

DOCUMENTS AND PROCEEDINGS OF THE GRADUATE ASSEMBLY
THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT AUSTIN
April 24, 2019

Chair James Cox called the fifth meeting of the Graduate Assembly for the 2018-2019 academic year to order on Wednesday, April 24, 2019, at 1:30 PM in the in the Tom Lea Room, 3.206, Harry Ransom Center.

Faculty Members Present: James Cox, Catherine Weaver, Hina Azam, James Buhler, Sue Cox, Hugh Daigle, Andrew Dunn, Catharine Echols, Alison Frazier, Elizabeth Gershoff, John Hasenbein, Michael Holleran, Christopher Jolly, Maria Juenger, Jack Lee, Steve Limberg, Christina Markert, Andreas Matouschek, Julia Mickenberg, Kavita Radhakrishnan, Karen Rascati, Sharon Strover, Jo Worthy

New members: Hal Alper, Marc Pierce, James Spindler

Faculty Members Absent: Tasha Beretvas, Allan Cole, John Deigh, Linda Golden, John Hatfield, Thomas Hunt, Wonsuck Kim, Stephen Limberg, Francisco Polidoro

Student Members Present: Samantha Fuchs, Christina Baze (new GSA president 19-20 AY)

Ex Officio Members Present: Provost Maurie McInnis, Charlotte Canning

Representatives from the Office of the Graduate Studies Present: Dean Mark Smith, Dean Marv Hackert, Dean Daina Berry, Dean Dean Neikirk, Shannon Neuse, Rebekah Sylvia, Nancy Riley

Visitors: Jane Champion, Emily Sparvero, Sherry Melecki, Doreen Lorenzo, Kate Canales, Kamy Sepehnoori, Eric Roe, Joey Williams

Order of Business

- I. Approval of the minutes of the March 27, 2019 meeting.
The minutes were approved unanimously with one correction.
- II. Report of the Graduate Dean (Mark Smith)
 - A. Dean Smith reported that overall graduate applications are up by 5.4% compared to last year – 3.3% domestic and 7.6% international.
 - B. He also reported that a new project is in the works where students will have audio files associated with their pictures so TAs and instructors will be able to pronounce their names.
 - C. Dean Smith reported that the university is looking to collaborate with sister institutions on various areas including ethics, innovative teaching, and faculty hiring practices.
 - D. Next, he reported that the Graduate Education Task Force has been charged with recommending changes in terms of how we support graduate education. Maria

Juenger (Civil Engineering) was asked for an update. She replied that the Task Force has divided into subgroups and is in the process of data gathering

E. James Cox was presented with a gift and heartfelt thanks for his service as Chair.

III. Report of Chair (James Cox)

A. Jim Cox introduced Provost Maurie McInnis to make comments and answer questions related to graduate education, after which he introduced new members of the committee.

Provost McInnis noted that the number of students completing traditional degrees is changing as the types of careers are changing, and that UT should be flexible in terms of how we provide education while maintaining program rigor. Innovation is key to attract great talent in terms of educators and students.

The provost acknowledged that graduate student support is an important topic and stated that she looks forward to reviewing the Task Force report. She noted that stipends are not the only issue; time to degree is also an important factor in affordability.

Next, the provost remarked on self-funded (Option III) programs, noting that while these programs may be seen as diverting resources from formula-funded (Option I) programs, it is important to recognize that they bring more revenue to the University, which actually benefits all programs.

On the subject of mentoring, Provost McInnis stated that sometimes the mentor has too much influence over a graduate student and may not be mentoring in the best interest of the student. Dean Smith confirmed that this topic is being addressed by the Task Force and the Faculty Innovation Center.

Catherine Weaver (LBJ School) asked about the role the Graduate Assembly has in the financial aspects of approving self-funded (Option III) programs. Provost McInnis said that she would work with Dean Smith and the dean of the proposed program to make sure it is financially logical to begin new programs.

IV. Academic Committee (Catherine Weaver)

A. A proposal to add a self-funded (Option III) track to the Master of Science in Engineering (MSE) degree in Petroleum Engineering was introduced based on the unanimous recommendation of the Academic Committee. This program will eventually allow stacking of graduate certificates. The program will start with 12-16 students and scale up to 30 each year..

The Graduate Assembly voted unanimously to recommend approval.

- B. Updates to the Guidelines for Option III Degree Programs were introduced based on the unanimous recommendation of the Academic Committee. The Guidelines were revised to inform faculty what is required for Option III consideration. The revised policy document also includes new questions that the Academic Committee would like to have addressed in the Option III Annual Progress Reports. Kate Weaver (LBJ School) noted that the guideline/policy document is a living document, meaning that it can continue to be updated. She encouraged members of the Assembly to send suggestions for update or enhancement.

The Graduate Assembly voted unanimously to recommend approval.

- C. A proposal to establish an MD/MA (Design) dual-degree program with Dell Medical School was introduced based on the unanimous recommendation of the Academic Committee. Sue Cox (Dell Medical School) reminded the Assembly that Dell Medical School has previously established dual-degree programs in Business Administration, Public Health, Biomedical Engineering, and Educational Psychology. She reported that 30 of the 50 students in the inaugural MD class are completing dual degrees. She noted that in the inaugural class nine completed a distinction project with the design institute. She anticipates that approximately 10 students per year will opt for the dual-degree arrangement in Design.

The Graduate Assembly voted unanimously to recommend approval.

- D. Kate Weaver (LBJ School) reported that Option III Annual Progress Reports have been helpful in enhancing the Academic Committee's understanding of self-supported (Option III) programs. In the future, new questions will be added to the reports, providing even more insight; e.g., placement data.
- E. Elizabeth Gershoff (Human Development and Family Sciences) was nominated to serve as Chair of the Academic Committee for the Academic Year 2019-2020, and there were no additional nominations from the floor. Dr. Gershoff accepted the nomination.

The Graduate Assembly voted unanimously in favor of electing Elizabeth Gershoff as Chair of the Academic Committee, and thus Chair-elect of the Graduate Assembly.

V. Administrative Committee (Elizabeth Gershoff)

- A. Elizabeth Gershoff reported that the committee looked at the Graduate Assembly bylaws, which need updating. She stated that a first draft of updates to the bylaws will be generated over the summer with the intent to review them in the Administrative Committee in the fall. In addition, she noted that the committee concerned about the functionality of Workday and that Graduate Coordinators are

working with other universities with similar concerns in hopes lobbying so that modifications can be made to make the product more functional.

VI. Admissions and Enrollment Committee (Shannon Neuse on behalf of Tasha Beretvas)

- A. A proposal to lift the 50% limitation on the GRE waiver for the Doctor of Nursing Practice (DNP) Option III program was introduced based on the unanimous recommendation of the Admissions and Enrollment Committee. Shannon Neuse reported that the committee monitored students who were admitted with and without GRE scores, finding little difference between the two groups. In fact, those without a GRE score had higher GPAs upon graduation. Therefore, the School of Nursing would like to waive the GRE for all applicants to the DNP degree program.

The Graduate Assembly voted unanimously to recommend approval.

- B. A proposal to waive the GRE requirement for select applicants to the Kinesiology Self-Funded (Option III) program was introduced based on the unanimous recommendation of the Admissions and Enrollment Committee. Shannon Neuse explained that this program is targeted towards mid-career professionals and that the test-score requirement puts the program at a competitive disadvantage. She noted that the program would like to waive the GRE test-score requirement for applicants who have an undergraduate gpa of at least 3.0 and who have three or more years of full-time work experience or who hold a Master's degree.

The Graduate Assembly voted unanimously to recommend approval.

- C. A proposal to waive the GRE requirement for select applicants to the Master of Arts (MA) self-funded (Option III) degree program in Design was introduced based on the unanimous recommendation of the Admissions and Enrollment Committee. Shannon Neuse explained that the program is designed for experienced professionals and noted that similar programs do not require the GRE.

The Graduate Assembly voted unanimously to recommend approval.

VII. Graduate Student Assembly (Samantha Fuchs)

- A. Samantha Fuchs provided a highlight and summary of GSA activity for the past year. She reported that the Graduate Student Assembly completed an overhaul of the election code for all five organizations that participate in campus-wide elections; they added two students to the Graduate Education Task Force; they traveled to DC to advocate for graduate education policies; and they passed legislation in support of the zero-waste sustainability master plan. Samantha also reported that the housing situation is still being worked on and that the GSA is still seeking a \$20,000/year minimum stipend.

B. Finally, Samantha introduced the incoming GSA President, Christina Baze.

VIII. Adjournment at 2:54 PM

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Karen Rascati".

Karen Rascati, Secretary