

Graduate Assembly Meeting Meeting Minutes from October 6, 2022

Thursday, October 6, 2022

2:30 pm

Virtual via Teams

PRESIDING: Panos Shiakolas, Chair Pro Tempore of the Graduate Assembly

MEMBERS ATTENDING: Panos Shiakolas, Leonidas Fegaras, Subhrangsu Mandal, Shawn Christensen, Robert Matthew Brothers, Ivonne Audirac, Dennis Chiessa, Sophia Fantus, Subhrangsu Mandal, Kathryn Pole, Catherine Robert, Alejandro Rodriguez, Philip Baiden, Mahmut Yasar, David Jorgensen, Jennifer Jie Zhang, Desiree Henderson, Paul Componation, Terry Skantz, Chris Durham.

GUESTS ATTENDING:

EX-OFFICIO MEMBERS ATTENDING: Tamara Brown, Pranesh Aswath, Teresa Taber Doughty, James Grover, Raymond L. Jackson, Rebecca J. Lewis, Amber M. K. Smallwood,

Call to Order - The meeting of the Graduate Assembly was called to order at 2:30 pm by Panos Shiakolas, Chair Pro Tempore.

I. Members and Committees Introduced

Dr. Shiakolas invited the members to introduce themselves.

- Committee members and Ex Officio members introduced themselves,
- Of special note, Tamara Brown, Provost, attended, introduced herself, and extended a warm welcome.

Dr. Shiakolas introduced into the record the names of the chairs of the subcommittees.

- Committee on Graduate Students—Dr. Matthew Brothers
- Committee on Program Revision— Dr. Mahmut Yasar
- Committee on Program Creation— Dr. Terry Skantz

II. Consideration of Minutes

Minutes from April 7, 2022

Dr. Pole moved to approve the minutes. Dr. Shiakolas seconded the motion. The minutes were unanimously approved.

III. Filling the position of secretary: presided over by Dr. James Grover, Dean of Graduate School and Interim Vice President for Research

- Dr. Grover asked for nominations. Chris Durham (Graduate Student Council representative) and Dr. Christensen nominated themselves. Chris Durham

withdrew. Dr. Shiakolas moved to close the nomination. Dr. Grover seconded and asked for a vote. Dr. Christensen was voted into the position of secretary.

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

- Some things that you can look forward to seeing from the graduate school: (1) looking into expanded tuition support for those students who are appointed as graduate teaching or graduate research assistants to cover tuition, (2) looking into a (matching grant) program to bring prospective students to UTA for a visit in an effort to entice students to accept admission offers, and (3) working on a revision to the manual for Academic Program review.

V. Graduate Student Committee

- Chris Durham: President and representative of Graduate Student Council. The council had been inactive due to COVID but is now becoming active again.

VI. Old Business

1. Report from Committee on Program Creation: Dr. Kathryne Pole

University of Dallas and UTA 4+1 MSEE Fast Track Program (College of Engineering)

- The committee requested more information and has not yet received the requested information. The effort is currently on hold.

2. Report from Committee on Graduate Students—Dr. Matthew Brothers

Status of grade replacement and grade forgiveness proposal

- The committee has been discussing a proposal originating from the nursing program to address a need for a grade replacement or grade forgiveness mechanism. Students, if they struggle early on and end up with one or two bad grades have a hard time recovering their GPA (and thus staying in the program after they have started to turn things around). It will be useful to give GPA relief in the form of a grade replacement/forgiveness and thus keep good students in the program.
- Committee discussed the matter and looked at the grade forgiveness rules at peer institutions: most allowed grade forgiveness but the particulars varied.
- The committee also had discussions with Joe Jackson.
- Committee's suggestion: Suggested/recommended policy would be that if a student earns a C or worse, they can repeat the course. Both grades would show up on the transcript, but only the higher grade would be calculated into

the GPA. Grade replacement/forgiveness could occur a maximum of two times in a student's career. Several pros and cons were mentioned.

- Dr. Compton discussed the issue from the College of Engineering perspective. Dr. Aswath asked if it was only the first semester under consideration or any semester. Dr. Compton mentioned that we probably do not want to limit the forgiveness to any particular semester.
- Dr. Chiessa inquired if grade forgiveness would be available for students wanting to improve from a B to an A. Dr. Brothers said that we could discuss what grades are eligible for, but currently it is envisioned for C, D, and F grades. For nursing, this encompasses a significant percentage of students. Dr. Parker states 20 students a month are under review (petitions) for GPA below 3.0. Dr. Aswath states the number of students that could make use of a grade forgiveness would be larger than those under a 3.0 because students with high grades compensating for a low one could/should use the grade forgiveness to raise the low grade, especially if it is a critical course.
- Dr. Jackson stated that the committee will have to look into the implications of grade forgiveness rules and financial aid as well as international student (visa) rules to make sure that our proposed grade forgiveness rules do not have unintended ramifications.
- Dr. Shiakolas inquired about the situation where a student retakes a class and does worse. Dr. Brothers said that the committee will discuss this point further.
- Dr. Shiakolas and Dr. Brothers agree that more work by the committee is required to generate a simple uniform policy.
- The committee will discuss further and report at the next GA meeting.

VII. New Business

1. Report from Committee on Program Creation: Dr. Terrance Skantz

- a. Master of Science in Industrial and Organizational Psychology (College of Science)
 - The Master of Science in Industrial and Organizational Psychology (M.S. I/O) is geared toward students wishing to pursue careers in non-academic settings (business and industry).
 - Drs. Skantz and Smallwood: This degree takes what was a popular and successful concentration under the MS Psychology program and turns it into a full degree. The original MS Psychology degree will remain on the books; it is academic/research oriented and a gateway/passthrough to a PhD.
 - Drs. Skantz: The committee has reviewed the degree proposal and unanimously recommend that the degree proposal be approved.

- A discussion (Drs Mandal, Shiakolas, Skantz, and Aswath) was had about the internship requirement of the degree and whether students could be placed as well as whether or not international students might struggle to be placed and be at risk of not graduating. Ultimately the department needs to be responsible for making sure students can fulfill the internship requirement: The department is responsible for what they offer and require (Dr. Shiakolas).
 - i. Degree requires students to complete 400 hours of an outside internship and their thesis or non-thesis option (capstone project) at the end of their second year.
 - ii. It is not known whether the internship requirement is an accreditation requirement or a simple programmatic requirement that can be changed.
 - iii. Committee needs to ask Psychology for more clarification including how many students have, and have not, gotten internships.
 - iv. Dr. Aswath recommends that the committee invites somebody from Psychology to attend the next meeting.

2. eLearning Program at UTA: Dr. Amber Smallwood

eLearning Transformational Model.

- This is a program that UTA launched back in January 2021. It was an effort to think about the way that we were doing business in the academic program space a little bit differently, including looking at providing some consistent policies and processes for program approvals, and looking at providing an accessible platform with policies and procedures.
- There is a high demand across Texas and across the nation for upskilling and reskilling. So, we wanted to see how UTA could align our strategies in the space.
- Create an ecosystem for generating eLearning content.
- We worked with different colleges and selected 6 academic certificate programs that were either in the process of being created or were recently proposed, and that included a couple of undergraduate certificates and four graduate certificates.
- As the project draws to a close, the eLearning project will generate a report making recommendations for where UTA should spend money to generate eLearning content.
- eLearning program has a video recording studio.

VIII. Adjournment

- Dr. Shiakolas congratulated the new GA officers and thanked others for service.
- A motion was made to adjourn the meeting. It was seconded, and the motion passed.
- The meeting was adjourned at 3:59 pm.

Teams Meeting:

- Chat feature should be used for questions or comments during the meeting.
- The Master of Science in Industrial and Organizational Psychology document is available in the Graduate Assembly's meetings files in Teams.

Meeting Minutes Submitted by GA Secretary: Dr. Shawn Christensen