

DOCUMENTS AND PROCEEDINGS OF THE GRADUATE ASSEMBLY
THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT AUSTIN
November 15, 2006

Chair Randall Parker called the second meeting of the Graduate Assembly for the 2006-2007 academic year to order on Wednesday, November 15, 2006, at 2:20 PM in the Tom Lea Room of the Harry Ransom Humanities Research Center (3.206).

Faculty Members Present: Cline, Dean-Jones, Doty, Gamkhar, Golden, Heinzelman, Henry, Hull, Kachelmeier, Murray, Neikirk, Parker, Sprinkle, Stout, Strong, Wilson
Faculty Members Absent: Browning (excused), Haunschild, Kinney, Loukas (excused), Markovits, McDougall, Mehdy (excused), Ovando, Peters, Popova, Rubin, Slawek (excused), Smith, Wiedemann (excused)
Student Members Present: Forestell, Rust
Student Members Absent: Cassidy, Guo, Mehrotra, Moody
Ex-Officio Members Present: Rodríguez
Representatives from the Office of Graduate Studies: Bancroft, Belinoski, Dalton, Ellison, Grant, Hackert, Kahn, Mattos, Watkins
Visitors: Charles Groat, Dan Johnston, David Eaton

Order of Business

I. Approval of the minutes of the September 20, 2006, meeting

The Assembly reviewed and approved minutes of the September 20, 2006, meeting.

II. Report of the Graduate Dean (Victoria Rodríguez)

Dean Rodríguez reiterated her excitement from the inaugural address of new University President William Powers and his emphasis on graduate education, increased financial support of graduate students especially for recruitment, and tying the recruitment of good faculty members to the recruitment of good graduate students. In conjunction with the President's focus, the Graduate School has put an emphasis on outreach, spearheaded by Assistant Dean John Dalton, including searching for a Graduate School development officer dedicated to fundraising for graduate students.

Dean Rodríguez's second comments concerned the speed at which the search for a new Provost was proceeding, aiming to have someone in place by late December or early January.

After the Graduate Student Assembly report (VIII below), Associate Dean Marv Hackert thanked everyone who has participated in phases one and two of the

National Research Council assessments and rankings of doctoral programs. The third phase will be the completion of questionnaires by faculty members in the participating doctoral programs, and Hackert encouraged all graduate advisors, deans, and faculty members to help make the questionnaire part of the survey as full, accurate, and successful as possible.

III. Report of Chair (Randall Parker)

The Chair had no report.

IV. Academic Committee (Pauline Strong)

Chair Strong presented the proposal for a dual Master of Public Affairs and Master of Arts in Energy and Earth Resources from the LBJ School of Public Affairs and Jackson School of Geosciences respectively. The Academic Committee supported the proposal. Professor Charles Groat of the Department of Geological Sciences, Jackson School of Geosciences, explained the rationale and structure of the proposed dual degree program.

- The Assembly voted unanimously to support the proposal for a dual Master of Public Affairs and Master of Arts in Energy and Earth Resources degree and deemed it minor legislation.

The Academic Committee also supported a proposal to change the title of the Master of Arts in Neuroscience to Master of Science in Neuroscience.

- The Graduate Assembly unanimously supported the proposed name change from Master of Arts in Neuroscience to Master of Science in Neuroscience and identified it as minor legislation.

The Academic Committee also accepted the self-report of the Option III program in Engineering Circuit Design required every five years.

V. Administrative Committee (David Hull)

Committee chair David Hull presented a proposal to include grades from upper-division undergraduate courses taken by graduate students in the students' grade point average (GPA). The proposal would restore upper-division undergraduate courses to the calculation of the integrated graduate GPA. Chair Hull and other members of the Assembly described real and theoretical scenarios in which graduate students could have their GPA's calculated on a very small number of courses under the present system. Individual Graduate Study Committees, in conjunction with the graduate advisers and individual graduate student advisees,

would ascertain whether students could count upper-division undergraduate course grades in their programs of study if those committees or advisors deemed courses too easy even if the grades from such courses would be included in students' graduate GPA's. The Assembly also considered that graduate instructors are free to use the +/- system for assigning grades while undergraduate instructors cannot.

- The Assembly unanimously passed the proposal to include grades from upper-division undergraduate courses taken by graduate students in the students' grade point average and deemed it major legislation in line with such determinations related to the +/- system of several years ago.

Tom Belinoski, Assistant Dean of the Graduate School, would, therefore, solicit comments from all Graduate Study Committees on campus to allow them to make comments or file protests. If 10 or more protests are received, the legislation would go back to the Assembly for reconsideration. If 30 or more are received, the dean of the Graduate School would create a review committee to address the proposal.

VII. Admissions and Enrollment Committee (Karen Browning)

The Admissions and Enrollment Committee had no report.

VIII. Graduate Student Assembly (Amy Forestell)

Amy Forestell, President of the Graduate Student Assembly (GSA), highlighted a number of activities of the GSA. She reported that the GSA remains involved in the building of the new student activities center and is active in the on-going disposition of the Brackenridge land parcel where substantial numbers of graduate students live in graduate student housing.

Forestell also reported on three items from the recent UT System Student Advisory Council meeting that the Council will make recommendations on to the university regents: (1) to make it possible for students who need comprehensive health insurance to get such coverage from the UT student health insurance, (2) to establish international exchange programs for graduate students, and (3) to increase graduate students' stipends and the general amount of tuition assistance available for graduate students. The first point generated considerable discussion and an informal consensus of strong support for the graduate students' comprehensive health insurance coverage.

IX. Adjournment

Chair Randy Parker adjourned the meeting at 3:10 PM.

