

**Graduate Assembly Meeting
Meeting Minutes from April 1, 2021**

Thursday, April 1, 2021

2:30 pm

Virtual via Teams

PRESIDING: Ali Abolmaali, Chair of the Graduate Assembly

MEMBERS ATTENDING: Patti Parker, Kathryn Pole, Rebecca Mauldin, Jinny Choi, Subhrangsu S Mandal, Bin Srinidhi, Erick C Jones, Kamesh Subbarao, Cynthia Kilpatrick, Jared B Kenworthy, David Jorgensen, Regina T Praetorius, Robert Matthew Brothers, Cedrick May, Essence M Carter Griffin, Eusebius Small, Mahmut Yasar, Yi Zhang, Ardeshir Anjomani, Ivonne Audirac, Jiyeon Yoon, Jennifer Jie Zhang

GUESTS ATTENDING: Sara Ridenour, Kelli Sederavicius, Donna Hamby, John D Gonzalez, Jason H. Losh, Denise Cobbs, Leah C. Cullum, Kimberly Tate

EX-OFFICIO MEMBERS ATTENDING: Joe Jackson; Pranesh Aswath, Amber Smallwood, James Grover, Rebecca J. Lewis, Nichole Mancone Fisher,

Call to Order - The meeting of the Graduate Assembly was called to order at 2:30 pm by Chair, Dr. Ali Abolmaali

I. Introductions

Welcome by the Chair

II. Members and Committees Introduced

Committee on Graduate Students—Dr. Matthew Brothers
Committee on Program Revision—Dr. Jared Kenworthy
Committee on Program Creation—Dr. David Jorgensen

III. Consideration of Minutes

Minutes from February 4, 2021

Motion called to approve previous minutes. The minutes were approved.

IV. Dr. James Grover, Dean of Graduate School and Interim Vice President for Research

- Dr. Grover thanked everyone for supporting students during the pandemic.
- Dr. Grover mentioned that there should be confirmation of UTA's Tier 1 status in a couple of months. There is still a soft goal of graduating 200 PhD graduations this year.
- There will be some dissertation-completion fellowships this summer.
- In the future, the focus will shift from financial support for completion to support for students across their studies.
- University is transitioning to a new budgeting model. There will be a transfer of some responsibilities to Deans. This includes how tuition support for doctoral students is managed and formally budgeted. This tuition support/stipend will be budgeted within colleges, so they will have greater flexibility in how funds are managed.
- Dr. Grover mentioned that some things will continue in the same way.

1. The same formula will be used to determine what the level of tuition support will be. For every college, that is defined based on a formula that includes many components of tuition and fees for graduate students and amounts to 75-80% of the total. The amount that graduate students get will carry forward.
 2. Back office vetting of tuition support will continue every semester to ensure the university meets all the legal and regulatory requirements.
- Yi Zhang asked if there was financial help for students who aren't eligible for these fellowships because they work full-time. Dr. Grover said he was open to a discussion about it, but it is complex, so there isn't assistance right now. Dr. Jackson mentioned the Dissertation Enhancement Grant, with limited funds, is available for non-STEM programs, and students who are working are eligible for these grants. There were still some available as of the date of this meeting.

V. Graduate Student Committee

Shane Wilson, Vice Chair of the Graduate Student Council, was sitting in for Melissa Reardon.

- Current goal: grow and transform into a larger community; connection with other organizations within UTA community.
- The biggest focus is looking into benefits for GRAs and GTAs because UT Austin and UT Dallas allow GRAs and GTAs to be considered for full-time-employee status so that they get healthcare included into their salaries. GSC wants to make this the same across the UT system. Currently, UTA GRAs and GTAs pay \$380/month, more for international students, for healthcare.
 - Provost Aswath mentioned that UTA does not have control to negotiate the healthcare fees. He said it is an issue for HR and OIE for international students. He also said UT Austin, for example, might be able to cover students' insurance costs because they have additional resources that UTA does not have.
 - Dr. Grover said that healthcare cannot be expensed to grants.
 - Dr. Abolmaali suggested the Committee on Graduate Students look into this issue and bring it for discussion at the next meeting.

VI. Old Business

1. Committee on Program Creation—Dr. David Jorgensen

Dr. Jorgensen reported on the Committee on Program Creation's vote on whether to approve to implement stacked certificates and whether to approve the guidelines on stacked certificates.

- 7 out of 9 people (1 person abstained, 1 person was absent) voted to implement the certificates.
- 8 out of 9 people (1 person was absent) voted to approve the guidelines, except item #12, which should be revised to say that the certificates should be re-approved every 5 years. Dr. Jorgensen reminded us that these guidelines are generally the same guidelines that the university has for master's degrees.

- Kamesh Subbarao asked about the admission requirements for certificates, which Dr. Jorgensen said would remain the same.
- Dr. Mauldin asked if pre-existing certificates would be exempt from the 5-year re-approval, and Dr. Jorgensen confirmed.
- Dr. Jackson suggested that overlapping core classes should be allowed in stackable certificates, but cannot count twice towards a master's degree, so students who decide to pursue a master's degree would have to take an additional course; he suggested the wording in #8 might need to be changed to allow for overlapping core courses in certificates, but not a master's degree.
- Dr. Abolmaali called a motion to change the wording in #8 to: "No single certificate course can count more than once towards the degree requirements."
- The motion passed.

2. Committee on Graduate Students—Matthew Brothers

Dr. Brothers reported on the survey to assess master's students' experiences at UTA.

- The committee has reviewed the survey (from UCLA) to see if it's applicable to UTA students.
- Questions reviewing the survey went to everyone on the committee, and the response was generally positive, but that better questions for individual departments are needed.
- Solution: implement a core set of questions from the university perspective for all students, and then colleges or departments can ask additional questions specific to students in those programs.
- Removing fair and equitable use of financial resources question: sub-committee felt that maybe this question should be re-worded or removed because students won't know all the considerations in the distribution of financial resources.
- Dr. Brothers said that he will send the survey out to Deans to get questions specific to the various colleges.

3. New Academic Program Proposal Review Process—Amber Smallwood

Dr. Smallwood said the workflow for new programs was approved and 8 programs are under review. The body tries to meet within a week of receiving a proposal in order to offer feedback before the proposal moves forward in the process.

- Dr. Smallwood will contact those with proposals that are approved in today's meeting to finalize financial part so they can be routed to the appropriate review bodies.

VII. New Business

1. Committee on Program Creation—Dr. David Jorgensen

- Dr. Abolmaali mentioned that the programs were sent to committee members two weeks ago, and he called for a vote to approve the certificates listed on the agenda.
- The motion passed.

2. Committee on Program Revision—Dr. Jared Kenworthy

Dr. Kenworthy had nothing to report at this meeting.

3. New Master of Science Proposal (Master of Science in Nursing, Healthcare Informatics)

- Dr. Abolmaali requested a motion to approve.
- The motion passed.

4. Double-counting courses in certificates

- Dr. Jackson mentioned that he believed overlapping courses should be counted towards both certificates.
- Dr. Abolmaali called for a vote to accept double counting of courses in certificates.
- The motion passed.

VIII. Adjournment

- Dr. Abolmaali mentioned that this was the last meeting for AY 2020-2021, but for Fall 2021, he will suggest the Committee continue to meet on Teams.
- Dr. Abolmaali thanked the committee members that would be rotating off.
- The meeting was adjourned at 3:31pm.

Teams Meeting:

Chat feature should be used for questions or comments during meeting.

Minutes respectfully submitted, Patti Parker, PhD, RN