

**Minutes of the Academic Affairs Committee
August 20, 2025**

Members in Attendance:

Willis Jones, Peter Carton, Francesca Go, John Potter, Les Black, LaKaavia Taylor, Quentin Sedlacek

Ex officio members: Paige Ware, Katrina Glenn, Rebecca Hood

Business:

- A motion to approve the Agenda for [August 20, 2025](#) was moved, seconded, and carried.
- **Proposal: Creating New Doctoral Course Advancing Qualitative Case Study Methods and Analysis; Creating New Doctoral Course Advancing Relationship between Qualitative Coding and Theory.** Dr. Alex Pavlakis was present to discuss the proposal for the creation of two qualitative courses for students in the Simmons PhD program. The desire to create these classes stemmed from students requesting advanced courses involving qualitative methods in the PhD program. Dr Pavlakis notes these proposed courses are designed to rotate which aligns with integration of student struggles finding and applying theory in dissertations, and in future career roles. Both these courses had previously been successfully taught as special topics in the PhD program.
- The Academic Affairs Committee concluded discussion of courses and **a motion to approve the proposal was moved, seconded, and carried.**
- **Proposal: Creating Three Asynchronous Mathematical Method- Special Topics Courses in The Master of Education in Higher Education.** Dr. Leanne Ketterlin-Geller and Director of Operations at RME, Cassandra Hatfield, were present to discuss the proposal. Cassandra discussed the desire to create three, one hour online courses that are designed to support teachers' understanding of fractions and developing their pedagogical and content knowledge. The three courses will be sequenced. Grant supported recruitment will target rural populations across 10 universities for enrollment. Current SMU students are not eligible to enroll in the courses. The courses are asynchronous and self-paced, and the three course are

designed to be completed over the course a single semester. Dr. Ketterli-Geller notes course frameworks are a slight deviation from Math Methods course taught previously in Department of Teaching and Learning. These courses would not be added to the curriculum of any current program at Simmons. Individuals who complete the course and apply to SMU as non-degree seeking would receive academic credit for the courses.

- The Academic Affairs Committee concluded discussion and **a motion to approve the proposal contingent upon omitting “Special Topics” from all courses was moved, seconded, and carried.**
- **Proposal: Request to Modify Doctoral Program Milestones and Required/Elective Course in the PhD Curriculum.** Dr. Sondra Barringer and Dr. Jeanna Weisemann were present to discuss their proposal to streamline the modify the milestones for students in the PhD program. Their proposal was to eliminate three non-curriculum milestones (Qualifying Exam 1, Qualifying Exam 1, and Major Area Paper) and replace them with two new non-curriculum milestones (Research Design Proposal and Specialization Paper). The belief is that these new milestones will better serve the students in moving forward with their skill development as well as in their own research agendas and dissertations.

A curriculum change was proposed that would revise the required methods courses for the PhD program (see below for summary of revised methods course requirements). This change better aligns with the needs of students and areas of expertise of faculty. The new curriculum would allow more customization to fit student requests to have the option to specialize in either qualitative or quantitative methods. Modifications align with the goal to sustain the students’ well-rounded understanding of both quantitative and qualitative knowledge without requirement of focus in one.

- The Academic Affairs Committee concluded discussion and **a motion to approve both milestone changes and curriculum changes as proposed was moved, seconded, and carried.**
- Meeting adjourned.

Overview of Approved Methods Course Sequence for PhD program

Table 2: Revised Core/Required Methodological Courses

Required Methods Courses (17 credit hours)	Advanced Methods Bucket (9 credit hours)
<p><u>Fall, Year 1- 7 hours</u> EDU 7302: Quantitative Research Methods I (3 credits) EDU 7311: Quantitative Statistics for Educational Research (3 credits) EDU 7111: Quantitative Statistics Lab (1 credit) <u>Spring, Year 1-7 hours</u> EDU 7312: Intermediate Statistics in Education (3 credits) EDU 7112: Intermediate Statistics Lab (1 credit) EDU 7305: Introduction to Qualitative Research (3 credits) <u>Year 2</u> You have to pick 1 additional 3-hour Qualitative course from those listed in the bucket to the right.</p>	<p><u>Qualitative Courses, eligible for the 2nd Qual course requirement, or as an additional course:</u> EDU 73XX: Advanced Qual-Case Studies (in the process of being proposed for approval in a separate proposal but is currently offered as a special topics course) EDU 73XX: Advanced Qual-Data Analysis (in the process of being proposed for approval in a separate proposal but is currently offered as a special topics course) <i>Additional courses approved by the PhD Executive Committee</i></p> <p><u>Other Quantitative analysis and methods courses:</u> EDU 7314: Advanced Multivariate Statistics (3 credits) EDU 7321: Quantitative Research Methods II (3 credits) PSY 6323: Structural Equation Modeling (3 credits) EDU 7324: Advanced Structural Equation Modeling (3 credits) EDU 7313: Advanced Measurement & Assessment I (3 credits) EDU 7320: Advanced Measurement & Assessment II (3 credits)-psychometric course EDU 7318: Program Evaluation (3 credits)</p> <p><i>Special Topics Courses: Meta Analysis, Mixed Methods, Building Datasets, Visualization, etc.</i></p>