

1 **John Jay College of Criminal Justice**
2 City University of New York
3 **Committee on Graduate Studies**

4
5 **Minutes of February 14, 2025**
6

7 The Committee on Graduate Studies held a remote meeting February 14, 2025, at 12:30 P.M.,
8 via Zoom. Interim Dean Andrew Sidman called the meeting to order.
9

10 **Voting Members Present:** Ruby Aguirre, Jana Arsovska, Marta Concheiro-Guisan, Kendra
11 Doychak, Shweta Jain, Susan Kang, Susan Pickman, Ellen Sexton, David Shapiro, Andrew
12 Sidman, Dominic Stellini, Robert Till, Rebecca Weiss, Valerie West
13

14 **Voting Members Absent:** Simone Martin-Howard, Daniel Matos, Chitra Raghavan, Avijit Roy,
15 Ian Seda Irizarry, Lucia Velotti
16

17 **Non-voting Attendees Present:** Maggie Arismendi, Alexander Bolesta, Wynne Ferdinand, Kathy
18 Killoran, Shavonne McKiever, Patrizia Pelgrift, Dyanna Pooley, Tatsiana Sokhar, Elaine
19 Thompson, Valerie Vengerov
20

21 **I. Dean's Announcements—Interim Dean Andrew Sidman**
22

23 Scheduling guidance has been sent out, this time it will cover both the upcoming fall and spring
24 semesters to offer a chance to plan for a year's worth of program needs. The belief is that
25 upcoming enrollment numbers will be relatively steady compared to the decreasing enrollment
26 rates seen in the past several years.
27

28 **II. Approval of the minutes of December 13, 2024**
29

30 There was no discussion.
31

32 A motion was made and seconded to approve the minutes of December 13, 2024. The minutes
33 were approved unanimously with 13 votes in favor.
34

35 **III. Old Business—None**
36

37 **IV. New Business**

1 **A. Programs**

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3 **i. Program Revisions**

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5 1. Revision of MS in Forensic Science

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7 Professor Marta Concheiro-Guisan explained that Forensic Science MS students on the
8 Criminalistics track have a choice of three electives to satisfy a program requirement. One of
9 the three choices, FOS 717 Organic Compound Structure Determination, has not been offered
10 in recent years. This revision would replace that course in the list of three elective choices with
11 a course that fits in thematically and also is offered more frequently: FOS 738 Crime Scene
12 Investigation for Forensic Scientists.

13

14 A motion was made and seconded to approve the revision to the MS in Forensic Science. The
15 motion was approved unanimously with 13 votes in favor.

16

17 **B. Courses**

18

19 **i. Course Revisions**

20

21 1. ICJ 703 International Criminal Law

22

23 Professor Jana Arsovska introduced this revision, which adjusts the prerequisites so that
24 students in the Human Rights MA program need permission to register for the course. This
25 restriction is needed because students in the International Crime and Justice MA program, for
26 whom this course is required, are encountering full sections when trying to register. While this
27 course used to be a requirement also for the Human Rights MA program, it is now an optional
28 elective for that degree. This revision will ensure that International Crime and Justice MA
29 Students get priority.

30

31 Interim Dean Sidman requested that Professor Arsovska work with Director of the Human
32 Rights MA Professor Susan Kang to ensure that Human Rights MA students know whether or
33 not they will be able to register for this course well before the semester begins. Professor
34 Arsovska assured Interim Dean Sidman that they would coordinate on that matter.

35

36 A motion was made and seconded to approve the revision to ICJ 703. The motion was approved
37 unanimously with 13 votes in favor.

1 **V. Other Business**

2

3 1. Online Policy for Courses and Programs DRAFT for Discussion—Wynne Ferdinand

4

5 Interim Dean Sidman began by saying that our current online courses and programs policy
6 dates back to 2013 and needs revision. While the policy served an important purpose at that
7 time of facilitating the creation of our online master’s programs, it is inadequate when it comes
8 to providing guidance for the large expansion in online education that the college has seen
9 recently, especially post-pandemic.

10

11 Assistant Dean Wynne Ferdinand shared a draft of the new policy, which has been developed
12 by a group of people who support online learning at the college from the Office of Academic
13 Programs, from the Teaching and Learning Center, and from the Department of Online
14 Education and Support. Comments on the draft are welcomed and will be taken into
15 consideration as the final version of the policy takes shape. The Draft covers general policies
16 and procedures, including academic standards, scheduling, class size, modalities, copyright,
17 camera use, and other guidelines.

18

19 After this brief introduction the floor was opened to questions. Professor David Shapiro asked
20 why the default for synchronous courses was not that cameras are expected to be on. Interim
21 Dean Sidman responded that the policy on camera use comes from the university level, and
22 that CUNY erred on the side of student privacy. Camera use can be required; however,
23 professors have to relay that requirement ahead of time on CUNYfirst so that students can
24 make an informed decision on whether or not to register for that course.

25

26 Dean Dominic Stellini asked about the section covering out-of-class activities, which states that
27 activities scheduled outside of class meeting times or in a synchronous mode for an
28 asynchronous course must be optional for student participation. This would seem to preclude
29 any sort of group project, as that would require students to agree on a specific time outside of
30 class time to work together. There was agreement that the phrasing of the policy should make
31 clear that while the instructor of an asynchronous course cannot schedule a required
32 synchronous activity, students may still be required to meet and collaborate on assignments.

33

34 Professor Bob Till had a question about military students and the funding that they receive that
35 is contingent on taking at least one in-person course per semester. Professor Elaine Thompson
36 clarified that the VA has a requirement that students need to be in an in-person program and
37 that at least one course per semester must be in-person to receive their benefits, but beyond

1 that most of their courses can be online. Interim Dean Sidman added that there is a similar
2 requirement for international students who have a student visa. Professor Thompson agreed
3 and noted that the requirement in that case is that six credits must be in-person per federal
4 law. Professor Till requested that these and similar policies be written down somewhere for
5 quick reference, to which Interim Dean Sidman replied that he would work to make that
6 happen.

7
8 Professor Valerie West requested clarity in several areas. First was regarding the new online
9 policy addressing course shells for asynchronous courses, and ensuring that faculty are aware
10 of their rights and responsibilities for course development. Secondly, Professor West requested
11 an easier way to determine which students are online only, as current student groups do not
12 adequately capture that. Third, on the academic honesty section, there should be a CUNY or
13 John Jay policy about AI generated work and how to address it with students in a productive
14 way.

15
16 Assistant Dean Ferdinand addressed the course shells and mentioned some challenges
17 surrounding them, which include not only the development of the shells but also the
18 maintenance of them. Additionally, there are copyright concerns. These are all things that are
19 being worked on, and the hope is to get to a spot where the shells are living documents and
20 easily accessible to both existing and new faculty.

21
22 Professor Susan Pickman also had questions about the student group codes especially when
23 reviewing applications and requested a glossary of codes. Professor Thompson mentioned that
24 CUNY will be transitioning to a new application soon and that the hope is that things will be a
25 lot clearer on that front.

26

27 2. Other Announcements

28

29 Interim Dean Sidman mentioned that details will be forthcoming about a capstone research
30 presentation event for humanities majors.

31

32 Student Council Representative Valerie Vengerov was in attendance and gave an introduction.
33 Student Council Representative Ruby Aguirre announced some upcoming events, including a sip
34 and paint night in collaboration with the Immigrant Student Success Center. Next, on April 4th
35 there are plans to hold a cross-discipline panel, and Representative Aguirre welcomed anyone
36 who would like to offer their expertise.

37

1 Representative Aguirre gathered feedback from graduate students who would like to see some
2 sort of awards reception dinner where departments can highlight student successes. Interim
3 Dean Sidman said that currently graduate students are recognized at two events:
4 commencement, and the hooding ceremony, the latter of which includes the conferral of
5 student service and academic awards. Representative Aguirre thanked Interim Dean Sidman for
6 the context behind the existing events and will proceed with that in mind as an additional end-
7 of-year event for graduate students is planned.

8

9 Registrar Shavonne McKiever announced that CUNY is in the process of implementing a new
10 universal application for both grade changes and WN reversals. Faculty will be able to access
11 this new application on CUNYfirst starting on February 18th. More information on how to use
12 the application as well as video tutorials will come in the near future. This new app will only
13 cover grade changes and reversals for courses offered in the past year. For older grade
14 changes, the Registrar will still be using the locally developed app that has been in use for
15 several years. The Registrar's Office will also soon be creating a webpage that provides the
16 links to the apps and instructions.

17

18 Professor Valerie West asked what responsibility graduate program directors have regarding
19 ensuring that faculty remain within the bounds of in-person vs. online workloads. Interim Dean
20 Sidman responded that it is up to the individual faculty members as well as department chairs
21 to keep track of workload management, and so program directors can take faculty members at
22 their word if they say they are able to teach a course.

23

24 Dean Stellini relayed that Commencement has been officially announced for Wednesday, May
25 28, 2025, and that graduate hooding will be on Thursday, May 22, 2025.

26

27 Professor West said that a discussion should be held regarding academic probation and student
28 dismissals. Interim Dean Sidman said that it will be added to the agenda for March.

29

30 The meeting concluded at 1:41 P.M.

31

32 Submitted by,

33 Alexander Bolesta, scribe