

DOCUMENTS AND PROCEEDINGS OF THE GRADUATE ASSEMBLY
THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT AUSTIN
September 20, 2006

Chair Randall Parker called the first meeting of the Graduate Assembly for the 2006-2007 academic year to order on Wednesday, September 20, 2006, at 2:15 PM in the Main Building, Room 212.

Faculty Members Present: Browning, Cline, Doty, Gamkhar, Golden, Haunschild, Heinzelman, Hull, Kachelmeier, Kinney, Loukas, Mehdy, Neikirk, Ovando, Parker, Popova, Rubin, Slawek, Smith, Sprinkle, Stout, Strong, Wilson

Faculty Members Absent: Dean-Jones, Henry, Markovits (excused), McDougall (excused), Murray, Peters, Wiedemann

Student Members Present: Cassidy, Forestell, Moody, Rust

Student Members Absent: Guo, Mehrotra

Ex-Officio Members Present: Rodriguez

Representatives from the Office of Graduate Studies: Bancroft, Belinoski, Dalton, Ellison, Hackert, Kahn, Mattos, Newman

Visitors: G. Raffa

Order of Business

I. Approval of the minutes of the April 26, 2006, meeting

The Assembly reviewed and approved minutes of the April 26, 2006, meeting.

II. Report of the Graduate Dean (Victoria Rodríguez)

Dean Rodríguez began her report by thanking Janet Dukerich, the previous year's chair of the Graduate Assembly, for her service and echoed Chair Randall Parker's words welcoming the new members of the Assembly. The Dean further commented on the speed with which the Graduate Assembly accomplished its work, and she expressed her anticipation of new University President William Powers's second semester and interim provost Steve Monti's work, especially the entire university's engagement with the evolving undergraduate curriculum and the implementation of the Commission of 125's report.

Pat Ellison, associate director of the Graduate and International Admission Center, aggregated some data about the fall 2006 admissions. The report compared fall 2005 to fall 2006 along a number of characteristics, e.g., applicants, admissions, percent of applicants admitted ("Selectivity"), and percent enrolled, cross-tabulated with characteristics such as the geographic source of the

applicants (TX, out-of-state U.S., and international), ethnicity, and gender. The general picture is that applications and enrollments are up (5.56% and 2.14% on totals of 17,043 and 4,482 respectively), while admissions are slightly down (0.49%, on a total of 2,286). International applications have rebounded from the downturn post-9/11, but there is still important work to be done to further diversify the graduate student population at UT.

After the Graduate Student Assembly report (VIII below), Dean Rodríguez asked Dean Marv Hackert to discuss the up-coming NRC doctoral assessments and rankings. These rankings are done about once a decade, last done in 1995. Dean Hackert is the overall coordinator of this effort on the UT campus. This initiative is a nation-wide survey of graduate programs in some selected academic areas that meet specific selection criteria, e.g., five or more local graduates in the past five years, at least five hundred PhD's over the last five years nation wide, and a minimum of twenty-five institutions offering the degree. He discussed some of the particulars of how the survey and its attendant complex and lengthy questionnaire will be administered.

The survey is used to determine salient characteristics of doctoral programs, e.g., time to completion of degree, characteristics of faculty members, and gender and ethnicity of students. Dean Hackert, echoed by Dean Rodríguez, strongly urged all members of the Graduate Assembly to help make the responses to the survey instruments as complete and reliable as possible, especially since the results are used to determine quality rankings for doctoral programs.

III. Report of Chair (Randall Parker)

The Chair introduced and welcomed the new members of the Graduate Assembly after having briefly introduced Dean Rodríguez, Dean Terry Kahn, Dean Marv Hackert, the chairs of the Assembly's three committees, the Graduate Assembly secretary, and himself. He also recognized Linda Golden, chair of the University's Faculty Council (and an elected member of the Graduate Assembly), and recognized Dean Tom Belinoski. Chair Parker then briefly commented on the continued work of the Faculty Council on the undergraduate curriculum and the other recommendations of the Commission of 125. He later solicited volunteers to serve on committees for Graduate School awards: outstanding graduate coordinator, graduate teaching, graduate advisor, and dissertations.

IV. Academic Committee (Pauline Strong)

Chair Strong presented the proposal to create a Doctoral degree and a Master of Arts in Italian Studies at UT-Austin. The academic committee supported the

initiative after extensive review and clarification that offering such degrees would not require any additional resources. Professor Guy Raffa of the Department of French and Italian responded to some questions from the Assembly about the proposal.

- The proposal to create a Doctor of Philosophy and a Master of Arts degree in Italian Studies was approved unanimously by Assembly, and it was deemed minor legislation.

V. Administrative Committee (David Hull)

The Administrative Committee had no report.

VI. Admissions and Enrollment Committee (Karen Browning)

The Admissions and Enrollment Committee had no report, but Chair Browning noted that the committee would soon consider questions related to electronic letters of recommendation.

VII. Graduate Student Assembly (Amy Forestell)

Amy Forestell, president of the Graduate Student Assembly (GSA), introduced the two vice-presidents of the GSA, Jessica Cassidy and Bonnie Rust. Forestell reported on the orientation activities held by the GSA for incoming graduate students – the traditional fall barbeque, the attendant information fair, and the new ice cream social; and she praised the Graduate School for its “wonderful orientation.” All of these events were well attended and successful. She finished her report by noting that the Graduate Student Assembly would begin participating in the initial planning discussions for the new student activity center.

VIII. Adjournment

Chair Randy Parker adjourned the meeting at 2:56 PM.

Philip Doty, Secretary