

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

October 5, 2010

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

Present: David Akopian, Mark Bayer, Kimberly Bilica, Rena Bizios, Youn-Min Chou, William Cooke, Schuyler Costello, Samer Dessouky, Sedef Doganer, Jim Dykes, Carolyn Ehardt, Dorothy Flannagan, Rhonda Gonzales, Norma Guerra, Kimberly Kline, Myung Ko, Sharon Navarro, Elizabeth Murakami Ramalho, Joel Saegert, Patricia Sanchez, Elaine Sanders, Rodolpho Sandoval, Drew Stephen, Garry Sunter, Heather Trepal, Ram Tripathi, Lila Truett, John Wald, Mindy Wallen, Honjie Xie, Weining Zhang

Absent: Peter Anderson, Ashraf Alam, Shereen Bhalla, Andrey Chabanov, Santiago Daydi-Tolson, Yue Huang, Donald Kurtz, Branco Ponomariov

Excused: Richard Hartley, Mary Houston-Vega, Russell Reeder, Can Saygin, Scott Sherer, Xiaohe Xu, Mary Zey

Visitors:

Ruyan Guo Chair, Department of Electrical and Computer Engineering
Wei-Ming Lin Associate Dean for Graduate Studies, College of Engineering
Mo Jamshidi Director, Autonomous Control Engineering (ACE) Center
Sos Agaian, Peter Flawn Distinguished Professor

I. Call to order and taking of attendance.

Dr. Kim Kline called the October 5, 2010 meeting of the Graduate Council to order at 3:34 pm.

II. Approval of Minutes (Kim Kline)

The Minutes of the September 7, 2010 meeting were approved.

III. Reports

A. Council Chair (Kim Kline)

Dr. Kline reviewed our accomplishments from last year. The Committee on Academic Policy and Requirements was not as busy last year, but already has a new charge this year. The Committee on Graduate Program Evaluation was quite busy. The committee conducted two program reviews: the MS in Chemistry and the MS in Electrical Engineering. A total of five one-year follow-ups were presented to the Graduate Council: PhD & MA in English, PhD & MS Biomedical Engineering, PhD & MS Computer Science, PhD in Environmental Science & Engineering, and PhD Neurobiology. The Committee on Graduate Programs and Courses approved the Bilingual Reading Specialist Graduate Certificate, the Joint Doctoral Degree Program in Translational Science, and the Dual Degree Masters of Business Administration-Business

Health / Masters of Public Health. The Membership Committee was also very busy. They approved 105 applications: 90 Special Members of the Graduate Faculty and 15 Adjoint Faculty.

Dr. Kline noted that we have a lot on our plate this year. The Committee on Academic Policy and Requirements has new business reviewing the composition of dissertation committees. The Committee on Graduate Program Evaluation will present the review of the PhD in Electrical Engineering today. As shown in Attachment A of the Agenda, four other reviews and two follow-up reports will also be conducted under the old review procedures. The Committee on Graduate Programs and Courses is reviewing changes to the *Graduate Catalog* and will review a proposed Certificate in Rhetoric. The Membership Committee will continue to do its good work.

B. Dean of Graduate School (Dorothy Flannagan)

Dean Dorothy Flannagan reminded the Graduate Council that she had reported preliminary enrollments of over 4000 graduate students at our September meeting. Those enrollments held up nicely through census date. We have just over 4200 degree-seeking graduate students and almost 4400 total graduate students. Consistent with our Strategic Goals, graduate student enrollments are increasing faster than undergraduate enrollments. We have more PhD and Masters students and they are taking more courses. There is a greater proportion of full-time graduate students.

Dean Flannagan explained that she and Dr. Larry Williams (Vice Provost and Dean of Undergraduate Studies) wrote a *Curriculum Guide* over the Summer. They developed the guide based on a document the Provost recommended that originated with the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS). It was substantially modified to provide step-by-step instructions for UTSA. For example, there are instructions for departments proposing new programs, wanting to change their course inventory, and seeking approval of distance learning and off-site classes. While many departments know the steps, it is helpful to have them compiled. For instance, Dean Flannagan noted that prior notification of or approval by the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB) is required to teach a class off-campus. Under certain circumstances, approval by SACS may also be required. The *Curriculum Guide* is currently being reviewed by the Provost and will hopefully be posted on the Provost's website by our next meeting.

Next Dean Flannagan described the status of four PhD proposals.

1) The PhD in Mechanical Engineering proposal had the site visit. The reviewers' comments were positive and the THECB representative was pleased. The letter addressing the comments should leave campus tomorrow. Hopefully the proposal will be approved by the UT System at its November meeting and will be approved by the THECB in January. We should know by our February meeting. We would still need SACS approval prior to implementation.

2) The proposed Joint Doctoral Degree Program in Translational Science is being reviewed by four members at multiple levels of the THECB. Preliminary comments from staff have been positive and the site visit may be scheduled for November. The proposal may be approved this year for a Fall 2011 implementation.

3) The proposed PhD in Psychology has been under review by the THECB for about two years. Dean Flannagan said that she and the Provost had met with the Associate Vice Chancellor of the UT System, who seemed enthusiastic that

we had addressed the concerns of the THECB. A revised proposal should be forwarded to the Vice Chancellor and THECB next week.

4) The proposed PhD in Economics has been revised to be a concentration under the PhD in Business program rather than being a stand-alone program. Hopefully that revision will be well received.

Dean Flannagan also noted a new proposed Certificate in Rhetoric and a possible proposal for a MS in Geographic Information Systems (GIS) program that would be housed in the College of Sciences. In response to a question by Dr. Drew Stephen, Dean Flannagan explained that we are still awaiting preliminary planning authority from the THECB for the MA in Music.

Dean Flannagan informed the Graduate Council that last year the Faculty Senate had approved changing to a plus / minus grading system for both undergraduate and graduate courses and that the system has now been approved by the Provost and President for a Fall 2011 implementation. Adoption is to be optional for professors, but it is unclear about decision making by Departments and Colleges. A vigorous discussion followed. In addition to comments by Dean Flannagan and Dr. Kline, other discussants included Drs. Kim Bilica, Jim Dykes, Rhonda Gonzales, and Joel Saegert. Part of the discussion focused on goals and pragmatics of the plus / minus grading system. It was reported that proponents of the plus / minus system in the Faculty Senate cited a goal of motivating students. For instance a student with a current grade in the low 80s might work harder in order to achieve a B+. In contrast, some discussants were concerned about the implications of different sections of the same undergraduate course (e.g.; PSY 1013) being graded under different schemes and about the implications of a GPA < 3.0 (B-) for probation and scholarships at the graduate level. The rest of the discussion focused on the process. It was reported that the Faculty Senate had previously voted down a plus / minus grading system. It was also reported that there was a not a discussion of separate policies for undergraduate and graduate grades. While the Graduate Council does have a representative on the Faculty Senate, there was no formal process of soliciting Graduate Council review of a decision about grades in graduate courses. The Graduate Council is to provide advice to the Faculty Senate on all matters relating to graduate education at UTSA. There was not consensus about the pragmatics of the plus / minus policy, but concern was expressed about the process serving as a precedent.

C. Secretary (Jim Dykes)

Referring to Attachment B of the Agenda, Dr. Dykes noted that Dr. Santiago Daydi-Tolson has replaced Dr. Francisco Marcos-Morin as the Graduate Council representative for Modern Languages and Literature. Dr. Dykes noted two updates to Attachment C of the Agenda (membership of Graduate Council Committees). He thanked Dr. Elaine Sanders for serving as Chair of our Nominating Committee and Dr. Sharon Navarro for serving as Chair of our Graduate Program Evaluation Committee. As shown in Attachment A below, there are still vacancies; but the members of the Graduate Council were praised for serving on our committees. Our Bylaws require a minimum of three members of the Graduate Council serve on each of our committees. We have exceeded that requirement. Dr. Dykes recommended that we nudge our department friends to contact Dr. Sanders about volunteering to fill our remaining vacancies.

D. Committee on Graduate Programs and Courses (vacant Chair)

Dr. Kline explained that the committee members are voting to elect their Chair.

E. Membership Committee (Scott Sherer)

Dr. Kline reported that Dr. Scott Sherer was unable to attend the meeting and had asked her to present Attachment D of the Agenda. There were four applications for Special Members of the Graduate Faculty and all applicants hold doctoral degrees. As a member of the committee, Dr. William Cooke moved that the Graduate Council approve the list. The list was unanimously approved.

F. Committee on Graduate Program Evaluation (Sharon Navarro)

Dr. Kline thanked Dr. Navarro for serving as Chair. The review of the PhD in Electrical Engineering program was conducted last year, but the Final Report was not presented to the Graduate Council (Attachment E of the Agenda). Dr. Kline welcomed our visitors who were invited to help with our discussion of the program review and moved that the Bylaws be suspended to allow their participation. Her motion was unanimously approved.

Dr. Kline reported that the overall impression of the outside reviewers was very positive. They recommended that hiring new faculty should be used to increase the department's strengths, research, and funding. Department visibility could be increased with a program of distinguished lecturers. The reviewers also recommended that more of the indirect costs from grants be returned to the department, that high quality students be attracted nationally, and that the expectations for the qualifying exam be made more transparent. They concluded that the program is developing in a very positive direction.

Dr. Mo Jamshidi stated that he had discussed the issue of indirect costs and distinguished lecturers with the Dean and Chair. He also noted that the program is increasing the quality of the students while balancing credit hours generated. So far, 28 students have graduated and about 50 doctoral students are in the pipeline. The faculty are working very hard to bring in extramural funding and to attract and supervise quality students. Dr. Jamshidi supervises 8 students, Dr. Sos Agaian supervises 6- 7 students, and Dr. David Akopian supervises 8 students. Dr. Kline congratulated the visitors on their good program and positive review.

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

Dr. Joel Saegert had no report, but announced that Dr. Kline had informed him that his committee would be charged with reviewing the composition and size of doctoral committees. He specifically noted that the lack of a requirement for an outside member had raised eyebrows. He reminded the Graduate Council that there are three vacancies on his committee. Both he and Dr. Rena Bizios explained that there are currently big differences between Departments and Colleges in terms of the composition of dissertation committees. His committee will review what we are doing now, will review the policy at aspirant institutions, and will make future recommendations for the UTSA requirement. Given the importance of the policy, he recommended that Graduate Council members seek College representatives to fill the vacancies.

IV. Unfinished Business

None

V. New Business

Dr. Kline formally charged Dr. Saegert's committee and suggested that Graduate Council members forward any suggestions to Dr. Saegert.

VI. Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 4:24.

Attachment A

**GRADUATE COUNCIL COMMITTEES
2010-2011**

ADMINISTRATIVE AND AGENDA

Kim Kline, Chair
 Dorothy Flannagan, Dean of Graduate School, Ex Officio
 James Dykes, Secretary
 Sharon Navarro, Graduate Program Evaluation Committee, Chair
 Joel Saegert, Academic Policy and Requirements Committee, Chair
 Scott Sherer, Membership Committee, Chair
 Vacant, Graduate Programs and Courses Committee, Chair
 Elaine Sanders, Nominating Committee, Chair
 Shereen Bhalla, Student Rep

STUDENT REPRESENTATIVES

(CoA) Schuyler Costello (CoPP) Mindy Wallen
 (CoB) Russell Reeder (CoS) Peter Anderson
 (CoE) Yue Huang (CoEHD) Shereen Bhalla
 (CoLFA) Ashraf Alam

PARLIAMENTARIAN Vacant

<p><u>COMPOSITION</u> One member from each college and two at large, minimum of three members of the Graduate Council</p>	<p><u>NOMINATING COMMITTEE</u> (Appointed by the Council Chair) * Elaine Sanders, Chair</p>
<p><u>ACADEMIC AND POLICY REQUIREMENTS</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * (1 year) Joel Saegert (CoB), Chair (2 years) Steve Temple (CoA) * (2 years) Norma Guerra (CoEHD) * (2 years) Patricia Sanchez (CoEHD) (2 years) Vacant (CoE) (2 years) Vacant (CoPP) (2 years) Vacant (CoS) * (1 year) James Dykes (CoLFA) * (2 years) Carolyn Ehardt (CoLFA) (1 year) Schuyler Costello, Student Rep 	<p><u>GRADUATE PROGRAM EVALUATION</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * (1 year) Sharon Navarro (CoLFA), Chair (2 years) Saadet Toker (CoA) * (2 years) Rudy Sandoval (CoB) (2 years) Vacant (CoE) * (2 years) Branco Ponomariov (CoPP) * (1 year) Kathleen Mittag (CoS) * (2 years) Hongjie Xie (CoS) (1 year) Vacant (at large) (2 years) Audrey Dentith (CoEHD) (1 year) Ashraf Alam, Student Rep
<p><u>GRADUATE PROGRAMS AND COURSES</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * (2 years) Vacant, Chair (1 year) Sue-Ann Permberton-Haugh (COA) (2 years) Vacant (CoB) * (1 year) Kim Bilica (CoEHD) * (1 year) Can Saygin (CoE) (2 years) Paco Marcos-Marin (CoLFA) * (1 year) Mary Kay Houston Vega (CoPP) (1 year) Raj Wilson (CoS) * (2 years) Mary Zey (CoPP) (2 years) Vacant (at large) (1 year) Mindy Wallen, Student Rep 	<p><u>MEMBERSHIP</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * (1 year) Scott Sherer (CoLFA), Chair * (2 years) Sedef Boganer (CoA) * (2 years) Elaine Sanders (CoB) * (2 years) Rena Bizios (CoE) * (2 years) Heather Trepal (CoEHD) * (1 years) Gary Sunter (CoS) (2 years) Vacant (CoPP) * (1 year) John Wald (COB) * (2 years) William Cooke (CoEHD) (1 year) Russell Reeder, Student Rep

* Member of the Graduate Council