Graduate Assembly Meeting
Meeting Minutes from February 4, 2021

Thursday, February 4, 2021
2:30 pm
Virtual via Teams
Submitted by Patti Parker, PhD, RN

PRESIDING: Ali Abolmaali, Chair of the Graduate Assembly
MEMBERS ATTENDING: Kathryn Pole, Subhrangsu S Mandal, Bin Srinidhi, Panos S Shiakolas, Erick C Jones, Kamesh Subbarao, Cynthia Kilpatrick, Kimberly Tate, J B Kenworthy, David Jorgensen, Regina T Praetorius, Rebecca Mauldin, Jinny Choi, Robert Matthew Brothers, Cedrick May, Essence M Carter Griffin, Eusebius Small, Melissa Marie Reardon, Mahmut Yasar, Yi Zhang, Ardeshir Anjomani, Ivonne Audirac, Jiyoon Yoon, Jennifer Jie Zhang, Dennis A Chiessa
GUESTS ATTENDING: Sara Ridenour, Rebecca Lewis
EX-OFFICIO MEMBERS ATTENDING: Joe Jackson, Pranesh Aswath, Amber Smallwood

Call to Order - The meeting of the Graduate Assembly was called to order at 2:32 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 November 5, 2020
        Motion called to approve previous notes. Panos Shiakolas requested that previous meetings' minutes be uploaded to Teams folder on Drive before subsequent meetings. Provost Aswath reminded the committee that the minutes must be available for all of the university faculty as a SACS requirement; Dr. Raymond Jackson remarked that the minutes are publicly posted on the Graduate page of the UTA website. Approved minutes need to be emailed to Raymond Jackson and Leah Collum. Several spelling corrections and the date correction were requested. After corrections, the minutes were approved.

IV.   **Provost Dr. Pranesh B. Aswath Provost and Vice president for Academic Affairs, Ad Interim**

        1. Opening Remarks—Provost Aswath opened the discussion by saying that the Spring semester was off to a good start, and he provided an update on enrollment.
           • Significant drop in international student enrollment in Spring 2021 continued from Fall 2020 (-847 graduate students, compared with Spring 2020), but there was not further decline in this enrollment.
           • There are 150 more new graduate students and 23 more new transfer graduate students compared with Spring 2020.

- Compared with Spring 2020, enrollment is down by only 1.4%, which is much better than the 8-9% predicted in December 2020.
- Fall 2021 applications have increased by double-digits.

2. Provost Aswath mentioned that Deans and Chairs will be reaching out regarding Fall semester planning.

V. Dr. Amber Smallwood, Assistant Vice Provost for Academic Planning and Policy

- New Academic Program Proposal Review Process—Dr. Smallwood talked about the plan to clarify and streamline the review and approval process for all new academic, for-credit credentials, including degrees, certificates, and minors.
  - Dr. Smallwood has worked on creating a single form that includes a few information prompts that are in addition to the prompts on the current template for new program proposals.
  - This form will eventually be in electronic format that will allow anyone who submits a proposal to see where it is in the review process.
  - The form is divided into 3 sections: general information, curriculum plan, and business plan (financial information). This form can also be used if external approval is needed for a program proposal.
  - The Office of Academic Resource Planning developed a Financial Valuation Model for new programs that utilize space in existing courses.
  - Dr. Smallwood mentioned some workflow changes.
    - Joe Jackson, Rebecca Lewis, and Dr. Smallwood will have a consultation meeting with anyone proposing a new credential before the proposal goes to Graduate Assembly.
    - After Graduate Assembly approves the proposal, it will move through the approval process for the business plan, going to the CFO before being implemented.
  - Dr. Smallwood noted that the form will officially launch in the next weeks, but until then, there is a patchwork system.
  - Dr. Smallwood mentioned that the form will be available on the Provost Office website, and she will share out the information as well.

VI. Melissa Reardon, Graduate Student Council
- A lot of new students who want to get involved at UTA
- Some students reported wanting more diverse graduate courses

VII. Old Business

1. **Committee on Graduate Students**
   Report from Dr. Matt Brothers on the topics presented by Dean Grover—Dr. Brothers commented on three key topics from their Fall meeting.

- Creating and implementing a master's-level survey for an overall understanding of how to better serve these students. Dr. Brothers reviewed and will share a survey from UCLA. UCLA says that the response rate for non-thesis track students is only 23%. Dr. Brothers mentioned ways to improve this response rate.
  a. Have the survey come from someone in the department, such as a graduate or academic advisor.
  b. Make the survey a non-required part of the process of filing for graduation.
  c. For thesis students, put a link to the survey when students are submitting documents to the library.
  d. Have anyone who completes the survey be entered into a raffle.
- How to help students deal with Covid-19.
  a. Generally, students want more flexibility from professors, and students who are parents need special considerations.
  b. Dr. Brothers discussed peer-mentoring program in Social Work that has had success in allowing students to be heard and getting issues to leadership.
  c. Dr. Brothers mentioned other departments have implemented similar programs, but on more informal level. There is still the question of whether this type of program can be adopted at the university level or needs to remain at the department level.
- Consideration of whether to continue with the DET (Duolingo English Test) or require TOEFL again.
  a. Dr. Brothers mentioned that there is not enough data yet to make a determination about the efficacy of the Duolingo test.
  b. Based on information from Analytics, Dr. Jackson noted that the cut-off for Duolingo's test was 10-15 points lower that what is accepted for TOEFL, so the cut-off for Duolingo's test may need to be changed.

2. **Committee on Program Revision**
   o Revision of Certificate in Big Data Management (College of Engineering) (Approved)
   o Revision of Certificate in Cybersecurity and Privacy (College of Engineering) (Approved)
   o Revision of Certificate in Artificial Intelligence (College of Engineering) (Approved)
   o Revision of Certificate in Deep Learning (College of Engineering) (Approved)
   o Revision of Certificate in Unmanned Vehicle Systems (College of Engineering) (Approved)

VIII. **New Business**
   1. Committee on Graduate Students—Dr. Matthew Brothers
      - Permanently waiving GRE for admissions.
        a. Dr. Brothers brought forward this topic, and asked Dr. Jackson to lead the discussion—Dr. Jackson mentioned that departments are still able to waive the requirement for GRE for this academic year and likely the next one.

b. Dr. Jackson reminded us that the policy for using GRE for admissions is a department-level one, and it can be removed with justification. This policy is on the Graduate webpage, under Graduate Assembly, between the years 2004 and 2006, or he can provide a copy of it.

c. Several programs or departments at the university currently do not require GRE or GMAT: Political Science, Criminal Justice, Electrical Engineering, College of Education, College of Nursing, and some Business programs.

d. Dr. Jackson suggested reviewing the current national conversation about waiving the GRE if a department is considering doing so.

c. Dr. Jones spoke about his department. He mentioned that because of the variety of students, they can't request a blanket waiver of the GRE; it is only waived in some programs.

d. Provost Aswath reminded us that the data from the current blanket GRE waiver, due to the Covid-19 pandemic, will be useful in determining the value of the GRE for admissions in the future.

e. For a college or school to propose a [permanent] waiver of the GRE, they should contact Dr. Jackson. He will send a form that will then be submitted to the Board of Regents.

2. Committee on Program Revision—Dr. Jared Kenworthy
3. Committee on Program Creation—Dr. David Jorgensen
4. Stacking Certificates
   o Dr. Jackson noted that the Graduate Assembly may need to weigh in on stacking certificates if they need to be addressed at the policy level.
   o Dr. Abolmaali and Dr. Jackson will take the issue to the Committee on Program Creation and discuss it in the next meeting.

IX. **Adjournment**
Meeting adjourned at 4:00 pm.

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

Transcribed and respectfully submitted at 1:01 pm CST February 26, 2021 by Patti Parker, PhD, RN