McCausland Undergraduate Committee Meeting Minutes

April 13, 2026

11 AM-12 PM

Petigru 321

Committee Members in Attendance: Dawn Campbell (WGST), Amanda P. Zeigler (BIOL), Judith Kalb (LLC), Amy Taylor-Perry (CHEM), and Cuizhen (Susan) Wang (GEOG)

Ex-Officio Members in Attendance: Christy Friend and Karen Thompson

1. The meeting began with a welcome message from the Chair.
2. A call was placed to approve the minutes from the previous Undergraduate Committee Meeting on February 9, 2026. Minutes were approved with no recommended amendments.
3. The selection of a new UGS Committee Chair was discussed. As the chair's term length is only one year, the committee was encouraged to decide who would like to serve in this role for the next academic year. As some committee members are rolling off the committee and new members are coming in, a decision was made to postpone the final Chair decision until all new committee members are decided.
4. Conversations surrounding challenges with finding ways to manage student attendance in courses, particularly students with excessive excused absences (approved either by the Office of Student Advocacy (OSA) or for students registered with the Student Disability Resource Center (SDRC) that have attendance accommodations) took place. The committee discussed the instructional challenges that many units are facing as student attendance rates continue to plummet.
    - It was suggested that the committee invite representatives from the Office of Student Advocacy and the SDRC to a meeting in the upcoming academic year to potentially provide some sort of guidance or formalized language that faculty can use to help strategize ways to work together with these two offices and encourage greater student attendance.
5. The McCausland College of Arts and Sciences is proposing two new career-readiness courses to complement the COLA 390, Internship: Community Engagement, course and requested feedback from the committee. The two courses are COLA 290: Foundations in Career Exploration and Planning and COLA 490: Career Preparation and Professional Transition. The committee reviewed the syllabi for each of these courses and found that they would be a great addition to the COLA course sequence.

6. Course scheduling practices, particularly the low enrollment review process, was revisited.
    - It was suggested that the committee invite Sonya Brown (or another College representative who participates in the low-enrollment review process, course caps, etc.) to speak more about this process in the upcoming academic year. The committee would like to work with the College to establish clear guidelines that balance traditional enrollment minimums with pedagogically appropriate class-size ranges (minimums and maximums) while also considering whether very large courses (over 300 students?) should count as two courses in faculty workload calculations, to support more equitable teaching practices.
7. Future directions:
    - The committee needs to establish a new committee Chair as soon as possible so that this person can begin preparations for the upcoming academic year's meetings.
    - The committee would like to bring in representatives from OSA and SDRC to discuss strategies for managing excessive excused absences and chronic absenteeism.
    - After the inaugural year of discussions with the UGS Committee, the members decided that next year's challenge should be to identify ways to make actionable, impactful changes for students/faculty/departments in MCAS, based on the stimulating conversations and suggestions from this past academic year.
8. The meeting adjourned at noon.

Minutes taken by: Amanda P. Zeigler