

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

February 1, 2005

John Peace Library 4.03.08

3:30 p.m.

Present: Adria Bodour, Stephen Brown, Youn-Min Chou, Jan Clark, Paul Cotae, Blanche Desjean-Perrotta, Juanity Firestone, Lila Flory-Truett, James Groff, Kolleen Guy, Jack Himmelblau, Fred Hudson, Eugene John, Palani-Rajan Kadapakkam, Laura Levi, Bill Mullen, Alan Shoho, Judith Sobre, Raydel Tullous, Dorothy Flannagan, Ted Skekel, and James Dykes

Absent: Mark Allen, Stephen Amberg, Stuart Birnbaum, Thomas Bylander, Matthew Gdovin, Larry Golden, Neal Guentzel, Han Hai-Chao, Han Hyunsoo, Daniel Hogenauer, Rosalind Horowitz, Michael Karcher, Kasandra Keeling, Michael Kelly, Don Lien, Tina Lowrey, Randall Manteufel, Neil Maurer, John McCarrey, Francine Romero, Howard Smith, Jon Thompson, Armando Trujillo, Esther Wheeler, Ray Wilson, Mary Zey, Weining Zhang, Robert Ayoub, Shawn Crawford, Sandra Guerrero, Jamal Rhadbane, Teresa Skeete, Sam Slocum, and Lorraine Trevino

Excused: Debbie Lopez, and Cynthia McCluskey

Visitors: None

I. Call to order and taking of attendance.

The February 1, 2005 meeting of the Graduate Council was called to order at 3:43 pm.

II. Approval of Minutes (Ted Skekel)

The Minutes of the December 7, 2004 meeting of the Graduate Council were unanimously approved.

III. Reports

A. Council Chair (Ted Skekel)

Dr. Ted Skekel noted that a proposed amendment to Article III 3 of the Graduate Council Bylaws (Membership of the Graduate Council: Elections) had been distributed at the December 7, 2004 meeting and was included as Attachment C of those minutes. The goal of the amendment was to clarify the election process and transfer more responsibility to the

Department. While not controversial, he expressed a desire to involve more members than were present at the meeting. The motion to consider the proposed amendment was amended to table the motion in lieu of an email vote by all members. As part of the amendment, the Secretary was charged with distributing email ballots to all members with a deadline of one day prior to the next Agenda meeting. The amended motion was unanimously approved.

Dr. Skekel encouraged members to anticipate that the last two meetings of the Graduate Council (April and May) may be long meetings.

B. Dean of Graduate School (Dorothy Flannagan)

Dr. Dorothy Flannagan described the status of new graduate programs and proposals. She noted that three proposals from UTSA (Master of Architecture, Master of Science in Computer Engineering, and Doctor of Philosophy in Applied Statistics/Demography) are currently under review at the UT System office. The review typically lasts about six months. Dr. Flannagan described four graduate proposals that had recently been approved for implementation at UTSA: MA in Communication (Fall 2005 implementation), Master of Social Work (Spring 2005 implementation at the Downtown campus), PhD in Chemistry (Fall 2005 implementation), and PhD in Counselor Education and Supervision, Spring 2005 implementation at the Downtown campus). A site visit for the PhD in Physics proposal has been scheduled for March 4th. If positive, the proposal might be on the agenda for the April meeting of the Coordinating Board. The PhD in Anthropology is currently under review by Dr. Fred Hudson's Committee on Graduate Programs and Courses. There may be one or two additional proposals forwarded from the Graduate School to his committee for review this year.

Dr. Flannagan also reported on a meeting she had with a staff advisor to the Vice Chancellor of the Board of Regents. The Coordinating Board has sent a message that new PhD proposals should be very well prepared due to closer review. While we have been very thorough in our internal review, we must make sure that new proposals are linked to the direction of the University, including areas of concentration and focus.

Dr. Flannagan responded to a number of questions about the deadline for application to a PhD program. Dr. Eugene John asked why we only have Fall admission for PhD programs. Dr. Hudson noted that some scientists are hired at Southwest Research Institute in the Spring and, if they miss the February 1st deadline, may have to wait more than a year to be admitted. Dr. Flannagan explained that the current policy is for Fall admission to the PhD programs, but that many students are accommodated by being admitted in the relevant Masters program in the Spring as a transition to the PhD program. She also explained that most programs

adopted the February 1st deadline in order to be competitive with other schools recruiting the students, but noted that there had been many requests to push back the deadline this year. While exceptions to a published deadline are difficult to administer, she recommended that each program have a dialog to see if the program would prefer a different deadline for the University. Dr. Kolleen Guy suggested that there might be multiple deadlines (perhaps differing between Colleges), but that there be no exceptions. Dr. Jack Himelblau noted that the deadline is absolute at many Universities. Dr. Bill Mullen pointed out that the programs might be polled about Spring admissions and the application deadline. Dr. Skekel asked Dr. Flannagan to poll the programs to see if 1) they were at all interested in having Spring admissions and 2) if they would prefer to change the February 1st application deadline.

C. Secretary (Jim Dykes)

No report.

D. Committee on Graduate Programs and Courses (Fred Hudson)

No report.

E. Membership Committee (Jon Thompson)

No report.

F. Committee on Graduate Program Evaluation (Victor Heller)

No report.

G. Committee on Academic Policy and Requirements (Stephen Brown)

Dr. Stephen Brown reported on two issues considered by his committee: thesis deadlines and size of the Graduate Council. To gain information about the current three deadlines for a thesis, his committee talked to students, faculty, Dr. Flannagan, and Olga Mata. His committee also scanned procedures that other Universities had posted on the web. He reported that most Universities have a single, drop-dead deadline. He indicated that most faculty were indifferent about multiple deadlines, but that some were very opposed to multiple deadlines. Most faculty expected the Graduate School to catch problems, but he noted that there would not be enough time to catch major problems if there was a single deadline. He also noted that all students interviewed hated the multiple deadlines, but said that having multiple deadlines had helped them (especially for formatting). Since the multiple deadlines had been helpful to the students, he suggested that a single Graduate School deadline could be implemented with the caveat that an earlier review, perhaps at the College level, be added.

While everyone agreed that the ultimate responsibility for the thesis rests with the student, much of the discussion focused on ways of helping the

student without increasing Olga Mata's workload. Dr. Laura Levi asked if the Colleges had the resources available to do a preliminary review. Dr. Brown thought that there might be such a person in each College. Dr. Jan Clark asked whether a formatting guide was available. Dr. Brown noted that the guide prepared by the Graduate School was the best his committee had found in their web search and that it included a template. Dr. Flannagan reported that the Graduate School always schedules at least two workshops for students and that a third was scheduled this semester at the Downtown campus. Later, she also explained that the Graduate School tries to work with the Associate Deans, who in turn work with the Graduate Advisors of Records (GARs). Dr. Brown pointed out that some schools require the student to hire a professional editor, but that an editor may charge up to \$900. Dr. Jack Himelblau suggested that, at whatever level implemented, an editor would be helpful. Dr. Clark suggested that more responsibility for the review process could be placed on the thesis committee. Dr. Bill Mullen suggested alerting both the faculty committees and the GARs to the importance and availability of the guidelines. Dr. Adria Boudour suggested that pointing new faculty to the guidelines would be helpful. Dr. Palani-Rajan Kadapakkam suggested that a signature block on the thesis committee's review page could increase the salience of adhering to the guidelines. Dr. Blanche Desjean-Perrotta emphasized the need to increase the number of reviewers in order to keep up with our exponential growth in students. Citing our critical dependence on Olga Mata, both Dr. Skekel and Brown suggested increasing personnel in the Graduate School and increasing the training and reliance on the GARs so that more polished theses were submitted to the Graduate School. Dr. Brown said that he would take the discussion back to his committee in order to draft a proposal on thesis deadlines.

As charged by Dr. Skekel, Dr. Brown's committee also considered ways to streamline membership on the Graduate Council. Initial responses from faculty ranged from a proposal to limit membership on the Graduate Council to only five people to including every member of the Graduate Faculty on the Graduate Council. He described one idea considered by his committee: having one representative elected by each department with a graduate program. That would limit the size of the Graduate Council as more programs are offered within departments. He noted that programs housed in multiple departments posed an issue. Dr. Hudson pointed out that some departments housed very dissimilar programs. Dr. Raydell Tullous asked about the need to streamline membership on the Graduate Council. Dr. Skekel noted that it has become more difficult to recruit dedicated members as both administrative responsibilities at the University and Graduate Council membership has increased over time. Dr. Tullous suggested that we may need to expand the size of some of the most hard-working committees (which include both Graduate Council

members and non-members). Dr. Brown's committee will continue to work on a proposal.

IV. Unfinished Business

None.

V. New Business

None.

VI. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 4:42 pm.