

Graduate Council Minutes

April 30, 2026

Present:

Mojdeh Bayat, Nermin Bayazit, Brady Chen, Becky Copper-Glenz, Jane Fiske, Nirajan Mani, Kyle Moody, Shirajum Munira, Daniel Sarefield, Renee Scapparone, Robert Shapiro, Deborah Stone, David Weiss, Denise Bertrand.

Absent:

Christine Dee, Ricky Sethi

Visitors:

Lynn D'Agostino, Stefan Dodd, Mark LeBlanc, Amy McGlothlin, Hefei Qiu

Motion to Open the Meeting: Deb Stone

Second: Kyle Moody

Motion to Review and Approve April 9th Minutes as written - Vote: Yes=12, Abstain=1

Non-Substantive Program Change Request Review - No changes to review.

Proposals:

Motion to Review Proposal SGOCE-25-26-24 - David Weiss

Second: Dan Sarafeld

Brady Chen: This is the new course called Introduction to Artificial Intelligence. The course introduced a broad range of fundamental concepts and techniques that enable computers to exhibit intelligent behavior. It covers various different areas in the search strategies and the knowledge representation reasoning and the uncertainties and some kind of statistical learning methods problem solvings.

This is the introduction, the first course in the sequence of AI courses.

Renee Scapparone: Any questions or concerns?

Mark LeBlanc: Course description needs to be reduced to 50 words or less.

Renee Scapparone: Any other questions or concerns? No. Do I have a motion to approve proposal 25-26-24 with the friendly amendment to reduce the course description to 50 words or less? David Weiss

Second: Dan Sarefield

Vote: Unanimous

Motion to Review Proposal SGOCE-25-26-35 - David Weiss

Second: Dan Sarafield

Brady Chen: This is another AI course called Natural Language Processing. This basically focuses on computational methods.

Mark LeBlanc: The first offering is listed as summer 2025.

Brady Chen: That is when it was first offered as a Topics Course.

Renee Scapparone: I see why Brady went with the summer 2025. Is Brady correct then, Becky? It was first offered in 2025?

Becky Copper Glenz: Right. Right.

Mark LeBlanc: The course description needs to be reduced to 50 words or less.

Renee Scapparone: Any other questions or concerns? No. Do I have a motion to approve proposal 25-26-35 with the friendly amendment to reduce the course description to 50 words or less? David Weiss.

Second: Deb Stone

Vote: Unanimous

Motion to Review Proposal SGOCE-25-26-43 - David Weiss

Second: Deb Stone

Brady Chen: This is a course change because we already have a course for machine learning for data science, but data science is actually the area that is a foundation for both the data science and for the AI. We want to use the course to serve as part of the AI concentration. We're going to change the title from machine learning for data science to just machine learning. Then we can apply this course in both data science concentration and also machine AI concentration. We change the course description and then remove anything related to data science.

Renee Scapparone: So it makes good sense that you can use this course description for two different programs.

Renee Scapparone: Other than reducing the course description to 50 words or less are there any questions or comments? No. Do I have a motion to approve proposal 25-26-43 with the friendly amendment to reduce the course description to 50 words or less? Deb Stone.

Second: Becky Copper Glenz

Vote: Unanimous

Motion to Review Proposal SGOCE-25-26-44 - Deb Stone

Second: Dan Sarefield

Brady Chen: This is another new course called Introduction to Generative Artificial Intelligence. It's actually the central area of the modern artificial intelligence and basically it focuses on the machines to create images, text, code, music and other forms of contents so that course is also a 7,000 level. It's the introduction to a particular area in the generative artificial intelligent area.

Renee Scapparone: This was a topics class so you've been running it already.

Brady Chen: Yes since summer 2025.

Mark LeBlanc: We're going to keep that same course number CSC7650.

Renee Scapparone: Other than reducing the course description to 50 words or less are there any questions or comments? No. Do I have a motion to approve proposal 25-26-44 with the friendly amendment to reduce the course description to 50 words or less? Jane Fiske

Second: Nirajan Mani

Vote: Unanimous

Motion to Review Proposal SGOCE-25-26-45 - Nirajan Mani

Second: Dan Sarefield

Brady Chen: This is a proposal for a new concentration in artificial intelligence and the concentration is basically built upon the existing master of computer science program. Our traditional master of computer science programs has six required core courses and five electives and we're going to replace these four electives with these four courses in artificial intelligence courses. We just replace the four of the five electives with the required courses for the concentration. So the four courses are the three newly created AI courses plus the existing courses.

Renee Scapparone: Other than reducing the course description to 50 words or less are there any questions or comments? No. Do I have a motion to approve proposal 25-26-45 with the friendly amendment to reduce the course description to 50 words or less? Jane Fiske

Second: Deb Stone

Vote: Unanimous

Becky Copper Glenz: I just want to say thank you to Brady and to the computer science department for bringing this forward. I really love that you're responsive to what you're hearing from students and what you're hearing from employers and that you work together with the department to really address it by adding this concentration knowing that enrollment is shifting with our international audience.

Brady Chen: I think the AI area is still changing right now.

Mark LeBlanc: There's two zip codes listed. We need just to have one CIP code because we need to be able to send it to errors reporting and for financial aid. We only have an entry spot for one CIP code.

Mark LeBlanc: Secondly, this is Barbara asking this one. She needs a program plan for the catalog layout which would include the core as well. So just everything as it would appear in the catalog.

Brady Chen: Ok.

Renee Scapparone: Any further questions or concerns? No. Do I have a motion to approve proposal 25-26-45 with the friendly amendment to reduce the course description to 50 words or less, remove one CIP code and to include a Program Plan which will also include the core as well? Jane Fiske

Second: Deb Stone

Vote: Unanimous

Renee Scapparone: Proposal 47 has been withdrawn and we'll be back on the table come the fall.

Motion to Review Proposal SGOCE-25-26-51 - Mojdeh Bayat

Second: David Weiss

Xuzhou Chen: This change of the concentration modification form. I don't know which is the right form to submit that change so I just use the new policy or change to the existing policy. I'm not sure whether this is the right proposal type.

Right now the students only have two options either they choose no concentration or data science concentration but since we have submitted the cyber security concentration and it's approved and also we submit the dual concentration plus this artificial intelligence concentration now if student want to switch between concentrations or want to apply for dual concentrations then they should be able to do that with the form. I actually attached the form so you can take a look at the original form.

Becky Copper Glenz: So this isn't really a policy change or anything really. This is just something that will work with you on Brady for the form update, but not really a change of anything.

Renee Scapparone: Let the record show that we are not taking a vote on proposal number 51 that this does not need to be discussed or voted on.

Motion to Review Proposal SGOCE-25-26-48 - Brady Chen

Second: Dan Sarefield

Lynn D'Agostino: It is an elective course for my students. The master's in pedagogy and learning has a lot of teachers that are moving to professional status as a teacher, and they just need more elective courses. This is a course we've run once so far. It's on the books for this summer for the second time. It's filling up pretty quickly. and we just want to get it approved so we can keep offering it once or twice a year.

Renee Scapparone: Does the topic course number 7221 stay the same?

Mark LeBlanc: Yeah, it will stay the same.

Mark LeBlanc: The course description needs to be reduced to 50 words or less and when will you first be offering the course as a real course?

Lynn D'Agostino: I would like to put it on the books for fall 2026.

Mark LeBlanc: Okay, Perfect. Thanks. Okay.

Renee Scapparone: Any questions or concerns? No. Do I have a motion to approve proposal 25-26-48 with the friendly amendment to reduce the course description to 50 words or less.
Stefan Dodd.

Second: Deb Stone

Vote: Unanimous

Motion to Review Proposal SGOCE-25-26-49 - David Weiss

Second: Becky Copper Glenz

Lynn D'Agostino: The pedagogy and learning master's degree is a degree that a lot of teachers use to professionalize their license. Right now, it's at 36 credits and some of our sister institutions and a lot of other kinds of online options are at 30 credits for our 4 plus one students. We've brought it down to 30 credits and this proposal is twofold. It's asking to bring the credits down to 30 credits for everyone and then to add some concentrations.

The first part is bringing it down to 30 credits. It would just have less electives. Part of the reason also why it makes sense to bring it down to 30 credits is used to require 12 credits in the content area for teachers to move to professional status. They've just changed that they only require six credits in the content area and six credits in the PSTs, the professional standards for teachers,

which is all of the courses. So now they don't need as many content courses. We've put that down to just 12 credits in content and pedagogy and then the rest of the 18 credits are kind of our core courses that were there before.

Mark LeBlanc: How would it impact the 4 plus one students because obviously it was reducing the amount of credits from 36 to 30. Is there going to be a new benefit for the four plus one students or how does that change?

Lynn D'Agostino: I would say the benefit is just that they're staying with Fitchburg State. They're not having to apply to other institutions.

What makes it easier I guess on our side there's been a lot of glitches when our 4 plus one students end up in the 36 credit program and not 30, and we don't always catch it. At 30 credits, I think they're still going to go into it. I have 16 students in our practicum seminar right now about to graduate. All 16 of them are continuing with us at Fitchburg State, either the 4 plus one or reading specialist program. I think that says something about this degree, about 30 credits, but it does allow some people that don't want to start right away to take a year off and then join later or other students to be able to choose us over some other competitors.

Mark LeBlanc: One last question. There's a line about using courses below the 7,000 level and then needing special approval, etc. 6,000 level courses don't go through governance. So, just curious how we use those towards a degree program requirement if they actually aren't looked at ahead of time by governance.

Lynn D'Agostino: I feel like it was there before.

Mark LeBlanc: Yeah, okay.

Lynn D'Agostino: It's more our extended campuses that have a 6,000 level course every once in a while. and so I always look through the syllabus to see and more often than not I say no.

Mark LeBlanc: Nope, that's perfect.

Lynn D'Agostino: There was a past president that some extended campus courses were automatically approved and I'm slowly trying to get rid of that.

Lynn D'Agostino: Move them to 7,000 to make them more intensive or they can't be counted.

Mark LeBlanc: Perfect.

Lynn D'Agostino: The other part of this proposal is to add concentrations which are more just to help our students. Right now this degree is like choosing your own adventure degree and students don't always like that. This would add some concentration. and make it easier for Barbara and everyone in the registrar's office to have these courses fall into place, so it would be

adding 5-12 education, early childhood, elementary, special ed, TESL is already one, and then a self-designed that if they still choose your own adventure, it could be that.

Mark LeBlanc: I can tell you Barbara's excited about this.

Becky Copper Glenz: Thank you Lynn for all of your work on this because this really has been years in the making. Lynn has done a lot to make some major updates to a program that serves a lot of students. There's 200 or more students at any point in time that live overseas in this program. These are important changes that will impact a large group of students.

Renee Scapparone: Any questions or concerns? No. Do I have a motion to approve proposal 25-26-49 with the friendly amendment to reduce the course description to 50 words or less. Mojdeh Bayat.

Second: Rob Shapiro

Vote: Unanimous

Motion to Review Proposal SGOCE-25-26-50 - David Weiss

Second: Kyle Moody

Nermin Bayazit: Now that the 5-12 is added as a concentration to pedagogy and learning, we currently have a program called 5-12 education non-licensure and serving the same student population teachers of 5-12 who wants to professionalize their license and a concentration in the pedagogy of learning is a better fit for them. They will still be taking a lot of courses that we offer currently for this group of students along with our 5-12 leisure students.

They will also have a better flexibility to be able to professionalize their license with less coursework with the cohort that are similar in the sense that they're all in class licensed teachers looking to professionalize their leisure as opposed to with the students who are looking to get their initial license.

Renee Scapparone: Any questions or concerns? No. Do I have a motion to approve proposal 25-26-50 as written? David Weiss.

Second: Becky Copper Glenz

Vote: Unanimous

Motion to Review Proposal SGOCE-25-26-52 - David Weiss

Second: Deb Stone

Amy McGlothlin: This proposal is to put the MED in arts education both the art and the music concentration on hold. We have been struggling with enrollment since and it is very difficult to offer coursework to students that is not in the form of a directed study, and we decided to put the program on hold, which means we're not going to take new enrollments while we finish out the

currently enrolled students in the program. That will give us time to revisit things. Now with this news about the content requirement changes, which I wasn't aware of, gives us an opportunity to retool the whole program into something that can better suit students moving forward.

Renee Scapparone: Do we remove it from the catalog?

Becky Copper Glenz: No because we do not want to not close out the program entirely. So, in the catalog, we put a statement that says, we're not accepting applications at this time, but it gives us an opportunity to take some time, reflect, and retool the program.

Amy McGlothlin: And we're still going to be offering classes for the next couple of years while we do retool this.

Renee Scapparone: Any questions or concerns? No. Do I have a motion to approve proposal 25-26-52 as written? Jane Fiske

Second: Deb Stone

Vote: Unanimous

Motion to Review Proposal SGOCE-25-26-55 - Becky Copper Glenz

Second: Deb Stone

Kyle Moody: This proposal involves the removal of the graduate course social mobilities. The needs of our students are such that they need a greater focus on production of media especially for our online courses, and the graduate committee unanimously voted in our department to move much of the scholarship and theory from social mobilities into the existing course theory which is COMM 7018 so the students will be served by the curriculum of social mobilities but in a condensed form within another existing course. That's one of the reasons for the course removal.

Renee Scapparone: You actually have something else already there waiting for them, so this is house cleaning.

Kyle Moody: Yes.

Renee Scapparone: Any questions or concerns? No. Do I have a motion to approve proposal 25-26-55 as written? Dan Sarefield

Second: Deb Stone

Vote: Unanimous

Motion to Review Proposal SGOCE-25-26-54 - Deb Stone

Second: David Weiss

Kyle Moody: This course is COMM 7400 AI and communication strategy is already on the books and is being offered through our AI and database strategy certificate. What we're proposing is that we bring this course into the MS in applied communication as it stands. In other words, by removing COM 77 social mobilities, we're now able to move this course into the rotation, keeping the number of courses current with our master structure as is.

One other piece of it is that since this class is a combination of theory and production, it also focuses on media production and students being asked to get hands-on experience with AI tools within a communication mediated platform. So, I just wanted that to be clear and on the record for transcription.

Renee Scapparone: Any questions or concerns? No. Do I have a motion to approve proposal 25-26-54 as written? Becky Copper Glenz.

Second: Mojdeh Bayat

Vote: Unanimous

Motion to Review Proposal SGOCE-25-26-53 - Deb Stone

Second: Becky Copper Glenz

Kyle Moody: This proposal would change the name from the MS in applied communication to an MS in digital media with the removal of social mobilities and a greater focus on production through AI communication strategy. The graduate committee of our department believes that this will now enable us to focus more on digital media for all our students. In effect, not taking away from the communication element, but highlighting the production element and opening up the program to greater focus on crafting for clients. Firms online nonprofits all these things and by moving it to a master of digital media we're now showing students that they are not just applying communication they are mastering digital media

Becky Copper Glenz: Kyle, thanks to you and the department. I know this has also been in discussion for a long time, and it's huge. This program name change is going to make a big difference for us in recruitment of students and really talking about the benefits of the program. I know it was a lot of market research and discussion and I really thank you for doing this.

Renee Scapparone: Any questions or concerns? No. Do I have a motion to approve proposal 25-26-53 as written? Jane Fiske

Second: Stefan Dodd

Vote: Unanimous

Motion to Review Proposal SGOCE-25-26-56 - Kyle Moody

Second: Deb Stone

Becky Copper Glenz: I'm presenting this on behalf of the school of education for Michael Hannah for our online accelerated educational leadership and management program. This is one

of the challenges we have at the university currently. We have two MED educational leadership and management non-licensure programs. Each of those programs is offered in a 7-week online format. One of them we run through Risepoint or formally Academic Partnerships. The other one is run through, what we refer to, as our on-campus program even though it's an online program. So each of these programs have the exact same program name but each of them have different program outcomes which is a problem as you can imagine if we were to answer to NECHE or any creditor why do you have the same program with two different sets of learning outcomes. So we know that this has been a challenge but it was a lot of work trying to work with our academic partnerships to look at possible name changes.

They did a market research study because they knew that we wanted to change the name of our program, but it was easier for them to change the name of the online accelerated program as our other program serves many local districts here through extended campus and it's important for them to have the formal name educational leadership and management. So, Risepoint agreed and they looked at market research and suggested that we change the name to MED leadership and management taking out educational at the beginning. So, it'll be MED leadership and management and then we'll retain the name of our other MED educational leadership and management program through our on-campus program. if that makes any sense. The only change is the name of the program. The curriculum and everything remains the same.

Renee Scapparone: Any questions or concerns? No. Do I have a motion to approve proposal 25-26-56 as written? Deb Stone.

Second: Mojdeh Bayat

Vote: Unanimous

Motion to Review Proposal SGOCE-25-26-57 - David Weiss

Second: Deb Stone

Becky Copper Glenz: Jim Alicado was not able to be here today, but this proposal is submitted from the occupational education program. So this is based on some changes with DESE and how they look at technical career and technical education. The term that we use currently is occupational education or you might hear vocational education. The terminology has changed in the vocational world so when you talk about technical career training or technical education, it's often seen as career and technical education. Mojdeh, you probably know more about this than I do, but is that your understanding as well that DESI has changed the language to career and technical education?

Mojdeh Bayat: The previous names had some kind of a negative connotation that this is inferior to other education majors and DESI wanted to do away with that and we wanted to be aligned with DESI and they are setting new regulations about this degree and programs and we wanted to be on top of that as we revise our curricula. We wanted to make the change to the name now.

Renee Scapparone: Any questions or concerns? No. Do I have a motion to approve proposal 25-26-57 as written? Deb Stone.

Second: Jane Fiske

Vote: Unanimous

Kyle Moody: With the approval of the name change does that now mean that this program would have to go to the BHE for approval?

Becky Copper Glenz: The next step whenever we add new concentrations or program name changes we do have to submit information to the BHE. That's something that Denise and I will work on after this but we put together it's basically a one-page form.

Mojdeh Bayat: I just want to say thank you to you and Denise. This is a lot of work, and you're always so organized and so quick. We really appreciate your leadership, Becky, and Denise for your assistance.

Meeting Adjourned