

# Graduate Academic Programs and Research Committee Report

University Faculty Senate (UFS) 2024 - 2025

## Committee Charge

*The committee will provide guidance on matters relating to graduate academic programs and the development and sustainability of faculty research and other scholarship that further the institution's mission beyond classroom and curricular activities.* To these ends, the committee shall identify and address issues pertaining to the policies, procedures, operation, criteria, quality, encouragement, and support of existing and proposed graduate academic programs within the University. The Committee shall also review and recommend policies and practices that affect the ability of faculty to conceive, fund, conduct, and/or report activities related to research and other scholarship within the University.

## Committee Members

Chair:

ISABELLE BICHINDARITZ	OSWEGO	ibichind@oswego.edu	YR 3
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Members:

T'SHURA BROWN	DOWNSTATE	tshura.brown@downstate.edu	YR 3
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SUNY Administrative Liaison:

MARIANNE HASSAN	SUNY Administration	Marianne.Hassan@suny.edu	N/A
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## Agenda from the Fall Planning Meeting

### 1. SUNY Graduate Research Conference:

The Committee plans to organize with the Center for Professional Development (CPD) at SUNY (Michaela Rehm) a fourth SUNY-wide virtual graduate student research conference. The goal of the conference is to provide graduate students the opportunity to present their research to a diverse audience and to serve as a catalyst to increase collaborations within the SUNY by providing a virtual meeting space for faculty and students from across the SUNY System. The Committee plans to continue improving the conference in several

directions, in particular by pushing the event date as far as possible in spring semester. The date of Friday, May 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2025 has been penciled down and approved by CPD. In terms of advertisement, the Committee will work at improving the event communication to all SUNY graduate students, faculty, administrators, staff, and undergraduate students, and through additional media such as Instagram. The committee plans to solicit again the Distinguished Faculty members to feature a keynote speaker and encourage their involvement in the conference and their students' participation. We are considering leaving the conference open to all disciplines without a general theme, to encourage broad participation. For the same reason, we plan to rename the conference "Graduate Research, Scholarly, and Creative Works Conference". Student cross disciplinary panels will be organized based on submissions. It is likely that panels around AI will emerge from the submissions, however many other new exciting themes may emerge. A journal publication of extended papers from the best submitted abstracts is also envisioned this year. In order to encourage student submissions, which can take the form of poster or talk, we would like to offer one or two awards for the best poster or presentation.

**Subcommittee:** all committee members

**Committee coordination:** CPD (Meghan Martin), Communication (Jie Zhang)

## **2. Fostering Cross Campus Research Collaboration:**

Pending the results of its spring UFS resolution on "[197-02-1: SUNY Cross Campus Research Support](#)", the Committee plans to continue advocating for providing research support resources across SUNY to facilitate research. One example would be broadening the adoption of Redcap for human subjects research to additional campuses and possibly SUNY-wide. Another example would be to allow access to existing Biobanks to all SUNY researchers. To facilitate collaboration between R1 faculty members and non-R1 faculty members, the Committee plans to propose incentive grants to foster those collaborations. The Committee also plans to share best practices for developing research collaborations and leverage current research resources across SUNY institutions through a social networking group and the UFS Web-site.

**Subcommittee:** Emre (chair), Kathryn, Isabelle

**Committee coordination:** none

## **3. Enhancing Research Reputation and Productivity across SUNY Campuses:**

Pending the results of its spring UFS resolution on "[197-04-1: SUNY Research Communication Enhancement](#)", the Committee plans to build on previous years' efforts to create and disseminate best practices for research productivity. Through a social networking Research Group (Viva Engage) and the UFS Web-site, the Committee plans to advertise grant opportunities for all disciplines at the local, state, and federal levels, grant preparation workshops, High Performance Computing (HPC) resources, research mentoring for junior faculty (in particular through the Distinguished Academy), data banks and biobanks, open access publishing, and address researchers' questions directly. For example, the Committee will pursue expanding grant training to the Humanities, Social Sciences, and the Arts, and advertising research faculty profiles on UFS' Web-site. Taken all together, these research

productivity resources will have the potential to catalyze and multiply research performance across the System.

**Subcommittee:** Kathryn (chair), Emre, Isabelle

**Committee coordination:** Communication

#### **4. ChatGPT and AI Role in Research and Graduate Education:**

Pending the results of its spring UFS resolution on "[197-01-1: AI Tools for Research](#)", the Committee plans to continue preparing best practices and resources to provide guidance for responsible use of AI tools in research, scholarly, and creative activities, as well as in graduate education. The Committee will tackle questions related to authoring publications, reviewing papers, writing grants, copyright, patents, plagiarism, and academic integrity in the AI and ChatGPT era to help researchers and graduate students leverage these resources in a responsible and beneficial manner with the goal of improving research skills. An important piece of this will be a resource guide to currently available AI tools to support research, creative activities, and graduate education. The Committee also envisions organizing cross-disciplinary panels on this topic at the Graduate Research Conference, based on a subset of received submissions.

**Subcommittee:** Emre (chair), Gina, Kathleen, Isabelle

**Committee coordination:** Ethics, Operations

#### **5. Fostering Cross Campus Graduate Education Collaborations:**

The Committee plans to facilitate educational paths throughout the SUNY system to foster student success, which likely benefit in particular students from underrepresented backgrounds. Resources and best practices will be posted on the Web-site to brainstorm cross-SUNY programs such as 5-year programs (BS+MS, BA+MA, MS+PhD etc.), joint PhD programs, pathways, graduate microcredentials, and international programs. The Committee will also look into making the case for the value of online graduate programs at SUNY, in particular from a diversity support perspective.

**Subcommittee:** Monique (chair), Alicia (co-chair), Isabelle

**Committee coordination:** none

#### **6. DEISJ Support for Graduate Education:**

The Committee plans to collaborate with the EID Committee to create and share best practices to infuse Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Social Justice (DEISJ) in graduate education, research, and scholarly activities. By looking at the state-of-the-art literature and other universities accomplishments in this area, resources can be provided in support of student mentoring, CSTEP opportunities for graduate students, and graduate students associations. In online programs, we can improve how non traditional students are included in the academic community and secure valuable internships and experiential learning

opportunities. More can also be proposed to support a broad range of diverse faculty members in having successful academic careers.

**Subcommittee:** Sweta (chair), Alicia, Kathleen, Isabelle

**Committee coordination:** EID

## **7. Best Practices and Standards for Graduate Education:**

The Committee plans to revise and resubmit its resolution on graduate education standards "197-03-2: [Graduate Education Standards](#)". To ask the President of UFS to collaborate with the Provost and the Committee to form a working group to evaluate graduate education at SUNY. Following the Governor's intent to make SUNY reach new levels of institutional excellence, the Committee recommends the sharing of best practices and standards for graduate education to ensure that all SUNY campuses follow the same drive for excellence in graduate education and that the SUNY label be recognized as a gauge of graduate education excellence. The Committee plans to gather and share best practices for graduate handbooks, graduate programs' operations and their leadership, by looking at the perspective and recommendations from accreditation and state and federal academic departments and associations. Since professional development is required for graduate faculty, the Committee will also look at how to better advertise professional development opportunities across SUNY and make them available SUNY wide. The Committee may also review hyflex modality and make recommendations for graduate education.

**Subcommittee:** Gina (chair), Alicia, Isabelle, T'Shura, and Justin

**Committee coordination:** Ethics, Undergraduate, Communication

## **Completed Action Items**

*Items that have been presented or passed by the Senate this year. Please include a brief description of the actions taken to complete the goals.*

Fall Plenary (October 24-26, SUNY Plattsburgh)

- We are proposing two resolutions:
  - [Graduate Education Standards Workgroup](#) (resubmission)
  - [Faculty Freedom and HyFlex Teaching Modality](#).
- We are reporting on the outcomes of the **Third SUNY Graduate Research Conference**, which was held online on April 26, 2024, which was after the Spring 2024 Plenary. This conference followed on the success of the Second SUNY Graduate Research Conference and the First SUNY Graduate Research Conference. This series of conferences focuses on showcasing graduate students' research and scholarly activities across the SUNY system and on promoting cross-campus research exchanges. It was held online on April 26, 2024. This conference was organized by the **University Faculty Senate (UFS) Graduate Academic Programs and Research Committee** and the **Center for**

**Professional Development (CPD)** at the State University of New York, with the generous support of the UFS.

This year's conference highlighted research contributing to the theme of **Research for the Common Good in Public Higher Education** and featured:

- Two panels, one on Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion, moderated by Distinguished Professor Tiantian Zheng a second one on Health and Wellness, moderated by Trustee Keith Landa.
- Six poster sessions held in parallel.
- Awards for the best oral presentation and for the best poster presentation (with a \$150 gift card for each). The awards were distributed to:
  - *Best oral presentation award:*  
*Mesenchymal Stem Cell-Derived Extracellular Vesicles Mitigate Mitochondrial DNA-Induced Activation of Porcine Peripheral Blood Mononuclear Cells*  
*Tyler Rolland, Sumbule Zahra, Daniel Cucinotta, Dr. Brian Weil*  
University of Buffalo, Jacobs School of Medicine & Biomedical Sciences, Department of Physiology and Biophysics
  - *Best poster presentation award:*  
*Identifying the Role of ERK Kinase in the Phosphorylation of Huntington Protein in Huntington's Disease*  
*Rasika Rathnayake, Dr. Shermali Gunawardena*  
University of Buffalo, Department of Biological Sciences

The call for abstracts proposed nine different themes, with a tenth theme grouping submissions not associated with one of the nine proposed themes. The theme of "Increasing Health and Well-being for All" was the most represented at the conference, followed by "Restoring Clean Water and Thriving Ecosystems", and "Achieving Universal Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion".

The conference organizers want to thank the **University Faculty Senate and its Chair, Trustee Keith Landa**, for their generous support, **Distinguished Professor Steve Faraone** for his exciting keynote address, **Distinguished Professor Tiantian Zheng** for moderating one panel, **Trustee Keith Landa** for moderating the second panel, and **Meghan Martin** for her dedicated support.

**Sixty three research abstracts** were selected for presentation during the online conference as poster or panel presentations after being reviewed by the **Graduate Academic Research Programs and Research Committee**, and are included in the **Conference Proceedings** which will be published in open access in the SOAR archive.

Winter Plenary (January 16-18, online)

- To be determined.

Spring Plenary (April 24-26, SUNY Oneonta)

- To be determined.

## **Committee requests for campuses**

*List requested actions from Senators and their campuses. These will be compiled across all committees and sent out to members after each plenary as follow-up.*

Fall Plenary (October 24-26, SUNY Plattsburgh)

- To be determined.

Winter Plenary (January 16-18, online)

- To be determined.

Spring Plenary (April 24-26, SUNY Oneonta)

- To be determined.

## **Meeting Dates**

We plan to meet this semester on:

October 11, 12-1pm

November 22, 12-1pm

December 13, 12-1pm

Subcommittees will meet as needed and decided by their respective chairs.

Spring meeting dates will be decided later on.

## **Summary of Committee Actions for the Year**

Summary of the Chair's analysis of the accomplishments and challenges of the year and a look ahead for the next year.