

**THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT SAN ANTONIO
DOCUMENTS AND PROCEEDINGS OF THE GRADUATE COUNCIL
ACTION MINUTES
ORDER OF BUSINESS**

February 2, 2010

**John Peace Library 4.03.12
3:30 p.m.**

Present: John Alexander, Kim Bilica, Rena Bizios, Norma Cantu, Michael Cepek, Andrey Chabanov, Bill Cooke, Jim Dykes, Dorothy Flannagan, Anjali Gupta, Richard Hartley, Mary Kay Houston-Vega, Kim Kline, Myung Ko, Don Kurtz, Lance Lambert, Fransisco Marcos-Marin, Greg Michel, Sharon Navarro, Joel Saegert, Rudy Sandoval, Scott Sherer, Howard Smith, Ryan Sprott, Drew Steven, Garry Sunter, Heather Trepal, Ram Tripathi, Lila Truett, John Wald, Jose Weissman, Raj Wilson, Xiaohe Xu (replacing Gabriel Acevado)

Absent: David Akopian, Julie Bland, Sean Guidry, Adrian Lipscombe, Renee Nank, Anne S. Reamey, Mary Zey, Weining Zhang

Excused: Elizabeth Murakami- Ramalho, Emeka Nwaeze, Can Saygin, Brian Smith

Visitors:

Robert Milk, Chair Department of Bicultural- Bilingual Studies
Ruyan Guo, Chair Department of Electrical and Computer Engineering
Chunjiang Qian, Graduate Advisor for Electrical and Computer Engineering

I. Call to order and taking of attendance.

Dr. Norma Cantú called the February 2, 2010 meeting of the Graduate Council to order at 3:40 pm.

II. Approval of Minutes (Jim Dykes, substituting for Norma Cantú)

The Minutes of the December 1, 2009 meeting were approved.

III. Reports

A. Council Chair (Norma Cantú)

Dr. Cantú welcomed our visitors and moved that the Bylaws be suspended so that Dr. Robert Milk could discuss the proposed Bilingual Reading Specialist Graduate Certificate and so that Drs. Ruyan Guo and Chunjiang Qian could discuss the final report for the MS in Electrical Engineering program. The motion was approved.

B. Dean of Graduate School (Dorothy Flannagan)

Dean Dorothy first provided an update on enrollments. As of midnight on 1 February, 798 doctoral applications had been received before the deadline. Despite no new PhD programs, that is a substantial increase over the 540 applications last year. Monica Rodriguez (Manager of Graduate Admissions) is working very hard to handle the increase with the same staff. It is a major priority to make the applications available on Rowdy Space. There also appears to be an increase in Master's level applications.

Next Dean Flannagan referred the members to the resolution from the Council of Graduate Schools (Attachment A of the Agenda). The resolution regarding graduate Scholars, Fellows, Trainees, and Assistants has also been shared with the Associate Deans. Doctoral applicants may need to choose a school prior to the April 15th deadline and they may resign from acceptance of a financial offer before April 15th. On the other hand, a student may not accept a stipend from another institution after April 15th without a previous, written release from the prior institution. The goal is for all schools to send the same message: accepting a stipend is a serious and important agreement. That will help professional behavior. Most appointments go through the Graduate School, but programs may want to communicate the same message in their letters to prospective students.

The Dean Flannagan noted that some graduate students have been overly eager in seeking employment outside their department. That is much more common with Master's level students, since PhD students are usually funded. After being unable to find funding within their department, some MA/MS students have inquired across the campuses trying to find support. The problem has increased across the last few semesters; especially with some persistent requests to faculty affiliated with centers and requests to faculty with grants. The Campus Police were involved in an incident a couple of weeks ago and some Associate Deans have become uncomfortable in some circumstances. The Graduate School gets numerous requests each week. The Graduate School refers those students to the Job Bank maintained by Career Services. Information about the Job Bank will be included in orientations for new and prospective graduate students. Instead of hiring outside the department, it is recommended that students are directed towards the Job Bank. Dr. Rena Bizios noted that international students often need financial support in order to obtain a visa. In seeking to solve that issue (especially in the case of hurricanes, earthquakes, and tsunamis), they often look for an alternative to providing false information to their Embassy. Dean Flannagan agreed that there are severe consequences to providing false information to their Embassy. Dean Flannagan also agreed with a suggestion by a visitor that having a common date for appointments might help students trying to decide between multiple offers and might encourage positive behavior. The Graduate Council might consider requesting the Graduate School to check if a student had accepted a prior offer before being awarded a different offer.

C. Secretary (Jim Dykes)

Dr. Jim Dykes referred to the Graduate Council membership (Attachment B of the Agenda). The 19 members with "2 years" in white will be serving the second year of their two-year term next year. The 18 faculty members with "1 year" in green are currently serving the second year of their two-year term this year. He welcomed Dr. Xiaohe Xu who will replace Dr. Gabriel Acevedo as the representative for Sociology at this meeting. Before March 1st, Dr. Dykes will send notice to their Department Chairs to hold elections for their 2010- 2012 representative. The current representatives will be cc:ed and may be re-elected. The results will be reported to the Administrative and Agenda Committee meeting on March 23rd and to the Graduate Council meeting on April 6th. The newly elected members will serve from September 2010- May 2012. Dr. Cantú will announce our Nominating Committee at our March 2nd meeting. The Nominating Committee will prepare a slate of officers and our 2010 / 2011 Chair, Secretary, and Parliamentarian will be elected at our April 6th meeting. The Nominating Committee will

also prepare a slate of members for our standing committees for our May 4th meeting. Ginger Hernandez will coordinate the election of student representatives (who serve for one year) from each College.

D. Committee on Graduate Programs and Courses (Gabriel Acevedo)

Dr. Gabriel Acevedo introduced Dr. Xu as his replacement and explained that he would bid farewell to the Graduate Council after presenting the proposal for the Bilingual Reading Specialist (BRS) Graduate Certificate. His committee had a positive evaluation of the five-course sequence; especially with regard to their three targeted audiences: licensed Texas Reading Specialists seeking a supplement, current MA Bicultural-Bilingual students seeking a specialization, and BA students contemplating entering the MA program. The response was also positive to the two questions his committee always asks: “What is the need?” and “What new resources are required?”. The program demonstrated a clear need for the certificate in Texas (especially given changing demographics) and no new faculty, facilities, or materials are required. Existing courses will fulfill the 15-hour curriculum: BBL 5173, ESL 5033, BBL 5063, BBL 5053, and BBL 5193. There are six current faculty who will teach the courses; including one who will oversee the program. Admission requirements are consistent with the Graduate Catalog with minimal TOEFL scores of at least 550 on the paper-based exam or at least 79-80 on the internet-based exam. There are two proposed measures of success: 50% apply to the MA in BBL program and 100% pass the state Master Reading Specialist exam by their second attempt. Dr. Howard Smith noted that the five courses were selected based on the success of students funded by a federal LIBRO grant. All of the students that took the sequence of five courses passed the test. The course sequence is the same without the federal grant support. Any student who fails the test the first time will be mentored before retaking it. In response to a question by Dr. Scott Sherer, Dr. Smith explained that a MA student could take two courses (BBL 5173 and 5193) as electives in order to earn the certificate along with their MA. In response to a question by a visitor, Dr. Smith reported that the current focus on Spanish was in response to the requests by 16 school districts. Other school districts (including Comal) have been contacted, so the focus may be expanded to other languages in the future if there is demand. The proposal was unanimously approved.

E. Membership Committee (Scott Sherer)

Dr. Sherer noted that all 10 applicants for Special Membership of the Graduate Faculty (Attachment C of the Agenda) held the terminal degree. He explained that there were two Dr. David Young applicants with different middle initials (T. and J. for Physics and Geological Sciences, respectively). He also noted a typo in Dr. Nathan Schwadron’s name. His committee’s vote was almost unanimous for all applicants. The entire applicant list was unanimously approved by the Graduate Council.

F. Committee on Graduate Program Evaluation (Howard Smith)

Dr. Smith presented the final report for the MS in Electrical Engineering program. Dr. Kathleen Mittag was the liaison for the committee and prepared the report. He particularly noted the quality of the program and the morale. While the student GRE scores and publication records were good, it was noted that only 51.6% chose the thesis option. Also, the general University issues of funding and student preparation were noted. The quality and increase in the number of full-time faculty members (from 9 to

19) were noted as excellent and their extramural funding was commended as research strengths. A concern was raised about the impact of the increased emphasis on the doctoral program. Funding issues for MS students and pressure on undergraduate course offerings were specifically mentioned. In addition, the Research Development office is working on intellectual property guidelines given the MS student involvement in industry. While the quality of the faculty is great and their mentoring is a strength, the faculty workload policy needs to be applied uniformly. The classroom and laboratory facilities are outstanding.

Dr. Guo explained that the research project requirement was being tightened and that the faculty are now including \$1000 awards to MS students in the grant proposals. Being offered through open competition, receiving such an award would qualify the student for in-state tuition. She also noted a new College initiative for MS scholarships. Dr. Bizios applauded the College's initiative and emphasized the dilemma between funding PhD and MS students, especially with regard to NSF grants. The report was unanimously accepted.

G. Committee on Academic Policy and Requirements (Andrey Chabanov)

No Report

IV. Unfinished Business

Dr. Xu reminded the Graduate Council that Dr. Acevedo had been working on the issue of the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) for international students. Following up on that issue, Dr. Xu compared the cut-offs for UTSA to those of other Universities (including Wisconsin, Michigan, UC Berkeley, Duke, Stanford, Penn, UT Austin, UT Arlington, UT Dallas, Houston, and Texas State). Across both paper- and computer-based formats, the UTSA criteria were higher than those of almost all of the other schools surveyed. Dr. Xu agreed to share his findings with Jim Kelim (Director of ESL Services), Dean Flannagan, and Dr. Smith. In addition, Drs. Bizios, Cantú, and Garry Sunter joined the discussion. The cut-offs were set about 15 years ago given the extant data on student success. Everyone agrees that we do not want to impede the admission of international students and that we need to establish cut-offs that allows them to succeed based on full benefit of their classes and research experience. We also need to comply with state mandates concerning teaching assistants and to recognize the unique requirements of different programs. An update will be presented at the March 2nd Graduate Council meeting.

V. New Business

None

VI. Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 4:43.