

**GRADUATE ASSEMBLY
FEBRUARY MEETING MINUTES
THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT ARLINGTON**

DATE: Thursday, February 7, 2019

TIME: 2:30 pm

PLACE: San Saba, University Center

PRESIDING: Diane Mitschke, Chair of the Graduate Assembly

MEMBERS ATTENDING: Ard Anjomani; Matthew Brothers; Jinny Choi; Courtney Cronley; Bradley Davis; Lauri John; Soo-Hong Kim; Jon Leffingwell; Subhrangsu Mandal; Patti Parker; Edmund Prater; Panos Shiakolas; Mahmut Yasar; Jared Kenworthy; James Williams (on behalf of Seyedali Abolmaali); Eusebius Small

GUESTS ATTENDING: Amy Tigner

EX-OFFICIO MEMBERS ATTENDING: Pranesh Aswath; Raymond Jackson

I. Call to Order

- The meeting of the Graduate Assembly was called to order at 2:35pm by chair, Dr. Diane Mitschke.

Introduction of members and ex officio members of GA

- Each member introduced his / herself.

II. Consideration of Minutes

- The minutes from Thursday November 1, 2018 Graduate Assembly meeting were approved, pending an editorial change to correct the spelling for Jared Kenworthy

III. Dr. Duane Dimos, Dean of Graduate School, Vice President for Research

- Dr. Dimos was not present so no report was provided from his office.

IV. Jain Hemanshu Kumar, President of Graduate Senate

- Jain was not present so no report was provided. It was mentioned that this student no longer serves in this role and that a new representative would be requested.

V. Old Business

- No old business was discussed at this time.

VI. New Business

A. Committee on Program Creation, Dr. Bradley Davis

- MS of Science in Data Science Proposal: Bradley Davis presented the case for this program. All members approved with the exception of one abstention (James Williams - on behalf of Seyedali Abolmaali from Civil Engineering).
- Executive Certificate in Business Analytics: Bradley Davis presented the case for this program. All members approved with the exception of one abstention (James Williams - on behalf of Seyedali Abolmaali from Civil Engineering).
- Fast Track Program for BS in Math/MS in BioMedical Engineering: This is a program proposal out of Biomedical Engineering that plans to allow undergraduate students to receive undergraduate and graduate course credit simultaneously. The motivation is to - 1) create a pathway that allows for students to receive the undergraduate and graduate degrees in a shorter time period while simultaneously spending less money; 2) allow for UTA to be more competitive in retaining their more “gifted” students for graduate work; and 3) generate increased enthusiasm in these students with the hope of having them proceed to

earn their doctoral degrees at UTA. Overall, the committee was supportive of this program. However, the primary point of contention was regarding the GPA criteria for admission which is a 3.3 GPA in the 9 hrs of coursework that the program determines are required for admittance into the program. In addition, the requirement for admission is a 3.3 GPA or better in at least 30 hrs of college courses as well as an overall GPA of at least 3.3.

Diane circulated a Graduate Assembly document from 2012 indicating that the 3.3 GPA requirement had been previously approved and Joe mentioned that this was the required credit that could go towards both degrees. Erick Jones (presenting the case on behalf of the Chairs) argued that the 3.3 is too restrictive and would limit the ability to accept students into this program. And that this would make UTA less competitive for getting these students to stay at UTA / come to UTA compared to other nearby institutions.

Joe Jackson cautioned that these students (BS math) are not classically trained in Bioengineering, which is the MS degree program they are applying for. So maybe a higher admission standard is helpful. In addition, that the GA could always use this as the initial standard and then reassess in a few years as we begin to have some data points to consider. Bradley then stressed that a GPA of 3.3 is more reflective of outstanding students, which is ultimately what the fast program is designed to capture. Erick Jones mentioned that the Department chairs feared that the 3.3 requirement would stunt enrollment and that the 3.3 requirement in 16 of the 30 hours required is already a rigorous requirement.

Diane mentioned that the programs are currently in violation of the rules agreed upon in 2012. It was recommended that the departments run a retrospective data analysis on the success of the students who have been accepted with a 3.0 but below a 3.3. Joe mentioned that having a GPA between 3.0 and 3.3 does not mean that they are not eligible for the MS program in Bioengineering.

It was again stated that the Chairs of the respective Departments would fight against the decision in effort to increase enrollment and retain the best students. Ultimately, it was proposed (by Diane) that we approve the program pending the change from 3.0 requirement to 3.3 and to allow the chairs to come back for the next GA meeting with data and make an argument for their case. Vote was approved with 3 abstentions.

B. *Committee on Program Revision, Dr. Mark Tremayne*

- No report

C. *Policy related to Undergraduate Students Enrollment in Graduate Courses, Dr. Joe Jackson.*

- This conversation centered on the merits of an undergraduate student being able to take graduate level courses and count those courses towards their undergraduate degree. Currently there are conflicting statements in the Undergrad and Grad catalogs. In the undergraduate section on Academic Regulations in the Degree Requirements it is stated that “*Graduate courses (numbered 5000 and above) cannot be used to fulfill undergraduate degree requirements except in programs approved by the Undergraduate Assembly*”. However, in the subsection under the Undergraduate Academic Regulations and Degree Requirements it is stated, “*Graduate level course work may be transferred as upper-division credit at the written request of the student. Any graduate courses transferred in as upper-division undergraduate work will not be eligible for use*”.

As pointed out by Joe and other member on the Graduate Assembly the main issues are 1) concern for “watering” down a graduate level course by also having undergraduates take the

course and 2) if these undergraduates continue on to the graduate program what will happen with this course that they already took as an undergraduate. This is particularly an issue if it is a required course for the graduate program. Diane asked Matt Brothers and the Committee on Graduate students to discuss this and bring our recommendations to the next Graduate Assembly meeting.

D. Graduate Certificate Approval Procedures, Dr. Pranesh Aswath

Pranesh asked the committee to consider the case of programs wanting to put together a certificate on short notice. For example, often companies ask for a certificate to be approved on an expedited basis. In support of this possibility, it was stated that generally, the Graduate Assembly would not have an issue with anyone taking an approved graduate class in the catalog – so should it matter if approved course are used for a certificate? Joe mentions that in the spirit of community engagement and the need to meet community needs that the assembly should consider allowing this to occur. Other potential positives are that this may give non-UTA students a taste of our university and programs and may encourage some individuals to pursue graduate degrees at UTA. One concern was the criteria used for obtaining a certificate – i.e. if a student obtains a C in a course in the certificate, he/she can still be awarded but this would not be the case in a traditional grad program. Joe suggested that the Department offering the certificate should house these types of considerations and that it would be beneficial if this issue was settled in April meeting.

X. Adjournment

- Meeting was adjourned at 3:56pm.

Respectfully submitted,

R. Matthew Brothers, PhD

Secretary, Graduate Assembly

Department of Kinesiology / College of Nursing and Health Innovation.

2/20/2019