

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

ORDER OF BUSINESS

APRIL 5, 2016

JPL 4.04.02

3:30pm

Present: Rahman Azari, Mike Baumann, Curtis Brewer, Michael Cepek, Whitney Chappell, Youn-Min Chou, Jonathan Clark, Dennis Davis, Heather Edelblute, Yusheng Feng, Kevin Grant, Vaidya Gundlupet, Ruyan Guo, Seok Kang, Adolfo Matamoros, Margarita Machado-Casas, Lucindia Nevarez, Catherine Nolan-Ferrell, Elaine Sanders, Liang Tang, Marie Tillyer, Ram Tripathi Lila Truett, Hongjie Xie, Weining Zhang

Absent: Richard Armendariz, Mehdi Beyhaghi, Alberto Cordova, Doug Frantz, Shane Haberstroh, Jingqi Li, Rongjie Liu, Marcela Lopez, Barbara McCabe, Chris Packham, Corey Sparks, Joshua Thurow, Daphne Villarreal, Jennifer Woods

Excused: DeBrenna Agbenyiga, Brian Derrick, Sharon Nichols, Drew Stephen

Visitors: Ana Leos, Courtney Balderas, Maren Mitchell, Heather Shipley, Victor Villarreal, Karen Daas, Tanya Orndorff

I. Call to order and taking of minutes

The March meeting of the Graduate Council was called to order at 3:36pm by Dr. Mike Baumann, Council Chair.

II. Reports

A. Council Chair (Mike Baumann)

- Consent Agenda

- Approval of Minutes
- Special Membership Applicants

Dr. Baumann gave an opportunity for discussion of the consent agenda items. All items were approved without removal.

B. Dean of Graduate School (DeBrenna Agbényiga)

No report

C. Secretary (Dennis Davis)

- Nominations for Elections

Dr. Davis announced that the Graduate Council received the following nominations for officers:

Chair – Michael Baumann

Secretary – no nominations submitted

Parliamentarian – Ruyan Guo

These nominees accepted the nominations. Council members were given a chance to submit additional nominations. No additional nominations were given. The motion was made by Catherine Nolan-Ferrell to approve the slate of nominees (Chair and Parliamentarian). Motion was seconded by Elaine Sanders and passed unanimously. Michael Baumann was re-elected as Chair and Ruyan Guo was elected as

Parliamentarian. Another call for nominations for Secretary will be made at the next meeting.

- Update on Council Members  
Dr. Davis reminded the members to have their departments send names of new representatives and alternates prior to the May meeting.

D. Committee on Graduate Programs and Courses (Kevin Grant)

- Doctoral Program in Civil Engineering Proposal  
Dr. Grant provided an overview of the proposed program, required coursework, the department's justification of the need for the program, the proposal review process, clarifications and critiques of the committee, and the department's responses to these requests. The committee voted to approve the proposal by vote of 5-0, 2 abstain, 1 recuse. The committee recommendation serves as the motion to approve the proposal. Motion was seconded by Weining Zhang. Motion passed by a vote of 22 in favor, 1 abstention.

E. Committee on Graduate Program Evaluation (Kinitra Brooks)

No report

F. Committee on Academic Policy and Requirements (Elaine Sanders)

- Bylaws Revisions  
Dr. Baumann made a motion to approve the proposed changes to the bylaws (as presented at the last meeting and distributed at that time). Motion was seconded by Adolfo Matamoros and passed unanimously.
- Then Dr. Sanders presented a document (handout provided at meeting) that shows the various roles and responsibilities of the different types of graduate faculty (members and special members) as currently stated in the bylaws. Dr. Sanders encouraged members to take this back to their departments and colleges and discuss whether or not these designations need to change. The question about the roles of participating and nonparticipating graduate faculty has come up at previous meetings (e.g., Is there a need to distinguish special members who are not participating actively in the department from other special members who do have active participation roles?; Should participating faculty have more privileges in the Graduate School?). These questions would require Graduate Council to consider/define what it means to be participating. The concern raised is about imbalance in the policy – e.g., research faculty who regularly support students through mentorship and grants, but have same rights in the Graduate School as special members from outside the university who sit on one committee. Dr. Baumann asked about interest in pursuing these questions and what members think is going to be best for the graduate students.

III. Unfinished Business

a. English Language Assessment Procedure (ELAP) Policy and Requirements

Maren Mitchell from the Department of Bicultural Bilingual Studies (BBL) presented at the meeting. She gave an overview of the English testing requirements for international students as posted on the Graduate School website. Maren administers the Michigan Test of English Language Proficiency (MTELP) as an additional opportunity for students to demonstrate their English proficiency. Students who do not meet the Graduate School criteria are then placed into English language courses. The BBL department offers three courses for graduate students in reading/writing and speaking/listening (placed based on their Michigan test score). Council members asked questions about:

- how test is graded
- how the student removes the registration hold
- whether advisors should have an avenue to remove the hold for individual students based on department/discipline preferences and needs
- how the passing standard is set for the students (Is it set at a place where it represents needed language skills for an academic setting?).

Maren responded to these questions and emphasized that the courses are meant to be a support for students. She encouraged departments to let her know if there are timing conflicts with the language courses. Additional concerns that came up in the conversation included:

- concern about the fact that students are admitted to 30 credit programs only to find out that they actually have 36 hours with these language courses being outside the academic program
- the design of the courses is done without input from departments

The representatives from the Office of International Programs clarified that these policies are university policies not under the control of the individuals who are administering the program.

Dr. Baumann suggested that the Administrative and Agenda Committee seek out more information, look at the rationale for the different cut-off scores, and bring something back to the Graduate Council for further discussion. Dr. Baumann made a motion to send this item back to the Admin/Agenda Committee to figure out the best way to get the additional information needed to pursue this issue further. Motion was seconded by Adolfo Matamoros. Dr. Matamoros suggested a friendly amendment for the committee to also look at GRE scores and how they relate to these language scores. The motion passed unanimously.

#### IV. New Business

##### a. Proposal of new meeting time

Dr. Baumann described that the 3:30 – 5pm block overlaps two class periods. He asked if individuals would be interested in moving the monthly Graduate Council meeting to a 4:00-5:30pm time slot. He asked if members have found the current time difficult or would find the new time better. Some interest was expressed in starting at 4. Another member expressed concern that a later meeting could be challenging for those who teach graduate courses at 6pm. A poll of members will be conducted at a later time.

#### V. Adjournment

Motion to adjourn was made by Catherine Nolan-Ferrell and seconded by Elaine Sanders. Meeting adjourned at 4:49 pm.