

DOCUMENTS AND PROCEEDINGS OF THE GRADUATE ASSEMBLY
THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT AUSTIN
November 16, 2005

Chair Janet Dukerich called the second meeting of the Graduate Assembly for the 2005-2006 academic year to order on Wednesday, November 16, 2005, at 2:15 PM in the Dobie Room of the Peter T. Flawn Academic Center.

Faculty Members Present: Arens, Bogard, Cline, Crist, Dean-Jones, Doty, Dukerich, Flamm, Hull, Kachelmeier, Lindstrom, Loukas, McDougall, Murray, Neikirk, Ovando, Palka, Parker, Rascati, Smith, Stout, Strong, Wiedemann

Faculty Members Absent: Browning, Golden (excused), Lawler (excused), Markovits (excused), Mehdy (excused), Peters, Rubin (excused)

Student Members Present: Forestell, Shah, Whittington

Student Members Absent: Borikar, Brannon (excused), Geier

Ex-Officio Members Present: Ortiz, Rodriguez

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

Visitors: Dempster, Bober

Order of Business

I. Approval of the minutes of the September 21, 2005, meeting

The Assembly reviewed and approved minutes of the September 21, 2005, meeting.

II. Report of the Graduate Dean (Victoria Rodríguez)

Rodríguez first announced the results of the search for a university president and mentioned an open forum with the successful candidate, William Powers.

She reported that after consideration the tuition policy advisory committee decided to keep graduate tuition determined by the number of graduate hours taken rather than by flat tuition rate.

Dean Rodríguez noted that Recommendation 12 of the Commission of 125, regarding the increase of stipends for graduate students, has become a high priority of the University in the new capital campaign. The Graduate School will have its own development officer in January 2006 to help with raising graduate students' stipends.

The final item from Dean Rodríguez involved the visiting of all of the main campus graduate schools and colleges by Associate Dean Terry Kahn and his

staff. Nine such visits have already been made, with the rest to follow in spring 2006. The goal is to increase each graduate program's familiarity with the Office of Graduate Studies (OGS) staff members and to increase OGS's understanding of the graduate programs, staffs, and concerns of the various colleges and schools.

III. Report of Chair (Janet Dukerich)

Chair Dukerich briefly noted that discussions of the status of the course instructor survey (CIS) forms continue in the Faculty Council and that Erica Whittington, a student member of the Graduate Assembly, would discuss the matter further later in the meeting [see item VII].

IV. Academic Committee (Randall Parker)

Chair Parker introduced a proposal for a Doctoral and Master's Portfolio Program in Museum Studies [see item V below]. The Academic Committee supported the proposal strongly, as well as the related proposal on a Master of Science in Museum Studies, for a number of reasons: UT's ability to put together an outstanding program quickly; the commitment to three new faculty hires; the staffing plan for the program; existing staff and faculty expertise; the strong museum collections at UT-Austin; the growing number of museums in Texas (now approximately 900); the small number of museum studies programs in Texas; and so on.

- The proposal for a Master's and Doctoral Portfolio Program in Museum Studies was reported to the Assembly as approved by the Academic Committee and was ruled minor legislation.
- The leading proposal for a Master's of Science degree in Museum Studies, also strongly supported by the Academic Committee, was passed unanimously by the Assembly and ruled minor legislation.

V. Administrative Committee (David Hull)

Chair Hull introduced a proposal to merge the master's and doctoral portfolios into a single graduate portfolio. The proposal had been sent back to the committee by the Graduate Assembly so that administrators of the various portfolio programs on campus could express their reactions. After securing the strong support of each of these administrators, the committee reintroduced the proposal, adding the Museum Studies portfolios described in item IV above.

- The proposal to consolidate the Master's and Doctoral portfolios passed without a dissenting vote and was identified as minor legislation.

VI. Admissions and Enrollment Committee (Katherine Arens)

The Admissions and Enrollment Committee had no report, but a discussion ensued about the new TOEFL (Test of English as a Foreign Language) stemming from a question by Palka. Robert Watkins, from GIAC (the Graduate and International Admissions Center), identified the institutional benchmarks that UT will use with regard to this test as it is made available globally in spring 2006. Since there are four parts to the new test (reading, listening, speaking, and writing) and the maximum score on each part is 30, the highest score possible is 120. UT is recommending that graduate programs expect a minimum score of 21 on those parts of the test of most importance to them, with 79 as a minimum total on the four parts, roughly equivalent to the previous standard of 550 on the old test. The Office of Graduate Studies will send these recommendations to each graduate program's chair/dean and graduate advisor.

VII. Graduate Student Assembly (Jessica Geier, Erica Whittington)

Erica Whittington of the Department of History reported that the Graduate Student Assembly passed a resolution that the naturalistic responses in the course instructor survey (CIS) be kept in whatever form the survey may take and that any changes in the faculty survey should be reflected in the teaching assistant (TA) and assistant instructor (AI) surveys. Whittington noted the Graduate Student Assembly would like the University to investigate the possibility of moving the CIS online.

This report prompted considerable discussion in the Graduate Assembly, focusing on two points: (1) Associate Dean Marv Hackert's explanation of his committee's work on the CIS, its recommendations to the Faculty Council, potential changes in the close-ended questions, and the tension with regard to CIS between open records requirements and students' privacy interests and (2) the potential misuse of the CIS in tenure and promotion decisions.

Whittington reported that the Graduate Student Assembly has passed new by-laws, resulting in a new officer structure for the Assembly, changing from two co-chairs to a president and a vice-president of internal affairs and a vice-president of external affairs. Other officers will have their titles and duties changed as well.

VIII. Adjournment

Chair Dukerich adjourned the meeting at 3:17 PM.

Philip Doty, Secretary