

1   **JOHN JAY COLLEGE OF CRIMINAL JUSTICE**  
 2   City University of New York  
 3   COMMITTEE ON GRADUATE STUDIES  
 4   **Minutes of October 18, 2024**

5  
 6 The Committee on Graduate Studies held a remote meeting on October 10, 2024, via Zoom.  
 7 Interim Dean Andrew Sidman called the meeting to order.

8  
 9 **Present:** Jana Arsovska, Marta Concheiro-Guisan, Shweta Jain, Simone Martin-Howard, Dominic  
 10 Stellini, Susan Pickman, Ian Seda Irizarry, Ellen Sexton, David Shapiro, Andrew Sidman, Robert  
 11 Till, Susan Kang, Ruby Aguirre, Roy Avijit, Valerie West

12  
 13 **Absent:** Kendra Doychak, Rebecca Weiss, Daniel Matos, Chitra Raghavan, Lucia Velotti

14  
 15 **Non-Voting Members and Guests:** Maggie Arismendi, Janice Johnson-Dias, Katherine Killoran,  
 16 Patrizia Pelgrift, Elena Lenihan, Abbie Tuller, Mechthild Printz

17  
 18 **I. Dean's Announcements – Interim Dean Andrew Sidman**

19  
 20 Interim Dean Sidman welcomed everyone and introduced the new Assistant Vice President  
 21 for Student Affairs and Dean of Students, Dominic Stellini who described his diverse  
 22 background in higher education, having worked at City College and Columbia University. His  
 23 roles have spanned both academic affairs and student affairs, including pre-college  
 24 programs, student onboarding, enrollment management, and data analysis.

25  
 26 Interim Dean Sidman went on to discuss a gap in the evaluation process for graduate  
 27 program directors at John Jay College. The previous Office of Graduate Studies, headed by a  
 28 Dean, provided evaluations for graduate program directors. However, after a reorganization  
 29 in 2022, this responsibility fell into a gray area. Interim Dean Sidman, as chair of the  
 30 committee, feels a responsibility to address this issue and ensure that graduate program  
 31 directors receive proper evaluation. Interim Dean Sidman announced that the Provost has  
 32 tasked him with the responsibility of evaluating graduate programs. To streamline this  
 33 process, he plans to revise the evaluation instrument used for program directors,  
 34 incorporating feedback from the graduate program directors to ensure it aligns with current  
 35 priorities and needs. The goal is to provide a comprehensive evaluation that includes

1 relevant data and information to support the growth and improvement of graduate  
2 programs.

## 3 4 **II. Approval of the minutes of September 6, 2024**

5  
6 There was no discussion.

7  
8 **A motion was made and seconded to approve the minutes of September 6, 2024. The**  
9 **minutes were approved unanimously with 13 votes in favor.**

## 10 11 **III. New Business**

### 12 13 **A. Graduate Program Faculty Approval**

14  
15 Interim Dean Sidman introduced the next item on this agenda, and proposed to take the  
16 vote as a slate to approve all seven new faculty members for the Digital Forensics and  
17 Cybersecurity and Economics master's programs. One of the faculty members, Julio Huato,  
18 was previously approved but did not teach at the time, so his CV was included again for  
19 reference. The rest of the faculty names were: Dexter Smith, John McFarland, Luciana  
20 Wachholtz, Maryam Vatankhah, Wilder Umana (all Digital Forensics and Cybersecurity MS),  
21 and Yahya Mete Madras (Economics MA).

22  
23 There was no further discussion.

24  
25 **A motion was made and seconded to take this vote as a slate, and approve the appointment**  
26 **of all seven new faculty members. The committee unanimously approved the appointment of**  
27 **all seven new faculty members as a slate. This decision was made with 13 votes in favor.**

### 28 29 **B. Planning for Graduate Student Research Symposium**

30 Interim Dean Sidman moved onto the next agenda item – planning the Graduate Student  
31 Research Symposium, part of the Research and Creativity Expo (formerly Research Week).  
32 The symposium began online during the pandemic and has since transitioned to an in-  
33 person event in the Moot Court. It has been a successful platform for graduate students to  
34 showcase their research, with faculty and some administrators, like President Mason,  
35 attending and expressing appreciation for the students' work.

36  
37 Today, the main focus is selecting a date for the event. The Research Expo runs from April  
38 30 to May 9, and the Office for Student Research and Creativity suggests Thursday, May 8,  
39 as a potential date. The symposium typically starts at 6 PM to accommodate students'

1 schedules. Interim Dean Sidman asked participants to check their calendars and confirm  
2 whether May 8 may work or if another date would be preferable, emphasizing that early  
3 planning would facilitate smoother event logistics.

4  
5 After much discussion of dates among the members, Professor Valerie West proposed a  
6 motion for this to be held on May 1<sup>st</sup> at 6pm.

7  
8 **A motion was made and seconded to hold this event on Thursday, May 1<sup>st</sup>, 2025 at 6pm. The**  
9 **motion was approved unanimously with 14 votes in favor.**

10  
11 Interim Dean Sidman's final agenda item addressed draft revised Guidelines for Writing  
12 Across the Curriculum, included in the meeting packet. The draft is intended for review  
13 and feedback but is not up for a vote yet; it is meant to initiate an important discussion  
14 about integrating writing instruction into the curriculum. The process started with  
15 developing a writing rubric for General Education courses and aims to broaden the types  
16 of writing skills cultivated in students. Interim Dean Sidman referenced outdated  
17 guidelines from 1997, noting the need for a more thoughtful approach to writing  
18 instruction, and emphasized that feedback from the group is especially important. This  
19 is because the goal is to create comprehensive guidelines that encompass all levels,  
20 including graduate writing, which is currently lacking in the draft.

21  
22 Interim Dean Sidman ultimately invited input from graduate directors and instructors  
23 about what should be included in the guidelines. There will be further discussions,  
24 including a potential follow-up with Professor Tim McCormack to address feedback  
25 received.

26  
27 Interim Dean Sidman opened the floor for new business or announcements, and  
28 Professor Concheiro-Guisan sought clarification on the ultimate goal for writing  
29 instruction in graduate programs. Is the aim to incorporate writing into each course,  
30 establish a writing boot camp, create a special course, or simply develop general  
31 guidelines?

32  
33 Interim Dean Sidman emphasizes that there would not a single goal for writing  
34 instruction in graduate programs; rather, it would encompass multiple initiatives. These  
35 include integrating writing into various courses, developing specialized writing courses  
36 led by discipline faculty, and enhancing existing courses through a writing curriculum  
37 project. The overall aim is to improve students' exposure to effective writing instruction,  
38 supported by professional development for faculty. The Guidelines are the framework  
39 that would assist faculty in helping students become better writers.

40  
41 Professor Valerie West wanted to revisit the evaluation of graduate or program  
42 directors and emphasized the need for CUNY to create a new data column in CUNY First

1 to identify online-only students. She expressed that the current sub plan is inadequate  
2 for this purpose. This is because the student group codes are not being maintained if  
3 they move from online-only students to in-person students. She was concerned that it  
4 may hurt the ranking of her department's programs.

5  
6 Associate Dean Killoran assessed that the issue may be the lack of maintenance in CUNY  
7 First, however, she commented that she was not familiar with the sub plan. Interim  
8 Dean Sidman agreed that the coding was inconsistent, offered to investigate the issue  
9 with the Registrar's office, and would include Associate Dean Killoran in the  
10 communications.

11  
12 Director Pickman then wondered whether there might be individuals on campus who  
13 could teach debate techniques to students, aiming to facilitate organized discussions  
14 and debates. The goal would be to help students learn how to communicate effectively  
15 and respectfully.

16  
17 Interim Dean Sidman acknowledged that the answer may depend on the definition of  
18 debate, but confirmed that there were faculty specializing in oral communication. He  
19 noted a change in tone at the Town Hall meetings from September to October,  
20 attributing part of this to Maria Volpe's work with students through the dispute  
21 resolution program she runs.

22  
23 Interim Dean Sidman also offered to resend information about a program from  
24 University Interim Dean Lopes' office that offers funding for faculty to develop initiatives  
25 related to civic engagement. This program focuses on fostering civil communication  
26 about contentious issues. Faculty interested in this area are encouraged to apply for  
27 resources to support their work.

28  
29 There were no further questions, and Interim Dean Sidman concluded the meeting.

30  
31 The meeting ended at 1:05 PM.

32  
33 Submitted by,  
34 Patrizia Pelgrift, scribe