

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

ORDER OF BUSINESS September 4th 2018

Present: Lupita Carmona, Michael Cepek, Lucila Ek, Kandyce Fernandez, Fathali Firoozi, Doug Frantz, Ruyan Guo, Judy Haschenburger, Shamshad Khan, Myung Ko, Angela Lombardi, Carlos Monton, Wing C. Ng, Elaine Sanders, Page Smith, Erica Sosa, Corey Sparks, Marie Tillyer, Heather Trepal, Ram Tripathi, Victor Villarreal, Melissa Wallace, Alistair Welchman, Rebecca Weston, Nasouri Reza

Absent: Janis Bush, Jurgen Engelberth, Kasandra Keeling, Ritu Mathur, Lucinda Nevarez, Zijun Wang, Greg Wene, Juliet Wiersema, Alpha A. Martinez-Suarez, Muntasir Masum, Jennifer Uria, Rory Vance

Excused: John Bartkowski, Jackie Cuevas

Alternate: Ender Finol

1. Call to order and taking of attendance

Meeting called to order at 3:34pm

2. Approval of Minutes

Alistair Welchman proposed a motion that the minutes from the May meeting be updated to reflect summer business. The motion was seconded and approved unanimously.

Special Membership Applicants (Attachment A)

Mike Cepek (chair of the Membership committee) raised issues with four candidates for special membership.

1. Audra Fahey to teach Accounting at the Masters level. Fahey has only a BS degree.
2. John Dugan to teach Architecture at the Masters level and serve on Masters committees. Dugan does not have a terminal degree.
3. Kristine McLaughlin to teach Architecture at the Masters level and serve on Masters committees. McLaughlin doesn't have a terminal degree in relevant discipline.
4. Jennifer Potter to serve on Masters and Doctoral committees in Psychology: no justification given in forms.

Elaine Sanders defended the selection of Fahey, which is not unusual in the discipline (the previous instructor for the course was in the same position), by saying that Fahey has other experience to draw on.

The Potter case was clerical error: the application was supposed to be for adjoint membership. The Council briefly discussed some general strategies for dealing with incorrectly filled-out forms: Council admins could check them; the committee chair could contact departments for clarification or corrections before bringing them before the Council; committee could simply reject them.

Motion was proposed and seconded to accept Fahey and Potter applications (the latter appropriately revised). The motion passed unanimously.

3. Reports

(1) Graduate Council Chair

No Chair has been elected. Can Saygin presided over the meeting in the absence of a Chair.

Alistair Welchman (Secretary) stated that he had previously indicated to the Agenda committee that he would be willing to stand for Chair. Elaine Sanders was nominated by Mike Cepak. Council agreed to have an electronic vote, which was duly undertaken and Elaine Sanders was elected Chair 20 votes to 15 (with 2 abstentions).

(2) Dean of the Graduate School

Can Saygin, Interim Sr. V-Provost for institutional effectiveness and strategic initiatives and Interim Dean of the Graduate School talked about the challenges facing the graduate school while UTSA is striving to reach R1 status: much more external grant money is needed; and many more PhD students (1000, instead of current 730). This will require changes e.g. better PhD student recruitment; better monitoring of PhD student progress; and the elimination of waste.

The hybrid budget model will be shadowed this year and implemented in full next year.

Faculty should be 'in synch' with university mission.

Peer universities are determined by a clustering algorithm.

The Graduate school is being restructured after meetings with GARs and administrators. There are a lot of responsible parties: GAR, Department Curriculum Committee, College Committees, Department Chairs etc. Processes could be streamlined. E.g. GRE requirements could be dropped (they're often waived anyway); pre-requisites create bottlenecks and could be revisited; Graduate Council structures could be revisited; use of on-line programs could be increased; GAR handbook could be clearer. Arizona State University is a model in many cases.

(3) Secretary of the Graduate Council

No report

(4) Committees (in chronological order of filing)

No reports

(5) Other

Discussion:

The Interim Vice Provost and Dean of the Graduate School, along with the present members of the Graduate Council, discussed the relationship dynamic between the position of a Graduate Advisor of Record (GAR) and the Graduate School. Multiple Graduate Council members brought up the deficiencies which seem to have an impact on the growth of individual programs, which could potentially extend into the overall growth of graduate education at UTSA. Re-occurring correlational themes mentioned were the lack of support GAR receive in conjunction with the expectation of serving multiple roles within a single position, lack of uniformity, and the lack of clarity to the definition and structure of the GAR position.

The second half of the discussion centered on possible improvements that can be made to help the faculty members serving in their department's role of GAR. Recommendations were suggested from both administrative and faculty perspectives. A multilayered support increase for the GAR from across the department, academic college, and Graduate School was a suggestion that was heavily agreed on by both the Graduate Council members and the Interim Vice Provost of the Graduate School. Additional suggestions consisted of restructuring the role to better fit the description of the responsibilities of a GAR, or possibly integrating multiple (departmental) positions into a single leadership position for a more balanced distribution of responsibilities.

There was a general consensus on the importance the role of a GAR has on graduate education, and the potential opportunities that are available given the proper resources and support. The discussion concluded with the Interim Vice Dean and Provost of the Graduate School asking the members of the Graduate Council to consider coming up with other innovative ideas that could help improve the current structure.

No other business

Meeting Adjourned:
5:05pm