

DOCUMENTS AND PROCEEDINGS OF THE GRADUATE ASSEMBLY  
THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT AUSTIN  
March 26, 2008

Chair Pauline Strong called the fourth meeting of the Graduate Assembly in the 2007-2008 academic year to order at 2:15 PM in the Harry Ransom Center 3.206, the Tom Lea Room.

Faculty Members Present: Browning, Cline, Dean-Jones, Doty, Edgar, Gamkhar, Golden, Heinzelman, Hess, Hull, Kachelmeier, Kinney, Lauderdale, Markovits, Mehdy, Neikirk, Odell, Parker, Popova, Slawek, Sprinkle, Stout, Strong, Wilson

Faculty Members Absent: Carter (excused), Haunschild (excused), Henry (excused), Kwallek, Loukas, Murray, Ovando

Student Members Present: Ferguson

Student Members Absent: Carpenter, Gatten, Jones, Marlantes, Witherspoon

Ex-Officio Members Present: Rodríguez

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

Visitors: Amy Bingham, Bruce Porter, David Springer, Jane Kretzschmar, Pete Franklin, Bob May, Maryann Ruddock, Eden Harrington, Cynthia Chappell, Cheryl Perry

Order of Business

I. Approval of the minutes of the January 30, 2008, meeting

The Assembly approved the minutes of the January 30, 2008, meeting.

II. Report of the Graduate Dean

Graduate Dean Victoria Rodríguez focused her report on graduate recruitment and fellowships. Eighty students attended the major recruitment event, "Come to Texas." Marv Hackert and Darlene Grant, Associate Deans of the Graduate School, reported on their work with the newly-instituted diversity and reconstituted recruitment fellowships. The Graduate School has made about 360 fellowship offers under these recruitment and diversity programs.

Dean Rodríguez also noted that UT-Austin hosted the annual meeting of the Council of Southern Graduate Schools in February in conjunction with the meeting of the Council of Historically Black Graduate Schools.

### III. Report of Chair

Assembly Chair Polly Strong reported that the silent phase of the capital campaign has begun, with the university interested in involving the faculty more fully in the campaign. She also informed the Graduate Assembly that the Faculty Council had passed a motion to institute the grade of A+ for undergraduate courses, contingent on the Graduate Assembly's adoption of a similar motion for graduate courses (see V below).

### IV. Academic Committee (Susan Heinzelman)

Chair Heinzelman's report had four parts.

- Heinzelman introduced a motion to change the name of the major in Science and Technology Commercialization to Technology Commercialization and the name of the degree from Master of Science in Science and Technology Commercialization to Master of Science in Technology Commercialization. The Assembly unanimously voted in favor of the motion and identified it as minor legislation.

The second item involved a proposal to create a dual degree master's program (MSSW/MPH) in Social Work from UT-Austin and in Public Health from the UT Health Science Center at Houston, School of Public Health. Representatives from the School of Social Work, the UT Health Science Center School of Public Health, and the Austin regional campus of the School of Public Health explained the program and responded to questions from the Assembly.

- The Assembly unanimously supported the proposal to create a dual degree master's program in Social Work from UT-Austin and in Public Health from the UT Health Science Center at Houston, School of Public Health; and it was deemed as minor legislation.

Representatives of the School of Social Work and the School of Law discussed the third proposal from the Academic Committee about a dual degree program in Law and Social Work (JD/MSSW).

- The Assembly supported the proposal to create a dual degree program in Law and Social Work. With no dissenting votes, the proposal was approved and it was considered minor legislation.

The fourth proposal from the Academic Committee involved the creation of an integrated five-year program to earn the Bachelor of Science and Masters of Science degrees in Computer Science, the major goal of which is the recruitment

of academically-talented undergraduate students to graduate study at UT. The Graduate Assembly's discussion of the program included concerns about equity regarding students in the proposed program and others in the current Masters of Science program in Computer Science, the total number of hours taken by undergraduates in the proposed program, and similar issues.

- After a spirited discussion, the Assembly unanimously supported the proposal to create the five-year program to earn the Bachelor of Science and Masters of Science degrees in Computer Science and regarded it as minor legislation.

V. Administrative Committee (David Hull)

Chair Hull explained the Administrative Committee's actions responding to the proposal for an honorary grade of A+ for undergraduate courses passed by a committee of the Faculty Council and contingent on the Graduate Assembly supporting a similar proposal for graduate classes (see III above). A poll of the Administrative Committee of the Graduate Assembly (including its student members), all graduate advisors, and faculty members in some graduate programs across the university displayed an overwhelming lack of interest in the grade of A+ for graduate courses. The major concerns with the proposed A+ expressed by respondents to Hull's survey and in the Graduate Assembly involve creeping grade inflation and confusion by reviewers of transcripts about GPA, A/A+, and 4.00/4.33 standards. The members of the Assembly discussed the A+ grade, and, since the Administrative Committee had no proposal regarding A+ for the Assembly as a whole and no member of the Assembly expressed interest in such a proposal, the matter was dropped.

VI. Admissions and Enrollment Committee (Karen Browning)

The Admissions and Enrollment Committee had no report.

VII. Graduate Student Assembly

There was no report from the Graduate Student Assembly.

VIII. Adjournment

Chair Strong adjourned the meeting at 3:28 PM.

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Philip Doty, Secretary