

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

April 5, 2011

**University Room, BB 2.06.04
3:30 p.m.**

Present: Gabriel Acevedo, Mark Bayer, Saadet Beeson, Kim Bilica, Rena Bizios, Amanda Chou, Santiago Daydi-Tolson, Samer Dessouky, Jim Dykes, Carolyn Ehardt, Dorothy Flannagan, Rhonda Gonzales, Yue Huang, Kim Kline, Myung Ko, Rebecca Krohn, Don Kurtz, Goutham Menon, Elizabeth Murakami-Ramalho, Patricia Quijada, Joel Saegert, Elaine Sanders, Can Saygin, Scott Sherer, Howard Smith, Drew Stephen, Ram Tripathi, Lila Truett, John Wald, Hongjie Xie

Absent: David Akopian, Ashraf Alam, Peter Anderson, Shereen Bhalla, Andrey Chabanov, Bill Cooke, Branco Ponomariov, Russell Reeder, Mindy Wallen, Weining Zhang

Excused: Richard Hartley, Sharon Navarro, Rudy Sandoval, Johnelle Sparks, Garry Sunter, Heather Trepal

Visitors:

Laura Levi Chair, Department of Anthropology
Jill Fleuriet Graduate Advisor of Record, Department of Anthropology
Edwin Barea-Rodriguez Chair, Department of Biology
Judy Teale Associate Dean of Graduate Studies, College of Sciences
Waldemar Gorski Chair, Department of Chemistry
Stephen Bach, Graduate Advisor of Record, Department of Chemistry

I. Call to order and taking of attendance.

Dr. Kim Kline called the April 5, 2011 meeting of the Graduate Council to order at 3:37 pm. She introduced our visitors and moved to suspend our Bylaws in order to allow them to join our discussion. Her motion was unanimously approved.

II. Approval of Minutes (Kim Kline)

In the distributed Minutes of the March 1, 2011 meeting, Dr. Jim Dykes incorrectly listed Yue Hang as "Absent". The Minutes were amended to reflect his presence and, as amended, were approved.

III. Reports

A. Council Chair (Kim Kline)

Dr. Kline reported on three items from the Executive Board meeting of the Faculty Senate. The working committee reviewing the Institutional Review Board procedures is chaired by Dr. Kline and will begin its work in earnest next Fall. It will study the strategies that are effective and the challenges as we move toward Tier 1. The second item is the biggest: Faculty Senate involvement in reviewing the Handbook of

Operating Procedures; specifically tenure, promotion and Periodic Performance Evaluation. Discussion continues about teaching evaluations. Privacy is an issue with the on-line comments. Also, Summer student evaluations may be required for all courses; although they may not necessarily be considered for merit.

B. Dean of Graduate School (Dorothy Flannagan)

Dean Dorothy Flannagan discussed three items. First she provided an update on the implementation of the new procedures for Graduate Program Review. All of the programs to be reviewed later in this meeting were reviewed under the old procedures. The new procedures based on the department: all undergraduate and graduate programs in a department will be reviewed together. The site visit for the first department reviewed under the new procedures (Modern Languages and Literatures) occurred on February 22nd and 23rd. The procedures are a little different with regard to graduate programs, but the Graduate Council is still involved. Previously the site visit was mainly organized by the Graduate School, but now it organized by the Office of the Provost; specifically Dr. Sandra Welch (Vice Provost for Accountability and Institutional Effectiveness) and Steve Wilkerson (Assistant Vice Provost for Assessment). Previously the Graduate Council representative was present at the entry meeting (when the reviewers are given their charge) and at the exit meeting (when the reviewers provide comments). During the site visit for the Department of Modern Languages and Literatures, an hour long meeting was scheduled with the reviewers, Dean Flannagan, and the Graduate Council representative. While the meeting was productive, Dean Flannagan noted that the reviewers asked different types of questions of her and the Graduate Council representative. She suggests that future site visits include a meeting with the reviewers, the Graduate Council representative, and the Graduate Advisor(s) of Record. If desired, Dean Flannagan could attend a separate meeting. The Graduate Council representative will receive the review and will report the parts relevant to graduate education to the Graduate Council. In the case of Modern Languages and Literatures, that report will be given at our May 3rd meeting. In response to a question by Dr. Edwin Barea-Rodriguez about differing expertise between multiple programs, Dean Flannagan noted a team approach. For Modern Languages and Literatures, different reviewers had expertise in the different undergraduate programs. She expects that the same approach will be used with multiple graduate programs. She also noted that they are sequencing the reviews through one College at a time. The Department of History is the only other department up for review this year in the College of Liberal and Fine Arts.

Next Dean Flannagan discussed graduate student health insurance. Human Resources sent a letter to 290 of the over 4000 graduate students concerning Blue Cross / Blue Shield employee health coverage. At one point, the State of Texas used to pay those premiums. After the State ceased to pay them, UTSA began paying them. The letter stated that UTSA will no longer pay those premiums in the future. Instead, the old monies were reallocated to the Colleges based on the number of eligible students and each College has developed a policy for distribution of those funds. In some cases, the College allowed each Department to set its own policy. Thus the policies vary across Colleges and, in some cases, across Departments in the same College. In total, an average of \$1100 was reallocated for each of 656 students eligible at the University level. That average is enough to purchase student health insurance. Some Colleges opted to increase the stipend for all eligible students, but other Colleges opted to only increase the stipend for doctoral students (and thus provide a larger stipend per doctoral student).

There is no University-wide policy, but each Associate Dean has the information for their respective College.

Finally Dean Flannagan informed the Graduate Council about the status of the proposed PhD in Translational Sciences. She reminded us that the proposal is for a joint degree between UTSA, UTHSCSA, and UT Austin's College of Pharmacy & Pharmacotherapy. The UT School of Public Health (San Antonio Regional Campus) would also participate by offering courses, but not awarding the joint degree. The proposal has been approved by the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board for a one-day site visit (tentatively scheduled for Friday April 22nd at UTHSCSA.

C. Secretary (Jim Dykes)

While unable to access his thumb drive, Dr. Jim Dykes updated the list of Graduate Council representatives included as Attachment A of the Agenda. Of the 38 department representatives, 19 are serving the first year of their two-year cycle. The other 19 are serving the second year and elections are being held for the September 2011-May 2013 representatives. Despite the very busy semester, the Department Chairs holding the elections have been outstanding. A total of 14 elections were completed prior to the Agenda, two more were elected today, and, of the three remaining, one more will be elected next week. Dr. Dykes appreciates the help of the members and Chairs, since having a complete set enables our election of officers for next year. Elaine Sanders (our Nominating Committee) prepares a slate of candidates so that we can elect our 2011 / 2012 Chair at this meeting and elect our 2011 / 2012 Secretary & Parliamentarian at our May 3rd meeting. When emailing the Department Chairs about the elections, Dr. Dykes followed Dr. Sanders' advice about describing the functions of the Graduate Council and our meeting times. That helped, but there was another common question. The slot for a two-year cycle is based on the department, so that 19 elections are held each year. If a new representative takes over during a two-year cycle; the representative changes, but the departmental, two-year slot remains unchanged.

D. Committee on Graduate Programs and Courses (Kim Bilica)

Dr. Kim Bilica noted that her committee is reviewing the MS in Advanced Materials Engineering proposal. It will be discussed at the May 3rd meeting.

E. Membership Committee (Scott Sherer)

Dr. Sherer presented the list of 18 applicants for Special Membership of the Graduate Faculty (Attachment B of the Agenda). They were approved by his committee and unanimously approved by the Graduate Council.

Dr. Sherer noted that Special Members may serve as co-chairs of thesis and dissertation committees, but may not serve as chair. The committee was asked to consider changing our Bylaws and the Handbook of Operating Procedures. The initial response of committee members about Special Members serving as chairs was mixed. Both Dr. Sherer and Dr. Rena Bizios (a committee member) suggested that the committee have a more formal review of the question next year. Concurring with the importance of the question, Dr. Kline agreed to have the committee carefully consider both sides of the issue next year.

F. Committee on Graduate Program Evaluation (No Chair)

Dr. Kline explained that Dr. Audrey Dentith had prepared the first two reports (Attachments C and D of the Agenda), but is unable to attend this meeting. Dr. Kline noted that the reviewers recommended more faculty, funding, space, and assistantships for the Masters in Anthropology program. She also noted three items for consideration: the qualifying exam & thesis requirement, rolling admissions, and coordination with the Center for Archaeological Research (CAR). Dr. Laura Levi noted that she was pleased with the review. Anthropology will receive more space next Fall and CAR is incorporated with the Department; albeit not as closely as the reviewers would like. Dr. Jill Fleuriet explained that rolling admissions had been a University requirement that is being changed. In response to a question by Dr. Bizios, she explained that a thesis is required.

With respect to the PhD in Cell and Molecular Biology program, Dr. Kline noted the reviewers' recommendations for more courses and faculty. She also noted two items for consideration: recitation teaching assistantships and a seven-year term limit for the number of years in the doctoral program. Dr. Edwin Barea-Rodriguez explained that the recitation teaching assistantships are one-hour meetings designed to help undergraduate students gain depth in large lecture courses. It is an option for the doctoral students to teach them. Dr. Kline noted that there were no red flags in the reviewer's report.

Dr. Howard Smith presented the administrative follow-up for the MS in Chemistry (Attachment E of the Agenda). He summarized that the program had completed all three recommendations. 1) The students now earn more money per course or lab section. They are also allowed to teach more lab sections (three instead of two) of a shorter duration (three instead of four hours). 2) The hiring of a grant specialist has unburdened the faculty to focus of the scientific content of their grant proposals. 3) Grants increased from a total of \$1.8 million last year to \$7 million this year. Dr. Waldemar Gorski said he was pleased with the follow-up report.

G. Committee on Academic Policy and Requirements (Joel Saegert)

Dr. Joel Saegert reported that the Provost had asked the Graduate Council to consider requiring an external member on dissertation committees. About 30 sister and aspirant Universities were reviewed and 2/3 of them explicitly require an outside member. Requiring an outside member may help prevent cronyism, but there is no evidence to date of abuse and some felt it would be a burden. The committee recommended that Departments not be required to include an outside member on each dissertation committee, but that each department publish its policy in its Graduate Program Handbook. The committee's recommendation is a motion and it was seconded to open discussion.

Drs. Saegert, Bizios, Dykes, Hongjie Xie, Kline, Smith, John Wald, Bilica, and Can Saygin engaged in a considerable discussion centering on the definition of "outside". It was suggested that a member might be outside the department, but should not be "outside" in terms of expertise. It was also noted that "outside" could be mean a) outside a specific concentration within the same department or b) outside the University but in the same discipline. In any case, an outside member would need to be a Member or Special Member of the Graduate Faculty. The need for a definition of "outside" is clear, but there was no guidance from the Catalogs of the other reviewed universities. Since the committee recommended maintaining the status quo, it wanted to provide flexibility for individual departments to determine individual policies. In short, there was no consensus

definition of “outside” produced at the meeting. Dr. Kline observed that having departments draft a policy would promote discussion, which might transition into a future University policy. A vote was called on the committee’s recommendation that departmental policy on an outside member serving on dissertation committees be published in the Graduate Program Handbook. The recommendation passed on a split vote: 14 in favor, 6 opposed, and 4 abstentions.

IV. Unfinished Business

None

V. New Business

Dr. Kline turned the floor over to Dr. Sanders, who explained that she had received the names of four people as nominees to chair the Graduate Council during the 2011 / 2012 academic year. One person was unsure of their membership on the Graduate Council next year and two declined in favor of an outstanding person: Dr. Kim Bilica. Dr. Sanders also thanked Dr. Kline for her wonderful service as Chair this year. Receiving no other nominations from the floor, Dr. Bilica was elected to chair the Graduate Council next year by acclamation.

VI. Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 4:45.