

DOCUMENTS AND PROCEEDINGS OF THE GRADUATE ASSEMBLY
THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT AUSTIN
October 14, 2020

Chair Elizabeth Gershoff called the first meeting of the Graduate Assembly for the 2020-2021 academic year to order on Wednesday, October 14, 2020, at 1:30 PM over Zoom.

Faculty Members Present: Hal Alper, Hina Azam, Jim Buhler, Ethan Burris, Michael Butterworth, Tanya Clement, Allan Cole, Sue Cox, Noah De Lissovoy, Andrew Dunn, Catharine Echols, Alison Frazier, Elizabeth Gershoff, Linda Golden, Gloria Gonzalez-Lopez, John Hasenbein, Thomas Hunt, Lizy John, Christopher Jolly, Jack Lee, Stephen Limberg, Christina Markert, Julia Mickenberg, Robert Paterson, Marc Pierce, Francisco Polidoro, Kavita Radhakrishnan, Karen Rascati, Rebecca Rossen, James Spindler, Jessica Toste, Catherine Weaver, Soo Young Rieh

Faculty Members Absent: Kerry Cook

Student Members Present: Ashley Bennett, Karina Mendez-Perez, Ishan Nigam, Gregorio Ponti, Sanju Vardhan

Ex Officio Members Present: Anthony Brown, Angela Evans, Sherry Melecki

Representatives from the Office of the Graduate Studies Present: Michelle Broadway, Jim Cox, Marv Hackert, Dean Neikirk, Shannon Neuse, Mark Smith, Rebekah Sylvia

Visitors: Molly Bray, Martin Luby, Monica Meadows, Elizabeth Nelson

Order of Business

- I. Approval of the minutes of the April 29, 2020 meeting.
The minutes were approved unanimously.

- II. Report of the Graduate Dean (Mark Smith)
 - A. Dean Smith started his report with a welcome of Jim Cox and Maria Juenger to Graduate School leadership team.
 - B. Next, he discussed the topic of admissions and the impact of COVID. He mentioned that the admissions numbers are quite healthy especially given the conditions of the day and commented on the great improvements in diversity at both the undergraduate and graduate number.
 - C. Dean Smith then discussed the newly awarded AGEP-T grant with the goal to increase URM faculty at institutions. He commended Associate Dean Marv Hackert for his work in putting this together.
 - D. Finally, Dean Smith reported on the Graduate Education Task Force. He mentioned that the implementation team is still working on efforts. Meanwhile, meetings with Deans and CSUs are underway to find new ways to support

- E. graduate students. A graduate education tracker is available on the Graduate School website to see progress to date and initiatives.
- F. Prof. Rossen asked about available funding for raising graduate student salaries. Dean Smith indicated that while budget cuts across CSUs are being made due to COVID, each program can adjust the number of students in the program to help increase stipends. Likewise, he indicated that future graduate student salaries will likely be increased centrally.
- G. Prof. Mickenberg asked for Dean Smith to comment on the claims about forced in person teaching of graduate students as reported by Underpaid @ UT. Dean Smith indicated that the graduate school has sent messaging to the Dean's level regarding teaching accommodations. He indicated the importance of working with departments and CSUs to plan for student progress and to look carefully at future admissions to avoid over-committing financial offers. Dean Smith reiterated a commitment of having current students complete their degrees.

III. Report of Chair (Elizabeth Gershoff)

- A. Chair Gershoff started her address by discussing the impact of potential changes to F1 visas that would impact graduate students. She mentioned discussions with UT Faculty Council on putting together a response on how these changes would negatively impact graduate education.
- B. Next, she discussed concerns about graduate student mental health and pointed assembly members to the mental health resource guides available on the Graduate School website.
- C. Chair Gershoff also discussed the issue of campus parking and discussed that PTS has been engaged in the process. There were also concerns about safety given research restart times and indicated that an email would be sent out to graduate students regarding safety issues and services that were available.
- D. Finally, Chair Gershoff mentioned that the Faculty Council C12 committee was working on altering the grievance policy for TAs and AIs to be simpler and were working toward a GRA policy as well.

IV. Academic Committee (Christopher Jolly)

- A. A proposal to create a MD/MPA dual-degree program was introduced based upon the unanimous recommendation of the Academic Committee. Academic Committee Chair Jolly introduced the program and indicated it would represent the 6th dual degree program for the medical school. Proposing faculty and members present to help discuss this proposal included Martin Luby (Associate Professor, Public Affairs), Sue Cox (Executive Vice Dean for Academics, DMS), and Elizabeth Nelson (UMEC Chair, Medical Education, DMS).

The Assembly voted unanimously to approve the MD/MPAff dual-degree program with one abstention of a GA member who is part of the proposal.

- B. A proposal to create an integrated degree program leading to the Bachelor of Science in Nutrition (BSN) and Master of Science in Nutritional Sciences (MSNS) degrees was introduced by Prof. Jolly upon the unanimous recommendation of the Academic Committee. He indicated that this program was in direct response to the dietetics board exam that will require an advanced degree and the program will have a 6 credit course efficiency. Proposing faculty and members present to help discuss this proposal included Molly Bray (Chair, Department of Nutritional Sciences) and Monica Meadows (Assistant Professor of Instruction & Director, Coordinated Program in Dietetics).

The Assembly voted unanimously to approve the BSN and MSNS integrated degree program proposal.

V. Administrative Committee (Tanya Clement)

- A. Report on discussion of the non-unanimous dissertation defense policy.

Administrative Committee Chair Clement reported on committee review of the non-unanimous defense policy from the catalogue. The committee considered the question as to whether the policy warranted re-evaluation now that this policy has been in place for some time. The current policy requires unanimous decisions on dissertations with any resulting issues being brought forward to the Dean. In the committee, 7 people voted no in reconsidering policy and the policy will stand.

- B. Report on discussion of multi-author works incorporated into reports, theses, and dissertations.

Administrative Committee Chair Clement reported on committee discussion regarding the incorporation of multi-author works. The committee had a discussion regarding the type of papers/articles and the impact of whether these are published, submitted, or un-submitted at the time of dissertation. The committee is still considering the aspects of whether any co-authored work is acceptable, whether the article needs to already be submitted/published, and any revisions of catalogue language that are needed to provide clarity. This topic will be brought back to the GA as a proposal in the future.

- C. Report on discussion of obtaining co-author sign off when multi-author works incorporated into reports, theses, and dissertations.

Administrative Committee Chair Clement reported on committee discussion regarding whether other authors need to sign-off on multi-author work contained in the report/thesis/dissertation. There were concerns of the potential for charges of academic dishonesty or misconduct after the fact resulting from

miscommunication. The committee is considering language as to whether other authors need to sign off and considering the number of authors that are on a publication. The committee will seek input from faculty with experience in this area.

VI. Admissions and Enrollment Committee (Allan Cole)

- A. A proposal for an *ad hoc* GRE waiver for students already holding a Ph.D. degree was introduced based upon the unanimous recommendation of the Admissions Committee. Committee Chair Cole indicated that this request would allow GIAC to directly waive this requirement in conversation with the program even when there is no explicit GRE waiver in process for this program.

The Assembly voted unanimously to recommend approval of the *ad hoc* GRE test-score waiver.

- B. Committee Chair Cole completed his report by mentioning that there is considerable interest in waiving the GRE in general and the committee will be bringing some guidance to the GA for consideration.

VII. Graduate Student Assembly (Gregorio Ponti)

- A. GSA Chair Ponti reported on activities of the GSA including two recent bylaw updates that codify virtual meeting processes as well as includes Dell Medical School into the bylaws.
- B. Next, he discussed the inclusion of the Black Graduate Student Association into the structure of GSA which will give them further access to funds.
- C. Finally, he discussed how proposals can now be fast-tracked to be voted on in the same meeting when proposed and mentioned that representation from programs is increasing but they are still trying to codify how to include students not in a current program.
- D. Prof. Markert asked how students were feeling within the pandemic and if anything should be addressed. Ponti responded that at the start of the year there was a lot of anxiety especially for TA appointments not knowing what modality would be used and was expecting more CMHC resources to be used by students.

VIII. Adjournment at 2:33 PM



Hal Alper, Secretary