

# 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

Members:

T'SHURA BROWN	DOWNSTATE	tshura.brown@downstate.edu	YR 3
KATHRYN HAUSCHILD	FARMINGDALE	hauschk@farmingdale.edu	YR 2
KATHLEEN OLMSTEAD	BROCKPORT	kolmstead@brockport.edu	YR 2
GINA SOLANO	ONEONTA	gina.solano@oneonta.edu	YR 2
SWETA DAS	OPTOMETRY	sdas@sunyopt.edu	NEW
ALICIA KERFOOT	BROCKPORT	akerfoot@brockport.edu	NEW
MONIQUE SOSNOWSKI	FARMINGDALE	sosnowm@farmingdale.edu	NEW
JUSTIN WARYOLD	UPSTATE	waryoldj@upstate.edu	NEW
EMRE TOKGOZ	FARMINGDALE	tokgoze@farmingdale.edu	NEW

SUNY Administrative Liaison:

MARIANNE HASSAN                      SUNY Administration                      Marianne.Hassan@suny.edu                      N/A

## 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 proposed two resolutions, which were successful:
  - [198-02-1 Graduate Education Standards Workgroup](#) (resubmission For: 47 / Against: 0)
  - [198-01-1 Faculty Freedom and HyFlex Teaching Modality](#) (For: 38 / Against: 8)
- We reported 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)

- The Committee is making progress in the organization of the Fourth SUNY Graduate Research and Creative Activities conference. The submission site is open for submissions at <http://www.suny.edu/gradcon>.

#### Spring Plenary (April 24-26, SUNY Oneonta)

- We are proposing one white paper and one resolution:

- Inter Institution Graduate Programs Best Practices (white paper)
- [Inter Institution Graduate Programs](#) (proposed resolution)

## 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)

- Please advertise the [SUNY Graduate Research and Creative Activities Conference](#) to graduate faculty and graduate students at all SUNY campuses.
- The Committee will send a survey to all graduate faculty and graduate program coordinators and directors to collect and spread best practices for graduate education across the SUNY System.

### Spring Plenary (April 24-26, SUNY Oneonta)

- Please continue advertising the Graduate Education survey, it remains open in order to collect more responses, please continue advertising it broadly, thank you!  
<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/ZM9LPMS>
- Please advertise the [SUNY Graduate Research and Creative Activities Conference](#) to faculty and graduate students at all SUNY campuses, which will take place on May 2nd online. Registration is free. Come and support our wonderful graduate students from across the SUNY System and invited speaker Professor Ibipo Johnston-Anumonwo, Distinguished Research Professor from SUNY Cortland.

## Meeting Dates

We met this academic year on:

October 11, 12-1pm

November 22, 12-1pm

December 13, 12-1pm

January 31st, 12-1pm

February 21st, 12-1pm

March 28, 12-1pm

April 18, 12-1pm

Subcommittees have been meeting regularly as needed and decided by their respective chairs. Committee members will continue working beyond the Spring Plenary, since the SUNY Graduate Research Conference will be held on May 2nd. The conference proceedings will be assembled and published after that date.

## **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.

### **1. SUNY Graduate Research Conference:**

The Committee has been diligently working on co-organizing with the Center for Professional Development (CPD) at SUNY (Meghan Martin) 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 has pushed back the event date as far as possible in spring semester. The date of Friday, May 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2025 has been chosen 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 has again solicited the Distinguished Faculty members to feature a keynote speaker and encourage their involvement in the conference and their students' participation. We are honored that Distinguished Research Professor Ibipo Johnston-Anumonwo from SUNY Cortland has accepted to be featured as our keynote speaker this year. This year, we have left the conference open to all disciplines without a general theme, to encourage broad participation. We have received 61 submissions, which represents an increase from the previous year. For the same reason, we have renamed the conference "Graduate Research, Scholarly, and Creative Works Conference". Student cross disciplinary panels are being organized based on submissions, related to two themes: Generative AI and Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion. The proceedings of the peer-reviewed abstracts from the conference will be published in open access in SUNY SOAR repository. In order to encourage student submissions, which can take the form of poster or talk, we will again offer awards for the best poster and the best presentation. The agenda and recordings of the conference will be available at <http://www.suny.edu/grc>.

**Subcommittee:** all committee members

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

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

Following the results of its spring UFS resolution on "[197-02-1: SUNY Cross Campus Research Support](#)", the Committee has continued advocating for research support resources across SUNY to facilitate SUNY-wide research collaboration and support. The

Committee met this year with Catherine Stollar Peters, Director of Research Data Strategy, and Drew Wallsh, Senior Data Strategist. Catherine and Drew provided a presentation on two projects that are part of the SUNY Digital Transformation Project (<http://dtp.suny.edu>). This project was funded with \$200M in 2023-24. The Data Pillars project includes in particular the Research Information Management project and the Research Data Repository project. These projects support the goal of doubling research expenditures by 2030. Catherine from OLIS co-leads the Research Information Management (RIM) project. It aims at facilitating multi-institution collaborations. It plans to deliver faculty profiles for research, an equipment portal, research analytics, and will start working with Buffalo, Binghamton, and plans to expand across the System. This project takes example on a New Jersey project hosted at the State level and collecting searchable information about its universities (Princeton, Rutgers, etc.) including information about people, grants, publications, bibliometric data, core facilities, datasets etc. RIM will look at how to add datasets that are not publicly available and at sustainability. Drew from ORIED co-leads the Research Data Repository project. This project aims at providing an institutional repository of data openly available from active research to allow this data to be used somewhere else – for AI for example. It will support the use of research data by collaborators, peers, and the general public. Data from many disciplines will be included, including the hard sciences, the social sciences, and the humanities. The Committee appreciated these efforts converging with the intents of its spring resolution, and intends in the future to continue collaborating with these SUNY-wide research initiatives by contributing ideas to support cross campus research collaboration.

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

**Committee coordination:** none

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

Following the results of its spring UFS resolution on "[197-04-1: SUNY Research Communication Enhancement](#)", the Committee discussed how in the future the UFS website and a SUNY-wide social networking platform could be leveraged to create and disseminate best practices for research productivity. The Committee discussed 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. Future plans may include expanding grant training to the Humanities, Social Sciences, and the Arts, and advertising research faculty profiles on UFS' website. Taken all together, these research productivity resources would have the potential to catalyze and multiply research performance across the System.

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

**Committee coordination:** none

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



Following the results of its spring UFS resolution on "[197-01-1: AI Tools for Research](#)", the Committee was active this year preparing best practices and resources to provide guidance for the ethical and responsible use of AI tools in research, scholarly, and creative activities, as well as in graduate education. The Committee made significant progress in the preparation of a white paper on "The Impact of AI on Research & Graduate Education", which will be made available either by the end of this year or next academic year. In its current state, the white paper has been accepted for peer reviewed publication at the American Association for Engineering Education (ASEE) Mid-Atlantic Section Meeting conference, with co-authors Emre Togkoz, Isabelle Bichindaritz, Kathleen Olmstead, and Gina Solano.

In addition, the Committee has submitted an IITG grant proposal on the topic of "AI-RA: an AI Powered Research Assistant to Optimize Generative AI Tools for Research". This grant proposal, headed by three Committee members, with the participation of 5 additional collaborators from across SUNY, aims at:

- 1) recommending optimal GenAI tools for research in a broad range of research tasks faculty members and students may be interested in pursuing.
- 2) creating a course on Optimizing Generative AI and AI-assisted Technologies for Research, which will teach faculty members and students research skills in the AI-powered present and future context.
- 3) creating a personalized AI-RA chatbot built on the previously collected information and course.

If funded, this project will help advance the availability of Generative AI resources for research across SUNY.

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

**Committee coordination:** Ethics, Operations

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

The Committee has completed a white paper aimed at providing best practices to faculty members for the creation of inter institution graduate programs across the SUNY system and beyond. It is also proposing a resolution on that topic, entitled "[SUNY Inter Institutional Programs Promotion and Support](#)". The intent is to support faculty members interested in creating inter institution graduate programs with resources, examples, and best practices. These programs could be very valuable to offer excellent opportunities to students from any SUNY campuses to explore pathways to pursue their education at the highest level possible for them.

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

**Committee coordination:** none

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

The Committee made some progress in the creation and sharing of 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 have been collected in support of student mentoring, CSTEP opportunities for graduate students, and graduate students associations. Sweta Das has written a document sharing her experience providing CSTEP opportunities to graduate students. This document will be added to the Committee's website in the future. The Committee would like to pursue this goal further in the future.

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

**Committee coordination:** none

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

The Committee plans to continue advancing standards for graduate education as planned in its successful resolution "[198-02-1 Graduate Education Standards Workgroup](#)". The Committee recommends the creation and 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 has made available a survey, with IRB approval, to collect best practices for graduate education from across the SUNY system. The survey will remain open during the summer months and is available at <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/ZM9LPMS>. In addition to the survey results and best practices from SUNY campuses, information is being gathered for graduate handbooks, graduate programs' operations and for their leadership. The Committee has been looking also at the perspective and recommendations from accreditation and state and federal academic departments and associations. A white paper is in preparation collating all this information to provide resources for faculty members regarding best practices for graduate education. Some of this information will be shared on its future website.

The Committee has also reviewed hyflex modality and made recommendations for great caution in its adoption without faculty preparedness, without workload considerations, and without academic freedom respect ([198-01-1 Faculty Freedom and HyFlex Teaching Modality](#)).

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

**Committee coordination:** none