

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

ORDER OF BUSINESS
February 6, 2018

**Graduate Student Professional
Development Center
GSR 1.204
3:30-5:00**

Present: DeBrenna Agbenyiga, Ernesto Alva-Sevilla, John Bartkowski, Michael Baumann, Janis Bush, Ian Caine, Guadalupe Carmona, Fengxini Chen, Jonathan Clark, Jackie Cuevas, Lucila Ek, Jugen Engelberth, Kandyce Fernanez, Shane Haberstroth, Judy Haschenburger, Kasandra Keeling, Shamsad Khan, Myung Ko, Ritu Mathur, Nancy Membrez, Wing Chung Ng, Chris Packham, Ricardo Ramirez, Libby Rowe, Heidi Rueda, Page Smith, Corey Sparks, Firat Testik, Marie Tillyer, Ram Tripathi, Victor Villarreal, HungDa Wan, Zijun Wang, Weining Zhang
Absent: Lauren Bednarski, Fathali Firoozi, Doug Frantz, Ruyan Guo, David Martinez-Prieto, Cyrus Melendez,
Excused: Michael Cepek, Elaine Sanders, Erica Sosa, Liang Tang, Alistar Welchman
Visitors: James Calder, Matthias Hofferberth

- I. Call to order and taking of attendance
 - Called to order at 3:33pm
 - Motion to re-order the agenda to allow program proposal to go first (unanimous)
 - Motion to suspend the bylaws (unanimous)

- II. Reports
 - A. Committee on Graduate Programs and Courses (**Victor Villarreal**)
 - M.A. Global Affairs
 - Overview presentation provided by Victor Villareal (Chair)
 - Need for program based on student demand; what's happening at other universities (e.g., 5 programs at other Texas universities)
 - Discussion about need based on job market; skills are not tied to specific jobs or titles; more general focus on skills used in Global Affairs
 - 36 hour program: thesis option or non-thesis option
 - Four proposed new courses; majority are existing courses
 - Program housed in Department of Political Science and Geography (COLFA)
 - Letters of support from department chairs; support for cross-listing courses
 - Admission: general UTSA requirements; plus some prerequisites; 4+1 program for highly qualified undergraduates
 - Projected enrollments: growth from 5 to 18 students in first five years
 - Hiring two tenure-track faculty
 - \$423,500 in new costs
 - Resources: 4 new courses, two new faculty; other resources already exist
 - Committee review: Alignment with coordinating board standards, curriculum, program administration

- Proposing department provided clarification to the satisfaction of the committee
- Discussion:
- Lack of another language? Will there be a language requirement? Major omission and urge you to add language requirements; even just an encouragement
 - Response: Not typical international studies program; touches upon culture, but do not need language expertise to study it from a global perspective
 - Marketing will be towards an international audience – so the language skills will be there for many of the students in the program
- Think the program is excellent; questions about elective courses; limited to list or others?
 - Response: List of electives is not exhaustive; recommend strongly that students develop a specific interest and take clusters of courses that align well with those interests
- MOTION: Presentation serves as the motion
 - Motion seconded
 - Yes: 30
 - No: 0
 - Abstentions: 1

B. Council Chair (**Mike Baumann**)

- Consent Agenda
 - Approval of Minutes
 - Special Membership Applicants (**Attachment A**)
 - Question: Special member with MS listed as a terminal degree
 - Response: Only as committee member on masters theses, not as committee chair
 - Question: Is this creating precedent?
 - Response: No. For example, not going to okay Masters-trained special members serving on a doctoral committee
 - There are already other departments that are special members and do not have doctoral degrees
 - Very, very, very rare for the committee to approve someone without a terminal degree
 - Departments serve as another screen of applicants
 - Consent agenda approved
- Senate Update
 - Emeritus Policy: Discussing under the rubric of making emeritus status more meritorious, e.g., must have received EXCEEDS for four of last five years
 - Senate was not positive in response to that proposal
 - Faculty senate is advisory; policy could still go through
 - Main arguments: (1) If departments have set up correctly, not going to have many people getting EXCEEDS every year; (2) Tying department's hands in how to evaluate people
 - Change in workload policy: The system is explicitly telling universities to develop their own workload policies; strongly recommended that grad council representatives should be involved in the committee developing the policy

C. Dean of Graduate School (**DeBrenna Agbényiga**)

Assistantship Appointments

- Over past year had several questions relating to how Gas are appointed; have been doing it semester to semester; burdensome for faculty and departments

- Met with fiscal services so they can do it so that GAs are appointed for the academic year
- Going to review proposal with associate deans: Fall 2018 appointments will be for Fall 2018 AND Spring 2019, reappointments in the summer
- QUESTION: Why is summer not included?
 - RESPONSE: Because not all GAs are supported and funded through summer
- QUESTION: Can we make including summer an option?
 - RESPONSE: No, but this should make summer reappointment smooth and streamlined
- QUESTION: Still think it would be more simple to allow summer to be included as an option
 - RESPONSE: From what we're told by fiscal and HR, there are some administrative complications that prevent them from doing that
- QUESTION: Does policy around credit hours required for GA appointment impact this?
 - RESPONSE: Not sure, there are some additional administrative issues (PeopleSoft) that complicate things
- QUESTION: Is there an update about getting a GA with one credit hour?
 - Will Address momentarily
- QUESTION: Isn't the appointment totally computerized? In PeopleSoft?
 - RESPONSE: YES

PROVOST's rule:

- Allowing students to be appointed as GA with only one credit hour; but the piece that is still pending is the TA policy; checking to see when we will be able to add TAs to the policy. UTSA has been discussing this since 2008, and not sure why it has taken so long for this to get done.
- COMMENT: This has been a major problem in terms of requiring students to take 3 credit hours; just overly burdensome; cause additional tuition costs for some students
 - RESPONSE: Yes, agree this is a problem. Working hard to get the TA aspect of this pushed through
- COMMENT: Thank you for your efforts to include the TAs in this policy
 - RESPONSE: Its been a team effort with fiscal and HR and others

Civil Engineering Program

- Two contingencies: (1) Hiring particular type of faculty member, (2) How do we give students credit for experience without taking away from the program's rigor
- On (2) Working with civil engineering to think about how to do this; seems to be the direction that the coordinating board is moving
- Graduate School Awards: Research, teaching, Graduate Advisor
 - Will be doing again, announcement this week
 - Please nominate deserving individuals

D. Secretary (**Jonathan Clark**)

- 2018-2019 Elections
 - Memos sent out for faculty/student representatives – Due by Feb 21st
 - Please check with your department chairs; ensure that an election is held and that the results are communicated to the council

E. Committee on Graduate Program Evaluation (**Vacant**)

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

- Emeritus status
 - Department feedback ranged from status quo to shift to treating emeritus like tenure-track.
 - Few departments represented reported currently having emeritus faculty
 - Issues with status quo include additional obstacles for students (e.g., having to change committee members if advisor goes emeritus) and departments (e.g., having to get individual appointed as special member, having to assign a co-chair for any students in progress)
 - Given that the university's emeritus policy is currently being revisited, may not be the right time to address this issue
- MOTION: Table this for now and wait until changes to Emeritus come
- Second
- Yes: 31
- No: 0

- Plus/minus (+/-) grading system
 - Mixed opinions from departments. Representatives of some departments favoring it liked having the ability to differentiate while others like the ability to remove a student from a program by assigning a B- rather than a C. Representatives of departments against it disliked the inconsistency across faculty and across departments. That it complicated things for international students was also noted.
 - Possible alternatives were discussed regarding a change, including removing the +/-, changing the catalog so that a "B-" is the minimum for good standing (rather than a 3.0), and faculty-level workarounds.
 - A related point regarding standardizing the meaning of different grades was made (e.g., defining an "A" as a certain percentage, university wide)
 - A straw poll was taken regarding whether the Academic Policy committee should be directed to draft a proposal based on the discussion. Result was YES:18, NO:4, ABSTAIN:9
 - MIKE WILL ASK ACADEMIC POLICY TO DEVELOP A PROPOSAL

III. Unfinished Business

- None

IV. New Business

- None

V. Adjournment

- MOTION
- SECOND
- MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY