17/2026	12/15/2031
Add	Morgan, Stefan	morgans@marshall.edu	COS	Criminal Justice, Criminology, & Forensic Sciences	Associate	8/17/2026	12/15/2029
Add	Schafer, Christopher	schafer4@marshall.edu	COB	Management and Health Care Administration	Associate	8/17/2026	12/15/2029
Add	Simpson, Lindsay	simpsonl@marshall.edu	COHP	School of Physical Therapy	Graduate	8/17/2026	12/15/2031
Add	Smith, Jacob	smith1233@marshall.edu	CAM	Music	Associate	8/17/2026	12/15/2029
Add	Williamson, Kaitlyn	williamso160@marshall.edu	COHP	Communication Disorders	Associate	8/17/2026	12/15/2029
edit	Billingsley, William	billingsleyw@marshall.edu	COLA	Psychology	Graduate Chair	8/17/2026	12/15/2031
edit	Christofero, Tracy	christofero@marshall.edu	COB	Marketing, MIS, and Entrepreneurship	Graduate Chair	1/11/2027	5/15/2032
edit	Powell, Robert	powellro@marshall.edu	COHP	Health and Movement Sciences	Graduate	8/17/2026	12/15/2031

Committee Review Feedback:

Duplicated Entries:

- Agesa, Richard (1/10/28 - 5/15/33; 1/11/27 - 5/15/32.)
- Looney, Robin (Only has a start date on 1/10/28 without Graduate Faculty Level. The second entry has a start date of 8/17/26 and an end date of 12/15/29.)
- Lyvers, Riley (1/10/28 - 5/15/33; 8/17/26 - 12/15/31.)

Missing Information:

- Johnson, Kaylan does not have a College/School selected.

Attachment #2

Planning Committee Report

October 2026

College of Business GC-26-10-02-PC

847: MS, Information Systems Degree Program, (Degree) Program Change Request

Department: Marketing

Rationale: Increase enrollment by updating to become more competitive with similar MSIS degrees. Change in Admission Criteria. Reduce total hours from 36 to 30.

Effective Date: Spring 2027

Planning Committee Recommends Approval

848: MS, Information Systems Major, (Major) Program Change Request

Department: Marketing

Rationale: To remain competitive with similar MSIS degrees. Change in Admission Criteria. Reduce total hours from 36 to 30.

Effective Date: Spring 2027

Planning Committee Recommends Approval

School of Medicine GC-26-10-03-PC

284: MMS, Physician Assistant Degree (Degree) Program Change Request

Department: Physician Assistant

Rationale: PAS 530 was inactivated and hours adjusted for other PAS courses so the Plan of Study has been updated to reflect that.

Effective Date: Spring 2027

Planning Committee Recommends Approval

Attachment #3
Graduate Council
Curriculum Committee Report 10.23.26

College Science	GC-26-10-03-CC
Department GLY	
Course Number(s) and Title	681: Thesis
Type of Change:	grading mode
Rationale for Change	This change is to correct the grading mode of the thesis course to CR/NC, to match the catalog statement "Students will be evaluated by a letter grade in all graduate coursework with the exception of the GLY 681 thesis work, which will be evaluated by a CR/NC grade. No candidate will earn his/her degree unless he/she obtains a “CR” grade for the thesis.".
Committee Recommendation	**approve**

College School of Medicine	GC-26-10-04-CC
Department Physician Assistant	
Course Number(s) and Title	PAS 500 Foundations of Medicine PAS 520 Gross anatomy for the PA PAS 550 History and Physical exam PAS 603 Clinical assessment I PAS 613 Clinical assessment II PAS 623 Clinical assessment III
Type of Change: credit	hour changes for all listed courses
Rationale for Change:	credit hours changed to align with curricular needs and to more accurately reflect possible credit hours earned per course. Per program: No change in overall POS hours (122) which meets ARC-PA accreditation standards
Committee Recommendation:	**approve**

Attachment #4

Degree	U or G	Program Name	College	SWOT report expected?	Assessment Report Submitted?	Notes	Reviewer 1	Reviewer 2
MS	G	Safety	CECS	N	Y		Amanda Meadows	Sandra Stroebel
EdD	G	Doctor of Education	COEPD	Y	Y		Johan Botes	Julie Snyder-Yuly
EdS	G	Educational Specialist	COEPD	Y	Y		Yousef Sardahi	Sarah Clemins
MA	G	Leadership Studies (plus certificate programs in Social Services and Attendance; School Principalship/Educational Leadership)	COEPD	Y	Y		Sarah Clemins	Yousef Sardahi
MS	G	Adult and Continuing Education	COEPD	Y	Y		Sarah Clemins	Johan Botes
Certificate post-bac	G	Grad certificate in Social Services and Attendance (affiliated with MA in Leader:	COEPD	N	Y		Sarah Clemins	Julie Snyder-Yuly
Certificate post-bac	G	Grad certificate in Violence, Loss, and Trauma Counseling (affiliated with MA in	COEPD	N	N		Timothy Bryan	Rick Gage
Certificate post-bac	G	Grad certificate in Early Childhood Education (affiliated with MA in Education)	COEPD	N	Y		Julie Snyder-Yuly	Amanda Meadows
Certificate post-bac	G	Grad certificate in Instructional Technology and Learning (affiliated with MA in E	COEPD	N	Y		Julie Snyder-Yuly	Johan Botes
Certificate post-bac	G	Grad certificate in Mathematics through Algebra (affiliated with MA in Educatio	COEPD	N	Y		Ashley Walters	Timothy Bryan
Certificate post-bac	G	Grad certificate in School Library Media Specialist (affiliated with MA in Educati	COEPD	N	Y		Amanda Meadows	Sarah Clemins
Certificate post-bac	G	Grad certificate in Teaching English as a Second Language [Licensure and Non-Licensure] (affiliated with MA in Education)	COEPD	N	Y		Amanda Meadows	Yousef Sardahi
Certificate post-bac	G	Grad certificate: Post-Baccalaureate Teaching Certificate (affiliated with MAT p	COEPD	N	Y		Ashley Walters	Craig Kimble
Certificate post-bac _OR_ post-MA	G	Grad certificate in Elementary Mathematics Specialist (affiliated with MA in Edu	COEPD	N	Y		Nate Floyd	Julie Snyder-Yuly
Certificate post-MA	G	Grad certificate in School Principalship/Educational Leadership (affiliated with MA in Leadership Studies)	COEPD	N	N		Craig Kimble	Amanda Meadows
EdS	G	School Psychology	COEPD	N	Y		Craig Kimble	Yousef Sardahi
MA	G	Counseling (plus certificate program in Violence, Loss, and Trauma Counseling	COEPD	N	Y		Timothy Bryan	Rick Gage
		Education (plus certificate programs in Early Childhood Education; Instructional Technology and Learning; Elementary Mathematics Specialist; Mathematics through Algebra I; School Library Media Specialist; Teaching						
MA	G	English as a Second Language [Licensure and Non-Licensure])	COEPD	N	Y		Julie Snyder-Yuly	Sarah Clemins
MAT	G	Teaching (MAT) (plus Post-Baccalaureate Teaching Certificate program)	COEPD	N	Y		Ashley Walters	Craig Kimble
MA	G	Psychology (plus certificates in Behavioral Statistics; Clinical Psychology Post-	COLA	Y	Y		Nate Floyd	Monica DellaMea
Certificate post-bac	G	Grad certificate in Behavioral Statistics (affiliated with MA Psychology)	COLA	N	N		McKenzie Brittain	Tammy Johnson
Certificate post-MA	G	Grad certificate in Clinical Psychology (Post-Master's Certificate) (affiliated wi	COLA	N	N		Huanshu Yuan	Tammy Johnson
PsyD	G	Doctor of Psychology	COLA	N	Y		Ashley Walters	McKenzie Brittain
MA/MS	G	Mathematics	COS	Y	Y		Sandra Stroebel	Huanshu Yuan
MS	G	Chemistry	COS	Y	Y		Monica DellaMea	Sandra Stroebel
MS	G	Physics and Applied Sciences	COS	Y	Y		McKenzie Brittain	Nate Floyd

Attachment #5

Graduate Council October 30, 2026

Discussion about dual mentors in ETDs

In the Grad catalog we have the following language:

Thesis/Dissertation Committee

Each student planning to write a thesis/dissertation will, in collaboration with his or her advisor, form a thesis/dissertation committee. All thesis/dissertation committees must have at least one chair and two additional qualified faculty members. A thesis committee may have more than one chair, provided that there are still at least three members of the committee overall. The qualifications to serve on the committee are determined by Board of Governors Policy UPAA-13 (Graduate Faculty Status) which stipulates who may chair and who may serve on a thesis/dissertation committee. Doctoral dissertation committees for the EdD may replace one of the members with a professional qualified member who does not need to meet the requirements of UPAA-13.

I have had some questions about how this may be reflected in the ETD, I have no idea, but I wanted to discuss it to find out how prevalent this may be before I approach the library.

Attachment #6

Graduate Council October 30, 2026

AI use in Thesis and Dissertation production

There is some discussion about requiring a statement that the committee has evaluated and approved the use of AI within a given thesis. I wanted to again address this and get feedback

3.10 Graduate Research, Theses, and Dissertations

This section governs thesis and dissertation work and other graduate research undertaken for academic credit. Where it differs from Sections 3.1 through 3.3, this section governs for that work.

The committee chair exercises the authority that Section 3.3 gives to the faculty member responsible for a course. The chair, in consultation with the committee, sets expectations for the use of Generative AI in the work and records those expectations in writing before proposal writing begins. Where the chair sets no expectation, Section 3.1 and the requirements of this section apply on their own.

Every thesis and dissertation submitted must include a statement disclosing the use of Generative AI in its preparation. Disclosure follows the conventions of scholarly publishing in the discipline. For students pursuing a multiple-paper format dissertation, each paper follows the conventions of the target journal. The placement of the disclosure statement is described in the Electronic Thesis and Dissertation Guidelines. The student is responsible for every part of the submitted work, including any portion produced with AI assistance.

A graduate degree is a credential requiring independent human authorship for purposes of Section 3.6. Each graduate program's local guidance may state what independent human authorship means in its context. Where a program has not yet provided local guidance, the committee makes this determination and records it with the expectations set before proposal writing begins.

Unpublished research data, export-controlled material, and material subject to a confidentiality, licensing, or nondisclosure agreement must not be entered into a Generative AI tool that has not been approved for it. An Institutional Review Board approval that does not contemplate processing by a third-party AI service does not authorize such processing.

Attachment #7

Graduate Studies Report for Graduate Council: October 2026

To: Graduate Council
From: Carl Mummert, Assistant Provost for Graduate Studies
Date: October 30, 2026

Enrollment Update

Our same-day graduate enrollment is up 0.5% compared to the same time last year. This increase is driven by non-degree students (primarily staff development). Our degree-seeking enrollment on 10/30/2026 is 2,823, compared to 2,899 one year ago. This 2.7% decrease is primarily due to a decrease in students across several master's level programs.

Our number of degrees awarded has continued to grow. Last year, we awarded 35 research doctorate degrees, well above the R-2 standard of 20 per year.

Same-day enrollment

	Fall 2023 Nov 03 23	Fall 2024 Nov 01 24	Fall 2025 Oct 31 25	Fall 2026 Oct 30 26	One-year %Change
Master's Degree	1,647	1,724	1,842	1,776	-3.6%
Specialist Degree	59	59	64	86	34.4%
Doctoral – Research	214	216	217	221	1.8%
Doctoral – Professional	718	671	669	667	-0.3%
Certificate	118	86	107	73	-31.8%
Non-Degree	257	233	172	263	52.9%
Total	3,013	2,989	3,071	3,086	0.5%

Source: IR Factbook

Degrees awarded by academic year

	2022 - 2023	2023 - 2024	2024 - 2025	2025 - 2026	%Change
Master's Degree	687	635	658	784	16.1%
Specialist Degree	71	51	70	58	-20.7%
Doctoral - Professional	206	200	174	189	7.9%
Doctoral - Research	27	28	29	35	17.1%
Certificate	82	74	51	81	37.0%
Total	1,073	988	982	1,147	14.4%

Source: IR Factbook

Fix Your Content Day 2026

November 10, 9:00am-4:00pm

A day dedicated to helping faculty meet the new accessibility guidelines. Marshall Online, Information Technology, College Accessibility Liaisons, and Blackboard will lead accessibility workshops and drop-in support sessions throughout the day. During this 24-hour event, every accessibility improvement you make in Blackboard Ally helps move Marshall up on a global leaderboard.

In preparation, Blackboard shells for Spring 2027 courses will open early to faculty (not students), allowing more time to update materials before the first day of class. More information is available at **https://www.marshall.edu/online/fycd/**

Institutional Updates

The university sent two email announcements this week about long-term strategic projects. These messages announce the broad outcomes of strategic planning teams that met over the spring and summer. While the University has now determined specific initiatives, some implementation details are still being clarified. Additional information will be distributed over time as specific projects move forward.

Strategic Hiring

An updated hiring approval process will help us ensure we hire strategically to maximize student success, academic and operational capability, campus safety and our long-term financial sustainability. This new process is an outcome of the President's listening tour and a Marshall team working with Huron Inc. over Summer 2026.

This process is not a hiring freeze in which all hiring is stopped. We are actively hiring and new positions, including faculty positions, are being approved. The strategic hiring process makes sure all hires, including administration, staff, and faculty, are reviewed and assessed. The process will accommodate unique or emergency situations as well. It is intended to maximize the impact of our hiring decisions within our overall University budget.

Student Success

A 15-member Student Success team met from April through the summer to study best practices for student success at all levels. The review included graduate student success. It included recommendations that apply to all students as well as some that are more focused on undergraduate students. The recommendations were then reviewed by the President and Provost for final decisions

One key goal is for all students, including graduate students, to have a documented professional (staff) advisor and a documented faculty mentor. We are exploring ways to formally document thesis/dissertation advisors as well.

The impact "on the ground" is likely to be small for programs that have essentially this advising structure already. Professional advisors can help students navigate bureaucratic issues like registration, submitting a plan of study, and applying to graduate – freeing up faculty time to focus on student mentorship, teaching, research and creativity.

Upcoming Events and Deadlines

- **Graduate Advisor Lunch & Learn, November 6, Noon-1:00pm.**
  Old Main 109 and Virtual. Bring your lunch and join fellow advisors for an informal conversation about what's on your mind. Whether you have questions, ideas, challenges, or successes to share, this session offers a space to connect and learn from one another.
- **ETD Review Deadline, November 13.**
  Defended, final theses and dissertations for Fall 2026 must be submitted to ProQuest by the end of the day.
- **Graduate Studies Chat with the Assistant Provost, Thursday, November 19, Noon – 1:00pm.** MSC John Spotts Room and Teams
- **South Charleston Office Hours, December 1, 1:00pm-4:00pm.**

Attachment #8

Faculty Senate Report
Rick Gage, Faculty Senate Chair

Faculty Senate met on October 22. I have a few brief updates to share.

- First, the review process for Spring 2027 Commencement Speaker and Honorary Degree candidates is moving forward. The committee has completed its initial review, and its recommendations have been sent to President Smith so that feasibility and availability can begin to be explored. The details remain confidential at this stage, but we hope to bring recommendations forward for formal consideration in November.
- The university is also developing a new Board of Governors rule and accompanying administrative procedure governing the conferral and possible rescission of honorary degrees. The conferral portion will largely codify the process already established through previous Senate recommendations. The rescission process is new, although obviously everyone hopes it will never need to be used. Both documents will move through the appropriate review process before adoption.
- Finally, Faculty Senate will soon begin a broader review of its standing committees. The goal is to examine what each committee is formally charged to do, what it currently does, how it connects with the larger university structure, and whether its responsibilities, membership, or operating procedures need clarification. I plan to begin with a small pilot involving a few committees before expanding the process more broadly.

Those are the main updates from Faculty Senate. I'm happy to answer any questions, and I'll continue working with Richard to make sure information flows effectively between Faculty Senate and Graduate Council.