**Graduate Assembly Meeting**

**Meeting Minutes from November 2, 2023**

Thursday, November 2, 2023

2:30 pm

*Virtual via msTeams*

**PRESIDING**: Kathryn Pole, Chair of the Graduate Assembly

**MEMBERS ATTENDING (voting):** Drs. Matthew Brothers, Dennis Chiessa, Shawn Christensen, Leonidas Fegaras, John Garrigus, Desiree Henderson, Robin Jocius, Subhra Mandal, Jacqueline Michael, Patti Parker, Kathryn Pole, Alejandro Rodriquez, Erika Roland, Panos Shiakolas, Jiwonn Suh, Christian Vasquez; Mr. Chris Durham.

**EX-OFFICIO MEMBERS ATTENDING (non-voting):** Drs. Casey Brown, Frank Foss, James Grover, Raymond (Joe) Jackson, Rebecca Lewis.

**GUESTS ATTENDING (non-voting):** Drs. Kathryn Daniel, Elanda Douglas, Maria Martinez-Cosio, Mester SuLynn

**MEETING MINUTES**

1. **Call to order**
   1. The meeting of the Graduate Assembly was called to order at 2:30 pm by Kathryn Pole, Chair
2. **Members and Committees Introduced.** 
   1. Dr. Pole invited the members to introduce themselves.
      1. Committee members, ex officio members, and guests introduced themselves
   2. For the record the names of the chairs of the subcommittees are
      1. Committee on Graduate Students — Dr. Matthew Brothers
      2. Committee on Program Creation — Dr. Cedric May
      3. Committee on Program Revision — Dr. Patti Parker
3. **Consideration of Minutes**
   1. Approval of Minutes from October 5, 2023.
      1. Motion to approve, seconded
      2. Vote taken verbally: **Approved**.
4. **Greeting and message of appreciation to the assembly members from Provost Dr. Tamara Brown**
   1. Not present.
5. **Updates from Dr. James Grover, Dean of Graduate School and Interim Vice President for Research**
   1. No updates to report.
6. **Updates from Graduate Student Council, Mr. Durham**
   1. No Updates to report.
7. **Old Business**
   1. **Report from Committee on Graduate Students: Dr. Matthew Brothers**
      1. Dr. Brothers states that Grade Forgiveness seems to be functioning as envisioned.
   2. **Report from Committee on Program Creation: Dr Cedric May.**
      1. Dr Pole states that there is currently no old business to report.
   3. **Report from Committee on Program Revision: Dr. Patti Parker**
      1. Dr Pole states that there is currently no old business to report.
8. **New Business**
   1. **Report from Committee on Graduate Students: Dr. Matthew Brothers**
      1. Proposal to change the summer enrollment requirements for summer enrollment for Graduate Teaching Assistants (GTA) and Graduate Reseach Assistants (GRA).
         1. Dr Brothers states: The proposal would reduce the number of hours the students need to enroll in during summer to three credit hours instead of six.
         2. Dr. Grover states that this will save UTA money as we are now providing more widespread tuition support for doctoral graduate students (GTA, GRA). It also saves folks supporting students on grants who are covering tuition costs. Finally, it slows down the progression to the 99 credit-hour cap. The new rule should not affect visas of international students as there is not a summer enrollment requirement for the student visa holder.
         3. Dr. Brothers states: The proposal would change the current rule of only taking 7399 once to being able to take it multiple times. 7399 is supposed to be taken in the semester that one expects to graduate, but if, for whatever reason, the student does not graduate the student used to have to sign up for 6699. The proposal will allow students to sign up for 7399 instead of 6699.
         4. Dr. Mandal asked how and if the change will affect international students and their visas. Dr. Grover stated that the international education office was consulted, and international students are not required to enroll in summer credits. Going less than three, but not zero, does not save on tuition money given the way tuition is structured at UTA.
         5. Dr Grover states that being able to retake three credits (7399) is where UTA should be at to save tuition/stipend costs (as opposed to having to take 7699 after taking 7399 as per current rules). This change will also help keep students under the 99 hour rule for longer, allowing more flexibility.
         6. Dr. Martinez-Cosio posits that perhaps there should be a limit put on how many times one can take 7399 as the original rule of once only was put in place to keep it from being used as a default (abusing the intent). Does the committee have any data or thoughts on abuse of the old rule or potential abuse of the new rule.
            1. Dr. Grover states that most students need to take 6 credit hours during the long semester for other reasons (e.g., assistant ships or international students for visa reasons). But to address the question, we could suggest a limit of one retake and see if there is demand for more than one repeat.
            2. Dr. Brothers states that the committee did not discuss the issue of abuse of the system but agrees that a limit of one repeat can be written in to address the concerns.
         7. Dr Chiessa inquired as to how this rule would impact architecture and landscape terminal master students. And are students aware that they must take six credit hours.
            1. Dr. Grover states that he is aware that terminal master students in the above programs have been treated as PhD students when they are employed as graduate assistants.
            2. Dr Grover states that there has been a standing policy that graduate students with assistantship must take 6 credit hours. Dr. Grover is in contact with the Dean about how the 7399 rule impacts architecture and landscape students.
         8. Dr. Rodriquez inquired relevant if there any funding difference between 7000 level courses in 6000 level courses
            1. Dr. Grover said there is no difference as far as he is aware.
         9. Dr. Panos suggested that a request to retake 7399 should be initiated from the advisor instead of the student to reduce the potential for abuse.
            1. Drs. Grover and Brothers agree that having the request originate from an advisor is acceptable.
         10. A discussion was had regarding if a vote should be held today assuming (assuming inclusion of language to curb abuse) so that the modified rule could be ready for spring usage. It was decided that a vote would be held for acceptance of the wording for the three-credit-hour summer and wanting edits on the 7399 for limits.
             1. A vote was held by raising virtual hands: 14 in favor of accepting the wording of the proposal for the three-credit-hour summer wording but needing to add limits over usage of 7399. No opposed votes. No abstentions.
             2. Dr Gover will add wording to limit the overuse/abuse of 7399.
      2. Dr Brothers spoke about the Fresh Start Proposal where graduate students would have the option to forfeit graduate credits earned at the university on their existing transcript should a student be dismissed from the university or have a low enough GPA to make it unfeasible to continue the current program. Graduate students can opt to start a new program at any point in time subject to admission requirements. Graduate students desiring to re-start the same program must wait two academic years before having the option to wipe their graduate hours. The student can request to retain up to six credit hours.
         1. Dr. Martinez-Cosio indicated that the provost would likely be in favor of the Graduate Fresh Start program.
         2. Dr Christensen voiced concern about the lack of time between failing out of one program and immediately entering another with no penalty for failure in the first program
         3. Dr. Pole inquired if there was a limit on how many Fresh Starts a student was allowed.
            1. Mr. Durham stated that the original thought was that one Fresh Start was enough, but there is currently no language limiting the number of times Fresh Start can be used.
            2. Dr. Brothers and the Graduate Student Committee will continue to work on the wording of the Fresh Start proposal before bringing the proposal to a vote.
   2. **Report from Committee on Program Creation: Dr. Cedric May**
      1. Nursing: Rural Health certificate program
         1. Dr. Douglas from Nursing.
            1. The program is designed for graduate health students in health-related disciplines interested in rural health knowledge and skills with direct application to health care access and delivery in rural Texas. The certificate will prepare students for the unique challenges faced by all health care professionals who practice in rural health settings. Students completing Certificate coursework will receive academic credit, which may be applied toward a graduate health care degree.
            2. The health certificate is not just for nursing, but for people of the community working in rural areas.
            3. The certificate is a 9 hour program for people that are not nurse practitioners. For a nurse practitioner it would be a 12 hour program because your last class would be a practicum clinic.
            4. Projecting 8 (year 1) to 20 (year 5) students per year.
         2. A discussion was had as to what extent graduate students from other programs (e.g. Psychology) can get this certificate as some of the electives are crossover courses. A similar discussion was had regarding returning students.
            1. Dr. Grover spoke to the question of applying credits from a certificate like this to a graduate degree: If a student should enter the degree program after receiving the certificate, they can apply up to 12 hours to that degree, but it's subject to the approval of the Graduate Studies Committee for the program.
            2. Mr. Durham pointed out that in the mission criteria for the certificate it says that all students must have an undergraduate GPA of 3.0 or better which is at odds with the college and nursing (and other colleges) where GPA of 3.0 in the last 60 hours is required. Dr. Douglass agreed that the certificate should align with the college GPA rules (last 60 hours).
            3. Dr. Douglas will make the necessary changes to the certificate proposal and send it to the Program Creation committee and Dr. Pole. An email vote can then be taken.
      2. Graduate Certificate in Mexican American Studies
         1. Dr Jocius summarized the Certificate:
            1. The certificate is coming from the Center for Mexican American Studies. And it is a graduate certificate in Mexican American Studies.
            2. Provides graduate students and non-degree seeking students an opportunity to build an interdisciplinary graduate concentration.
            3. Goals are obtaining valuable intercultural and international competence, understanding issues that impact Mexican, American and Latino communities in the United States and applying theory and knowledge.
            4. Delivery mode is face to face and depending on demand could shift to online.
            5. There are three required courses for the program, and then a choice and sorry, one required course and then three prescribed electives for a total of 12 credit hours and the required sort of core courses include opportunities in English, history and political science and elective courses draw from education, from architecture, from Spanish history, political science as well.
            6. They anticipate, I believe, 5 new students starting in year one and growing to 7 new students in year five.
         2. Dr. Martinez-Cosio stated that it is the provost's office position that the certificate would need an academic home (college/department) to move forward. “Who is going to offer the semester credit hours? It cannot be the Provost’s office. We do not do that.” A discussion followed.
            1. Dr. Jocius stated that the minor <Mexican American Studies?> is administered by CIMOS.
            2. Dr. Chiessa wrapped up the discussion by stating that the program creation committee will send it back for work and for clarifying an academic home.
         3. Dr. Panos asked for clarification on admission requirements for nondegree seeking students and degree seeking students for this certificate and is it consistent with other certificates?
            1. Dr. Martinez-Cosio and others indicated that it is good to be as inclusive as possible so that students can use a nondegree seeking certificate as gateway into a degree program. one wants to use a
   3. **Report from Committee on Program Revision: Dr. Patti Parker**
      1. No business
9. **Adjournment**
   1. **Dr. Pole asked for a motion to adjourn.**
      1. Dr. Shiakolas motioned to adjourn.
      2. Mr. Durham seconded.
      3. Adjourned at 3:57 pm.

**Teams Meeting:**

* Chat feature should be used for questions or comments during the meeting.
* Votes are taken using msForms. Links to the forms are supplied within the meeting chat feature.

**Meeting Minutes Submitted by GA Secretary:** Dr. Shawn Christensen