The first meeting of the Graduate Assembly for the 2016-2017 academic year will be held on Wednesday, September 21, 2016, at 1:30 PM in the Harry Ransom Center, Tom Lea Room, 3.206

Order of Business

Welcome and Introduction (Marvin Hackert, Graduate Dean, ad interim)

Special Guest: Provost Maurie McInnis

I. Approval of the minutes of the April 27, 2016 meeting

II. Report of the Graduate Dean, ad interim (Marvin Hackert)

III. Report of Chair (Prabhudev Konana)

IV. Academic Committee (Hal Alper)
   A. Proposal to update the degree title for the master’s degree program in Nutritional Sciences from Master of Arts (MA) to Master of Science in Nutritional Sciences (MSNS)

V. Administrative Committee (James Cox)
   A. Report

VI. Admissions and Enrollment Committee (Diane Schallert)
   A. Request to waive the requirement for the Graduate Management Admissions Test (GMAT) for applicants to the integrated master’s program in Accounting

VII. Graduate Student Assembly (Wills Brown)

VIII. Adjournment

Note: Graduate Assembly Meeting, November 9, 2016, 1:30 PM; Group photo, 1:00 PM, in front of HRC, 21st street
August 11, 2016

Dr. Marvin Hackert, Ph.D  
Dean of Graduate Studies, ad interim  
Office of Graduate Studies  
1 University Station, G0400  
Austin, TX, 78712

Dear Dr. Hackert,

Please accept this letter and attached documentation requesting to update the degree title associated with the master’s degree program in Nutritional Sciences. The Department of Nutritional Sciences currently offers a Master of Arts (MA) degree in Nutritional Sciences. We request that this MA degree be changed to a Master of Science in Nutritional Sciences (MSNS) degree, effective fall 2017.

This change has been requested for multiple reasons. First, course content within the master’s degree program has always included a strong emphasis on science-based nutrition. This is currently evidenced by the curricular emphasis on metabolism, molecular nutrition, nutritional immunology, cancer nutrition, obesity, metabolic disease, and basic nutrition research, as well as the name of the field of study, Nutritional Sciences. Students in the master’s degree program are expected to perform science-based research activities, providing further support that the Master of Science degree title is a more appropriate representation of their experiences.

In addition to the above, after reviewing other comparable graduate nutrition programs, including those offered at the University of California-Davis, Ohio State University, the University of Florida, Purdue University, and Penn State University, it is evident that the majority of graduate nutrition programs lead to the Master of Science degree. To provide comparable academic credentials to that of other nutrition programs, we propose a change in the existing degree title, from the Master of Arts (MA) to the Master of Science in Nutritional Sciences (MSNS). It is expected that this change in degree title will attract more top-tier students, as a Master of Science degree is more marketable and customary within the field of Nutritional Sciences.

The Graduate Studies Committee (GSC) of the Department of Nutritional Sciences has reviewed and discussed the proposed changes to the current Master of Arts degree. GSC members have unanimously voted to approve these changes to become effective Fall 2017. Once this change is approved, there will be no new admissions to the MA degree program, and the program will be phased out through fall 2023. Students who entered the master’s degree program prior to Fall 2017 will have the option of earning either an MA or MS in Nutritional Sciences.

Sincerely,

Christopher Jolly, Ph.D  
Chair, Graduate Studies Committee  
Department of Nutritional Sciences

Molly S. Bray, Ph.D  
Chair, Department of Nutritional Sciences

Linda A. Hickey, Ph.D  
Dean, College of Natural Sciences
Report of the Admissions Committee

Date: Sept. 14, 2016

The Committee met on Sept. 14 to discuss a request put to us by Stephen T. Smith, Senior Director, asking for permission to waive the GMAT (Graduate Management Admissions Test) for the students who are applying for the Integrated Master in Professional Accounting. The program supplied us with background information and our own GIAC office brought statistics to the table for us to consider. We also consulted the Graduate Assembly Recommended Guidelines for Future Standardized Test Waivers (passed Jan 2015).

As for rationale and background information, the program made the following point:

1. The Integrated MPA program is a 5 year program designed for students interested in earning both a bachelor’s and master’s degree in accounting. Students generally spend their first two years in the Bachelor of Business Administration (BBA) program. Typically, at the end of their second year, they apply for admissions to the iMPA program. Admission is competitive and only highly qualified candidates are admitted.

2. During the first and second years of the iMPA program, students complete all of their upper division undergraduate coursework and up to 24 hours of graduate business courses. They typically are eligible for graduate status after the second year of the MPA program.

3. It is worth noting that the MPA program also maintains a rigorous semester by semester review of MPA student academic performance. If a student’s upper division accounting, graduate accounting or graduate GPA falls below 3.0 then that student is subject to academic probation. If the student’s GPA does not improve in the subsequent semester, they may be subject to dismissal from the MPA program.

Criteria for Waiver

The Recommended Guidelines for Future Standardized Test Waivers memo lists three key criteria for a standardized test waiver.

1. Applicants must have had their most recent four semesters of preparation (graded coursework) at UT-Austin, thus making their GPA’s particularly diagnostic for graduate coursework at UT-Austin.
2. Applicant performance should be well known to faculty in the program
3. Applicants must have outstanding undergraduate academic history, particularly in courses critical to the discipline.

The Integrated MPA students meet these criteria.

- By the time Integrated MPA students begin their final graduate year, all have spent at least four semesters at UT-Austin completing undergraduate Bachelor of Business Administration (BBA) and MPA graduate coursework. Therefore, there will be ample evidence of academic performance.

- Department faculty will be familiar with student performance through the above-mentioned upper-division accounting core, as well as the graduate level course work typically completed during the second year in the program. I-MPA students
typically complete 12 to 24 hours of graduate course work before entering graduate school.

- The MPA Program’s policy that students must achieve and maintain 3.0 cumulative GPAs in the upper division accounting core, graduate accounting work, and overall graduate work, and the enforcement of this policy with the academic probation contract process, will ensure that applicants have a solid academic history in the courses that are critical to the discipline.

Therefore, the program requested a GMAT test waiver for iMPA students entering graduate status beginning in spring 2018.

After deliberation, the committee voted unanimously to support the request. Thus we put forth the following motion:

The Motion is to approve the request from the Integrated Master’s Program in Accounting to waive the requirement for the Graduate Management Admissions Test (GMAT) applicable for MPA students entering into graduate status spring 2018.