

1 **John Jay College of Criminal Justice**

2 City University of New York

3 Committee on Graduate Studies

4  
5 Minutes of December 13, 2024

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7 The Committee on Graduate Studies held a remote meeting on December 13, 2024, at 12:30  
8 PM, via Zoom. Interim Dean Andrew Sidman called the meeting to order.

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10 **Present:** Ruby Aguirre, Jana Arsovska, Marta Concheiro-Guisan, Kendra Doychak, Susan Kang,  
11 Avijit Roy, Ian Seda Irizarry, Ellen Sexton, David Shapiro, Andrew Sidman, Lucia Velotti, Rebecca  
12 Weiss, Valerie West

13  
14 **Absent:** Shweta Jain, Simone Martin-Howard, Daniel Matos, Susan Pickman, Chitra Raghavan,  
15 Dominic Stellini, Robert Till

16  
17 **Non-Voting Members and Guests:** Maggie Arismendi, Rosemary Barberet, Alexander Bolesta,  
18 Kathy Killoran, Elena Lenihan, Patrizia Pelgrift, Dyanna Pooley, Mechthild Printz, Jamella  
19 Richmond, Tatsiana Sokhar, Charlotte Walker-Said

20  
21 **I. Dean's Announcements – Interim Dean Andrew Sidman**

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23 The Professional Development Check-in and Needs Assessment portion of the meeting by  
24 Interim Dean of Faculty Angela Crossman, originally slated for the beginning of this meeting, is  
25 being moved to the end.

26  
27 **II. Approval of the minutes of November 15, 2024**

28  
29 There was no discussion.

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31 **A motion was made and seconded to approve the minutes of November 15, 2024. The**  
32 **minutes were approved unanimously with 12 votes in favor.**

33  
34 **III. Draft Instrument for Program Director Evaluation for discussion – Interim Dean Andrew**  
35 **Sidman**

36

1 Interim Dean Sidman described the past process by which graduate program directors were  
2 evaluated annually by the Dean of Graduate Studies. After the recent departmental  
3 reorganization, the responsibility of performing evaluations of graduate program directors will  
4 be taken on by Interim Dean Sidman. As the process for how program director evaluations were  
5 previously carried out in the past is not officially recorded anywhere, the opportunity will be  
6 taken to revamp the process. Presented here is a draft evaluation process based on the current  
7 evaluation process for department chairs.

8

9 Professor Valerie West brought up concerns that a high-level evaluation makes more sense for  
10 chairs than it does for program directors, the latter of which is more integrated within a  
11 department and its chair and should therefore be evaluated at that level. Professor David  
12 Shapiro echoed these sentiments, saying it would amount to increased responsibility without  
13 an increase in authority that should accompany it, though the substance of the proposal seems  
14 fine, as the details of programs need periodic inspection.

15

16 Interim Dean Sidman lamented the lack of involvement that independent graduate program  
17 directors have in the governance process while also being subject to an annual review process  
18 ordained by the college charter. With that in mind, the goal here is to rework the review to be  
19 something worth the consumption of time that it takes. Professor West agreed with making the  
20 review more useful and efficient. Program directors already rotate every three years and spend  
21 time picking up where the last director left off. Directors also have a number of direct  
22 responsibilities that, even when things like scheduling and faculty rosters are in good order, it is  
23 still a scramble to keep up. Therefore, any effort to remove unnecessary bloat from the review  
24 process is appreciated.

25

26 Interim Dean Sidman asked for volunteers to form a group to discuss this proposal in more  
27 detail. Professors Valerie West, David Shapiro, Jana Arsovska, Marta Concheiro-Guisan, and  
28 Graduate Student Representative Ruby Aguirre volunteered, and Interim Dean Sidman said he  
29 will contact them about the next steps, naming it the Ad Hoc Subcommittee on Director  
30 Evaluations.

31

#### 32 **IV. Old Business – None**

33

#### 34 **V. New Business**

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36 It was suggested that we take the following items as a slate. See details below the items.

37

1       **A. Programs**

2

3           **i. Program Revisions**

- 4               1. Revision of MS in Forensic Science

5

6       **B. Courses**

7           **i. New Courses**

- 8               1. FOS 7XX (708) Human Genetics and Forensic DNA Technology

- 9               2. FOS 7YY (709) Applied Statistics and Data Analytics for the Laboratory-based

10                       Forensic Sciences

11

12           **ii. Course Revisions**

- 13               1. FOS 710 Advanced Criminalistics I

- 14               2. FOS 711 Advanced Criminalistics II

- 15               3. FOS 736 Forensic Examination of Firearms and Toolmarks

16

17 Professor Concheiro-Guisan explained that the new course FOS 708 is meant to serve as a  
18 unified introductory course for the three tracks of the Forensic Science MS: Molecular Biology,  
19 Toxicology, and Criminalistics. An added hope is that this will help recruit students into the  
20 molecular biology track. FOS 709 is a new statistics course focused on forensic science. Instead  
21 of being an elective, as was a previous incarnation of this course, FOS 709 will be a core course  
22 owing to the increased importance of statistics in the field.

23

24 The revisions to the criminalistics courses FOS 710 and 711 serve to correct a mismatch  
25 between the bulletin and CUNYfirst. The latter has the courses marked as lecture courses when  
26 they are in fact a lecture and lab. This discordance is causing issues with scheduling. The third  
27 revision to FOS 736 is simply an expanded title to specify that this course deals with firearms  
28 and toolmarks. Finally, the revision of the program itself is an effort to reorganize and  
29 consolidate the Forensic Science MS, which includes incorporating the above new courses and  
30 course revisions into the program and adjusting the allocation credits among the various  
31 sections of the program where necessary.

32

33 **A motion was made and seconded to consider the revision to the MS in Forensic Science, the**  
34 **new courses FOS 708 and FOS 709, and the revisions to FOS 710, FOS 711, FOS 736 as a slate.**  
35 **The motion was approved unanimously with 12 votes in favor.**

36

1 **A motion was made to approve the slate. The motion was approved unanimously with 12**  
2 **votes in favor.**

3

#### 4 **VI. Other Business**

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##### 6 **A. Student Presentation – Ruby Aguirre, Graduate Student Representative**

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8 Chair of the Committee on Graduate Students and Student Council Ruby Aguirre, and Vice  
9 President of Student Council Jamella Richmond introduced themselves. Vice President  
10 Richmond recognized Representative Aguirre as well as the remaining three Graduate  
11 Representatives Dana Morgan, Avijit Roy, and Elena Lenihan.

12

13 Representative Aguirre highlighted some of the recent graduate student events, including a Sip  
14 and Paint Night, Student Voice Forum, and a Cross-Discipline Professional Panel. This was  
15 followed by a list of potential events for the spring, including another Sip and Paint Night, a  
16 Mental Health and Wellness Day, and a celebration gala for graduate students in their final  
17 term.

18

19 Graduate Student Tatsiana Sokhar shared a few questions, concerns, and suggestions  
20 regarding: 1) improving communication with students about who has been elected to student  
21 council; 2) spreading out graduate student events throughout the semester instead of  
22 concentrating them toward the end when students are focused on exams; 3) improving the  
23 process by which students are notified about upcoming events; 4) relaying highlights from the  
24 Student Voice Forum to the student body; and 5) collecting statistics and highlights from events  
25 in order to quantify impact as well as budget efficiency.

26

27 Representative Richmond responded to 1) by saying that representatives are selected by  
28 popular elections and must apply for their positions, noting that their names are public on the  
29 John Jay website. However, more effort could be made to get those names out in front of the  
30 student body. The Executive Board of the Student Council will be consulted on how best to  
31 achieve this.

32

33 Representative Aguirre responded to 2) in agreement, saying the goal is not only to increase  
34 the number of events per semester and spread them out going forward, but to also put a  
35 process in place for future cohorts of representatives to more easily plan and execute events.

36

1 As for 3) regarding communication of events, Interim Dean Sidman recommended that  
2 Representative Aguirre consult with Dean of Students Dominic Stellini about ways to get timely  
3 announcements out to the full graduate student body. Representative Aguirre noted that there  
4 is currently a lot of effort that goes on behind the scenes to run these events, including  
5 marketing them via the grad student WhatsApp group, the Student Council Instagram page, and  
6 with physical flyers posted around campus. Any other help to get the word out would be  
7 appreciated, and volunteers are welcome to join the graduate representative cohort at their  
8 biweekly meeting.

9

10 For 4) and 5) Representative Aguirre agreed that this would be good information to collect and  
11 share and that the Executive Board will try to figure out how best to communicate such  
12 highlights and statistics, as more attention given to these events will help to make them more  
13 well-attended and successful.

14

15 Professor Lucia Velotti asked about how panel members were selected for the Cross-Discipline  
16 Professional Panel. Representative Aguirre responded that, to start, each cohort member was  
17 in charge of asking a professor from their program to participate. There were participants  
18 outside of the college who were slated to participate but had to cancel, so this time around the  
19 panel consisted of John Jay faculty only. However, next time the goal is to expand to other  
20 areas of expertise as well. Representative Aguirre will keep Professor Velotti in the loop.

21

## 22 **VII. Professional Development Check-in and Needs Assessment – Interim Dean of Faculty**

23 **Angela Crossman**

24

25 Dean Sidman passed on the message that Dean Crossman is not able to make it to today's  
26 meeting, but that those interested should email her about ideas for workshops or outside  
27 training that would help fill any knowledge or training gaps among the faculty.

28

29 Interim Dean Sidman concluded the meeting with thanks for everyone's hard work and wished  
30 everyone happy holidays.

31

32 The meeting concluded at 1:38 PM.

33

34 Submitted by,

35 Alexander Bolesta, scribe