

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

**September 4, 2012**

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

**Present:**

Yolanda Allen, Richard Armendariz, Mike Baumann, Kimberly Bilica, Michael Cepek, Sara DeTurk, Dorothy Flannagan, Mark Garza, Kevin Grant, Judy Haschenburger, Anne Hardgrove, Jeffrey Howard, Myung Ko, Donald Kurtz, David Johnson, Barbara McCabe, Michael McDonald, Thomas Moore, Sharon Navarro, James O'Grady, Cornel Pasnicu, Billie Jo Rodriguez, Mariela Rodriguez, Patricia Sanchez, Elaine Sanders, Hatim Sharif, Johnelle Sparks, Drew Stephen, Ram Tripathi, Lila Truett, Weining Zhang

**Absent:**

David Akopian, Bernadette Andrea, Santiago Daydi-Tolson, Ender Finol, Goutham Menon, Michael Moyer, Garry Sunter, John Wald,

**Excused:**

Leanne Alarid, Andrey Chabanov, Vic Heller, Can Saygin,

**Visitors: None**

**I. Call to order and taking of attendance.**

Dr. Kim Bilica called the September 4, 2012 meeting of the Graduate Council to order at 3:31 p.m. She noted that we had no visitors.

**II. Approval of Minutes (Kim Bilica)**

The Minutes of the May 1, 2012 meeting were approved by a vote of the council as presented.

**III. Reports**

**A. Council Chair (Kim Bilica)**

Dr. Bilica welcomed the new members of Graduate Council and welcomed back the returning members. She then introduced Dr. Dorothy Flannagan (Dean of the Graduate School and Vice Provost), Ginger Hernandez (Dr. Flannagan's Administrative Assistant), and Dr. Elaine Sanders (Secretary of Graduate Council). She noted that the position of Parliamentarian is currently open.

Dr. Bilica introduced the Chairs of the Graduate Council committees:

- Committee on Graduate Programs and Courses: Michael Moyer
- Committee on Graduate Program Evaluation: Sharon Navarro

She then noted that three committees, Membership Committee, Nominating Committee, and Committee on Academic Policy and Requirements, do not have chairs. Two Graduate Council members volunteered to chair committees:

- Membership Committee: Mariela Rodriguez
- Committee on Academic Policy and Requirements: Sara DeTurk

Dr. Bilica then provided an introductory report on Graduate Council, beginning with an introduction to the Graduate Council website (<http://graduatecouncilutsa.edu>). She noted that the Graduate Council is a unit of Faculty Senate and that we report to both the Dean of the Graduate School and to Faculty Senate on issues related to graduate programs. Our function is to be a policy-recommending body. From the Graduate Council by-laws, she noted that each individual Council member is our link to each department and that information should flow both into and out of the individual departments on Graduate Council issues.

Dr. Bilica then discussed the individual standing committees and the charge for each committee.

- The Committee on Graduate Programs and Courses reviews proposals for new degrees, certificates and so forth. This committee views the broad landscape of graduate programs at UTSA.
- The Committee on Graduate Program Evaluation participates in the review and evaluation of individual graduate programs. This committee helps to assess the strengths and weaknesses of programs.
- The Membership Committee evaluates and approves or disapproves individuals interested in participating at the graduate level in classes, theses, and dissertations. These are typically Special Members or Adjoint Members. During the last academic year, this committee streamlined the approval process.
- The Committee on Academic Policy and Requirements addresses policy issues that arise.
- The Nominating Committee for the 2011-2012 academic year was Dr. Elaine Sanders. This committee is charged with filling the vacancies on committees and nominating a Chair, Secretary, and Parliamentarian for the following year. We are currently asking for members and a Chair for this committee.

Dr. Bilica discussed the role of the Administrative and Agenda Committee (Dean of Graduate School, Graduate Council officers and Committee Chairs) in moving Graduate Council forward by discussing issues that may or may not be relevant for presentation Graduate Council and preparing the agenda for the next Graduate Council meeting.

**B. Dean of the Graduate School (Dorothy Flannagan)**

Dr. Flannagan discussed the various units in the Graduate School. The recruiting unit is willing to work with departments and programs to help shape and plan programs. The admissions unit helps with the review of applications for master's and doctoral programs. The administrative unit deals with issues related to current students.

Dr. Flannagan introduced Ginger Hernandez as the staff person in her office who is the expert on Graduate Council. Graduate Council members should feel free to contact Ginger at any time for information relevant to Graduate Council.

Dr. Flannagan provided a very tentative update on Fall 2012 graduate enrollments (pre-census day), noting that enrollments may be down for the first time in eight years. Her estimate (using only early data) is that master's applications, master's admissions, and master's enrollments will be down. Doctoral applications, doctoral admissions, and doctoral enrollments are stable. Possible explanations for the decrease include more selectivity in admitting students and admitting students who have a variety of choices in where they actually enroll. Dr. Sara DeTurk noted that other schools offer tuition waivers to entice students to enroll. Dr. Flannagan noted that tuition cannot be waived under UT System rules. Dr. DeTurk asked about the graduation rates for master's and doctoral students at UTSA. Dr. Flannagan responded that doctoral graduations are flat. She did not have information on hand about master's graduations, but she noted that there is a definite shift in culture from part-time to full-time students. Dr. Anne Hardgrove asked about offering in-state tuition to graduate students. Dr. Flannagan responded that students must have competitive scholarships (\$1,000) or be appointed 20-hours per week to be offered in-state tuition.

Dr. Flannagan provided an update on master's programs. The Master of Arts in Philosophy (approved by the 2011-2012 Graduate Council) has been approved by UT System and the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board and is now under review at SACS. The Master's of Engineering (approved by the 2011-2012 Graduate Council) has been approved by UT System and is currently under review by the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board.

Dr. Flannagan then provided an update on the milestones agreement form for doctoral programs. A handout was provided with seven items to promote excellence in doctoral programs from Chancellor Cigeroa. UT System has charged us with

- (1) Implementing an academic program review process. This process is already in place at UTSA.
- (2) Submitting a copy of each review to UT System and to the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board. Dr. Janelle Sparks asked if new information, beyond what we now provide, will be required from programs. Dr. Flannagan replied the Dr. Steve Wilkerson is now in charge of this process, and his group in the Office of Accountability and Institutional Effectiveness will provide whatever information is requested by UT System.
- (3) Having the President affirm the review.
- (4) Providing timely feedback to all doctoral students about their progress in the program at least once each year. Students must also acknowledge that they have received this feedback. Dr. Flannagan's office will prepare a template to help programs design a milestone agreement. Students who do not receive positive feedback must receive an action plan. A copy of the evaluation and the action plan must be submitted to the academic college. The academic college will then submit the evaluation and action plan to the Graduate School by July 15 of each year. The programs must monitor the action plan to ensure the progress of the student. A follow-up report will be due at the end of the fall semester. Dr. Meining Zheng asked if a report will have to be written for every student. Dr. Flannagan replied that all doctoral students at all UT System schools must be reviewed. The milestones agreement form should have been given to all incoming doctoral students at their orientation this fall. This form lists the milestones and the timeline for reaching each milestone. Both the student and a representative of the program must sign the form by the end of the fall semester. UT System may restrict funding for students who do not sign the form. Dr. Zheng asked if there will be penalties for faculty who have students who are not progressing satisfactorily. Dr. Flannagan noted that the graduate programs committee should discuss the reasons why the student is not progressing and include that information in the action plan. Dr. Zheng expressed concern over providing a definitive timeline for student completion, given that the nature of research contains uncertainty and the student may not be able to reach each milestone on the timeline. Dr. Flannagan noted that timelines are flexible and can be rewritten based on the circumstances. Doctoral student progress is reviewed on a student by student basis. Dr. Johnelle Sparks asked if the rule must be applied to both full-time and part-time students. Dr. Flannagan replied that these issues must be considered in the programs. The program will probably have

milestones for full-time students and for part-time students that are separate and are based on prior knowledge of average times needed for students to complete various parts of the program. Dr. Zheng asked about students who move between full-time and part-time, or students who take a year off. Dr. Flannagan emphasized that students must be addressed on a case-by-case basis. She offered to speak to any departments or programs to provide more information on the milestone agreement form.

- (6) Ensuring continuous enrollment. Students can take a leave of absence, but they need to submit a leave of absence request form to be submitted to your college.
- (7) Focusing on career development. UT System wants doctoral students to have career resources, formalized career training and formalized career advising. Currently, this guidance is provided on a more informal basis between a student and his/her faculty mentor, but we can't document these interactions. We will hold more career workshops and ask colleges to provide more career sessions for students. UT System wants us to track our students and to publish salary data that will be accessible to students. Dr. Flannagan asked that any career activities in departments or colleges be reported to her office.

Dr. Flannagan reported on low-performing programs. These are programs that graduate low numbers of students each year. At this time, if the master's program is graduating less than fifteen students in five years (three students per year), it is a low-performing program. For doctoral students, the minimum is ten students over five years (two students per year). The new guidelines (effective fall 2013) will be twenty-five master's students over five years (five students per year) and fifteen doctoral students over five years (three students per year). Last year we had two programs and two concentrations that were at risk. With the implementation of the new rule, we will have fifteen master's programs and seven doctoral programs that are at risk. Dr. Cornel Pasnicu noted that this could lead to programs being more concerned about quantity than quality in their programs. Small programs are often the result of restricting admissions to get the best students. Dr. Flannagan replied that this is a resource allocation issue. Other programs need the resources. Dr. Barbara McCabe asked about the consequences of non-compliance. Dr. Flannagan replied that the worst case scenario is that the program is closed. She then offered to help strategize with any program that has concerns. Dr. Patricia Sanchez mentioned the program competition in the San Antonio area. Dr. Flannagan noted that her office does try to follow-up with students who are admitted, but do not enroll, to UTSA to find out where they did enroll.

**C. Secretary (Elaine Sanders)**

Dr. Elaine Sanders presented the membership to date. Four departments do not currently have representatives on Graduate Council. All of the committees are still in need of more members. All of the committees have the minimum number of Graduate Council members. The other members can be filled by Graduate Faculty in the departments. She noted that the first preference is for every Graduate Council member to sit on at least one committee and asked that members who are not currently on a committee please consider volunteering for a committee. Dr. DeTurk asked about the notations of (1) and (2) on the committee spreadsheet. Dr. Sanders explained that the positions designated as (1) require a member to serve one term, and those designated as (2) require a member to serve two terms.

**D. Committee on Graduate Programs and Courses (Michael Moyer)**

No report

**E. Membership Committee**

As the Membership Committee did not have a chair at the beginning of the meeting, Dr. Sanders provided the report. There were twenty-two applications for special membership to the Graduate Faculty during the month of August. Four of the five current members submitted their votes. All twenty-two applicants were found to be acceptable for special membership on the graduate faculty. The decision of the committee was approved by a vote of the council as presented.

**F. Committee on Graduate Program Evaluation (Sharon Navarro)**

Dr. Sharon Navarro noted that her committee members have been assigned to upcoming reviews.

**G. Committee on Academic Policy and Requirements (Sara DeTurk)**

No report.

**V. Unfinished Business**

None

**VI. Adjournment**

The council voted to adjourn at 4:50 p.m.