

THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT SAN ANTONIO
DOCUMENTS AND PROCEEDINGS OF THE GRADUATE COUNCIL
ACTION MINUTES
ORDER OF BUSINESS
MARCH 1, 2016

Assembly Room
JPL 4.04.02
3:39-4:32

Present: DeBrenna Agbenyiga, Mike Baumann, Mehdi Behagi, Kinitra Brooks, Whitney Chappell, Youn-Min Chou, Jonathan Clark, Alberto Cordova, Dennis Davis, Heather Edelblute, Doug Frantz, Kevin Grant, Vaidya Gundlupet, Ruyan Guo, Seok Kang, Sharon Nichols, Chris Packham, Elaine Sanders, Liang Tang, Marie Tillyer, Joshua Thurow, Ram Thirpathi, Lila Truett, Hongjie Xie, Weining Zhang

Absent: Curtis Brewer, Michael Cepek, Yusheng Feng, Jingqi Li, Rongji Liu, Marcela Lopez, Adolfo Matamoros, Barbara McCabe, Lucinda Nevarez, Catherine Nolan-Ferrell, Corey Sparks, Stephen Drew, Daphne Villarreal, Jennifer Woods

Excused: Richard Armendariz, Rahman Azari, Brian Derrick, Margarita Machado-Casas

Visitors: Jorge Solis (Subbing for Margarita Machado-Casas), Karen Daas

- I. Call to order and taking of minutes
The March meeting of the Graduate Council was called to order at 3:39pm by Dr. Mike Baumann, Council Chair.
- II. Reports
 - A. Council Chair (**Mike Baumann**)
 - Consent Agenda
 - i. Approval of Minutes
 - ii. 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**)
 - Presidential Distinguished Research Fellowship
Dr. Agbényiga gave an overview of this new fellowship available for incoming doctoral students. Applications are due soon (March 21, 2016). This is a 4-year award. The money comes from the graduate school during the first year (\$10,000 per student); and in years 2 – 4, the department or college matches half the funds (\$5000). The plan is to award 10 fellowships. There will be requirements for fellows to participate in professional development activities as part of the fellowship. The Dean explained that the list of research areas on the application is meant to be inclusive of all departments and areas in the University. A request was made to send this information directly to Graduate Council to advertise to departments.
 - Admission Deadlines
Reminders were given about the admissions calendar for master's and doctoral programs, including priority and final deadlines. The Dean clarified that departments

do not have to save admissions slots for the final deadline if all slots are filled from the priority deadline. The dates will be sent to the GC members by email.

- Revisions for 2017-2019 Graduate Catalog
The revision schedule has been shared with Associate Deans. Course inventory forms are due on April 15. April 29 is deadline for entering revisions in CourseLeaf. The Dean urges departments to clean up courses that have not been taught recently. Graduate Council will vote on the catalog changes in September. Discussion followed, including a question about the process for adding new courses to a concentration/program.
- Endowments
The Dean explained the endowment from the Carlos Alvarez Foundation. The amount is \$3.75 million for science and biomedical engineering for supporting graduate research fellowships in those areas (\$1.5 million + \$1.5 million matching funds + 750,000 additional matching funds)

C. Secretary (**Dennis Davis**)

- Nominations for Elections
Dr. Davis reminded members to submit nominations for Chair, Secretary, and Parliamentarian by next meeting for April voting.
He also reminded members to remind their Department Chairs to submit the names of new members for next year. Dr. Baumann also stressed the need for alternates so departments are always represented.

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

- No report

E. Committee on Graduate Program Evaluation (**Kinitra Brooks**)

- No report

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

- Bylaws Revisions
Proposed revisions to the Graduate Council bylaws were sent to members by email prior to the meeting. The specific revisions were related to differentiating Member and Special Member designations throughout the document. Also, the wording and numbering/formatting were cleaned up. The committee voted to approve these changes unanimously. Graduate Council vote will be held at the next meeting.

Dr. Sanders explained that at a future date, Graduate Council will also need to discuss the suggestion to differentiate different membership types (see below).

- Participating Members
Dr. Sanders explained that the bylaws do not differentiate special members who participate in their departments from those who do not. We currently do not have a way to distinguish different types of special members (those invited from outside of UTSA to serve on a single committee vs. those who are appointed at UTSA and participate in various ways). Dr. Sanders is putting together a table that lists all the different faculty types and their roles and responsibilities to facilitate these conversations at our April meeting.

It was suggested that these new categories (if created) will need to be reflected in the HOP as well.

III. Unfinished Business

IV. New Business

- Brought by Dr. Ruyan Guo: She explained that the Graduate Catalog specifies an English language assessment procedure (ELAP). This is a mandatory UTSA assessment for incoming international students with certain TOEFL scores, administered during orientation week. Students are given a registration hold until they have successfully met the requirement. Dr. Guo is concerned this could be an intrusion and difficulty for international students. She is suggesting that we revisit this policy. Discussion followed.

Dr. Baumann clarified that the university minimum for language testing is below the ELAP threshold – meaning that students can get admitted and then take the additional courses to meet the ELAP requirement. He asked what experiences we have had in our departments with this policy, and recommended we bring someone from International programs to tell us more about the requirement. Dr. Zhang explained a similar concern – students’ required first semester courses are sometimes delayed because of the English language course requirements. Dr. Xie shared a similar experience. The Dean provided additional clarification about the policy. Discussion was tabled until we acquire more information from the Office of International Programs.

V. Adjournment

Motion to adjourn made by Dr. Weining Zhang and seconded by Dr. Lila Truett . Meeting adjourned at 4:32pm.