University Council Cabinet Meeting Summary
April 27, 2026
3:30 p.m.
130 Burruss Hall and Zoom

Present: Justin Lemkul (co-chair), Julie Ross (co-chair), April Myers, Laura Belmonte, Amanda Morris, Marlena Lester, Amber Hagan, Rachel Miles, Jim Hawdon, Emma Roshioru, and Pooja Bhagawat

Absent with Notice: Kim O'Rourke and Amy Sebring

Absent: Menah Pratt

Guests: Aimée Surprenant, Ronnie Mondal, and Michelle Theus

Justin Lemkul called the meeting to order at 3:30 p.m. A quorum was present.

1. Adoption of Agenda

A motion was made, seconded, and approved to adopt the agenda.

2. Announcement of Approval of the March 30, 2026, meeting summary

Dr. Lemkul noted that these minutes have been voted on electronically and can be publicly accessed on the governance website.

3. Action/Decisions

A request was made to include an announcement at the end of the May 4, 2026, University Council agenda regarding the UMI Committee report. The University Council Cabinet members agreed to this addition.

The Cabinet voted to approve the following items:

1. The May 4, 2026, University Council Agenda with the amendment to add the announcement of the UMI Committee Report

Discussion Items

University Mission Initiative (UMI) Committee Update and Recommendations

The UMI Committee presented a comprehensive report outlining four primary focus areas: modernization of graduate funding and policy frameworks, expansion of self-funded professional and graduate programs, growth in graduate teaching and research capacity, and strengthening externally funded PhD pipelines and graduate endowments. Many recommendations were identified as low-barrier and are expected to move forward through governance channels, with a Policy 6210 working group already underway.

Discussion emphasized the need for clearer communication and transparency around graduate fees and cost-of-living data, as well as improved graduate student representation in future working groups. The report will be shared with University Council, with the Cabinet guiding next steps and implementation. While some recommendations can be addressed in the near term, others that are particularly related to enrollment growth and external funding are expected to be longer-term efforts, with an increased focus on stabilizing graduate enrollment given current external conditions.

Discussion of Merging CGPSP and CGPSA into One Commission

Discussion centered on challenges with the current structure of CGPSA and CGPSP, particularly around overlapping goals, limited scope for CGPSA, and a lack of coordination between the two commissions. Members noted that this has led to inefficiencies, duplicated conversations, and difficulty advancing meaningful resolutions, with many items defaulting to CGPSP or being redirected elsewhere.

The idea of merging the two commissions was raised as a potential solution to improve collaboration and streamline efforts; however, concerns were expressed that doing so could reduce student voice and limit the ability of student senates to independently advance resolutions within the shared governance structure.

Several alternative approaches were discussed. These included clarifying or revising commission charges to better define scope and allow CGPSA greater involvement in policy-related work tied to student well-being; enabling joint resolutions across commissions; and improving coordination during annual work planning to ensure alignment and reduce duplication. Participants also emphasized the role of the University Council Cabinet in more actively directing proposals, clarifying appropriate pathways, and facilitating collaboration across commissions and administrative units.

Broader challenges were identified across student and other commissions, including limited access to policy work, barriers or redirection of ideas outside governance, and high turnover that affects continuity and effectiveness. Suggestions to address these issues included strengthening administrative partnerships, providing clearer guidance and support to commissions, increasing transparency and engagement in governance processes, and ensuring commissions have meaningful opportunities to contribute to policy development rather than serving primarily in an advisory or discussion role.

Next steps include exploring potential revisions to commission charges, considering updates to governance documents, and engaging additional stakeholders to improve coordination and effectiveness across commissions.

4. Adjournment

There being no further business, a motion was made to adjourn the meeting at 4:27p.m.