

DOCUMENTS AND PROCEEDINGS OF THE GRADUATE ASSEMBLY
THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT AUSTIN
February 1, 2006

Chair Janet Dukerich called the third meeting of the Graduate Assembly for the 2005-2006 academic year to order on Wednesday, February 1, 2006, at 2:18 PM in the Dobie Room of the Peter T. Flawn Academic Center.

Faculty Members Present: Arens, Bogard, Browning, Crist, Dean-Jones, Doty, Dukerich, Golden, Hull, Kachelmeier, Lawler, Lindstrom, Loukas, McDougall, Murray, Neikirk, Ovando, Palka, Parker, Rascati, Rubin, Smith, Wiedemann

Faculty Members Absent: Cline, Flamm, Markovits (excused), Mehdy (excused), Peters, Stout, Strong (excused)

Student Members Present: Brannon, Forestell, Geier, Whittington

Student Members Absent: Borikar, Shah

Ex-Officio Members Present: Ortiz, Rodriguez

Representatives from the Office of Graduate Studies: Bancroft, Belinoski, Dalton, Ellison, Grant, Hackert, Kahn, Mattos

Visitors: Chip Groat, Paul Damien, A. Balakrishnan, Susan Broniarczyk, John Griffin, Jim Westphal, Bob Wilson

Order of Business

I. Approval of the minutes of the November 16, 2005, meeting

The Assembly reviewed and approved minutes of the November 16, 2005, meeting.

II. Report of the Graduate Dean (Victoria Rodríguez)

Rodríguez reported that newly installed University President William Powers met with the Graduate Assembly and the Faculty Council, speaking strongly in support of graduate education.

The Dean noted that graduate stipends are likely to be supplemented by the upcoming capital campaign and that the Graduate School has also been able to appoint its first development officer.

Dean Rodríguez mentioned the retirement of Char Dison from the Graduate School and the University and noted that John Dalton is taking on the responsibilities of assistant dean for graduate student services.

The fourth item from Dean Rodríguez involved the plus/minus grading system that was recently implemented and mostly well received. The Graduate School

sent a memo to deans, department chairs, directors, and graduate advisors and coordinators, reiterating the specifics of the plus/minus system.

The final item in the Dean's report involved the presence of William Livingston before he spoke to the Assembly. Dean Rodríguez noted that the number of Livingston Fellowships, like the Harrington Fellowships, the most prestigious at the University, will be increased.

III. Special Presentation (William Livingston)

William Livingston spoke about the window of opportunity for the University to assume a greater leadership role in the humanities based on the confluence of a number of recent events: the appointment of UT alumnus Michael Gillette as Executive Director of Humanities Texas (formerly the Texas Council for the Humanities), the appointment of several new board members for Humanities Texas, the impending opening of the University's new Blanton Museum of Art, the new museum's proximity to the Bob Bullock State History Museum, the recommendations of the Commission of 125, and the appointment of new University President Bill Powers. These events, along with the continued superb performance of the Humanities Research Center, have led to the creation of a new group to pursue excellence in the humanities at Texas; and Livingston asked for the faculty's intellectual, political, and financial support as the group's efforts evolve.

IV. Report of Chair (Janet Dukerich)

Chair Dukerich announced that the March 29 and April 26, 2006, meetings will take place in Main 212. She also encouraged members of the Assembly to attend the meetings of the various committees to which they belong.

Dukerich also referred to President Powers' commitment to graduate education, especially through increased graduate stipends, more extracurricular activities for graduate students, and increased creation of graduate student cohorts across programs.

The Chair reported that the Faculty Council is beginning to hear the results of various academic units' fora on recommended changes in the undergraduate curriculum, and the Assembly briefly clarified what the fora might accomplish and how they might be organized. Dukerich noted that the template for faculty members' annual reports is being reviewed for articulation with potential changes in the curriculum.

There was also some discussion among the Assembly members about the ongoing review of “ownership” of the course instructor survey responses. The discussion at the university and system levels will continue.

V. Academic Committee (Randall Parker)

- Chair Parker introduced a proposal, supported by the academic committee, to change the name of the graduate degree program and major from “Energy and Mineral Resources” to “Energy and Earth Resources.” After brief discussion, the proposal passed unanimously and was deemed minor legislation.
- The second item from the academic committee was a proposal, also supported by the academic committee, to establish a dual degree program in Public Affairs (in the LBJ School of Public Affairs) and Community and Regional Planning (in the School of Architecture). The degree would be designated MPAff/MSCR. The Assembly passed the proposal without dissent and deemed it minor legislation.
- The final proposal recommended by the academic committee was a proposal to establish Master of Science degree programs in each of the five existing PhD programs in the McCombs School of Business: Accounting; Finance; Information, Risk, and Operations Management; Management; and Marketing. The Master’s programs are to serve only as milestones on the way to earning the PhD. Students would be admitted only to the PhD programs, not to the Master’s programs, and representatives of the Business School assured the members of the Assembly that the existing MBA program is quite different from the course of study pursued by PhD students. The Assembly passed the proposal unanimously and identified it as minor legislation.

VI. Administrative Committee (David Hull)

The Administrative Committee had no report.

VII. Admissions and Enrollment Committee (Katherine Arens)

The Admissions and Enrollment Committee had no report.

VIII. Graduate Student Assembly (Jessica Geier)

Jessica Geier also noted President Powers’ interest in building a stronger sense of community and increased interdisciplinarity among graduate students. She

further reported that professional student appreciation week would be April 3 – April 8, 2006, with a half-day conference highlighting graduate students' scholarship. On a related note, she referred to the on-going collection of applications for the Mitchell Award for Excellence in Graduate Student Research and the Bill Livingston award for excellence in graduate student employment. She concluded her remarks by updating the Assembly on recent changes that allow campus-wide election of the president of the Graduate Student Assembly.

IX. Adjournment

Chair Dukerich adjourned the meeting at 3:15 PM.

Philip Doty, Secretary