In accordance with the Handbook of Operating Procedures of The University of Texas at Austin, the Secretary submits the following report of the activities of the Graduate Assembly during the Regular Session 2015-2016. The report summarizes pages 3212 – 3222 of the Documents and Proceedings of the Graduate Assembly.

I. Membership of the Assembly

For the period covered by this report the faculty members were as follows:

Elected members with vote and their terms of office, serving 2015-2016

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Graduate Assembly Member</th>
<th>Graduate Studies Committee</th>
<th>Term of Office</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Prabhudev Konana, Chair</td>
<td>Information, Risk and Operations Management</td>
<td>2015-2018(2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Noel Busch-Armendariz</td>
<td>Social Work</td>
<td>2013-2016(1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Darla Castelli</td>
<td>Kinesiology &amp; Health Ed</td>
<td>2015-2018(1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elizabeth Mueller*</td>
<td>Architecture</td>
<td>2014-2017(1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Andreas Matouschek</td>
<td>Biochemistry</td>
<td>2013-2016(1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ciaran Trace</td>
<td>Information</td>
<td>2014-2017(1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Raji Srinivasan</td>
<td>Marketing</td>
<td>2014-2017(1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Michael Mackert</td>
<td>Advertising</td>
<td>2014-2017(1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Charlotte Canning</td>
<td>Theatre &amp; Dance</td>
<td>2014-2017(1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hal Alper</td>
<td>Chemical Engineering</td>
<td>2015-2018(2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shirley Thompson</td>
<td>American Studies</td>
<td>2015-2018(1)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Serving out the term of a member who resigned or is on leave.
ADMINISTRATIVE COMMITTEE

Eileen Kintner, Chair  
Nursing  
2013-2016(1)
Tatjana Lichtenstein (Fall)  
History  
2015-2018(1)
Alison Frazier* (Spring)  
Law  
2013-2016(1)
John Deigh  
Curriculum & Instruction  
2013-2016(1)
Jo Worthy  
English  
2014-2017(1)
George Pollak  
Neuroscience  
2015-2018(1)
Kristen Brustad  
Middle Eastern Studies  
2015-2018(1)
Paula Murray  
Business  
2015-2018(1)
Pauline Strong  
Anthropology  
2015-2018(1)
Sheldon Landsberger  
Mechanical Engineering  
2013-2016(1)

ADMISSIONS AND ENROLLMENT COMMITTEE

Dan Knopf, Chair  
Mathematics  
2013-2016(1)
Diane Schallert  
Education Psychology  
2014-2017(1)
David Harrison  
Management  
2014-2017(1)
Ari Arapostathis  
Electrical & Computer Engineering  
2013-2016(1)
Francis Ostrower  
LBJ Public Affairs  
2013-2016(2)
Wonsuck Kim  
Geosciences  
2015-2018(1)
David DiCarlo* (Fall)  
Petroleum & Geosystems Engineering  
2014-2017(1)
Matthew Balhoff (Spring)  
Human Development & Family Sciences  
2013-2016(1)
Edward Anderson  
Pharmacy  
2015-2018(1)
Karen Rascati  
* Serving out the term of a member who resigned or is on leave.

No Committee Assignment

Maria Juenger, Chair of the Graduate Assembly
Catharine Echols, Secretary of the Graduate Assembly

Elected Student members, with Vote

ACADEMIC COMMITTEE

Brian Wilkey  
Human Development/Family Sciences
Fatma Tarlaci  
Comparative Literature

3222a
ADMINISTRATIVE COMMITTEE

Vance Roper  
Public Affairs/Community & Regional Planning

Jen Clegg  
Psychology

ADMISSIONS & ENROLLMENT COMMITTEE

Caleb Swaim  
Microbiology

Ex Officio Member, with Vote

Andrea Gore  
Chair, Faculty Council

Ex Officio Members, without Vote

Gregory Fenves  
President

Marvin L. Hackert  
Dean of Graduate Studies, ad interim

Judith H. Langlois  
Executive Vice President and Provost, ad interim

Daniel Jaffe  
Vice President for Research

Jay Hartzell  
Dean, Red McCombs School of Business

Jay Bernhardt  
Dean, College of Communication

Manuel J. Justiz  
Dean, College of Education

Sharon Wood  
Dean, College of Engineering

Douglas Dempster  
Dean, College of Fine Arts

Randy Diehl  
Dean, College of Liberal Arts

Linda Hicke  
Dean, College of Natural Sciences

Lynn Crismon  
Dean, College of Pharmacy

Frederick Steiner  
Dean, School of Architecture

Luis H. Zayas  
Dean, School of Social Work

Alexandra Stuifbergen  
Dean, School of Nursing

Angela Evans  
Dean, LBJ School of Public Affairs

Ward Farnsworth  
Dean, School of Law

Andrew Dillon  
Dean, School of Information

Sharon Mosher  
Dean, Jackson School of Geosciences
II. Organization of the Assembly

Elected Officers (2015-2016)

Chair: Maria Juenger, Civil Engineering
Chair-elect: Prabhudev Konana, IROM
Secretary: Catharine Echols, Psychology

Meeting Dates:
September 23, 2015
November 11, 2015
February 3, 2016
March 23, 2016
April 27, 2016

III. Proceedings of the Graduate Assembly

Major Legislation

• The recommendation of non-unanimous decision on dissertation (11/11/15) would be reconsidered as major legislation as discussed at the 2/3/16 meeting and would be put before the GSCs in case of any protest. (D&P 3217c – 3217d, 2/3/16)

Minor Legislation

• The recommendation regarding the DNP waiver request was approved unanimously by the Graduate Assembly and was deemed minor legislation. (D&P 3215a, 11/11/15)
• The recommendation regarding the HDO waiver request was approved unanimously by the Graduate Assembly and was deemed minor legislation. (D&P 3215a-3215b, 11/11/15)
• The proposal for periodic review of previously granted Option III waivers was approved unanimously by the Graduate Assembly and was deemed minor legislation. (D&P 3215b, 11/11/15)
• The proposal to update name of graduate program and degree major from “Mexican American Studies” to “Mexican American and Latina/o Studies” was approved unanimously by the Graduate Assembly and was deemed minor legislation. (D&P 3215c, 11/11/15)
• The proposal to add an Option III track to the existing MS Marketing Degree program was approved unanimously by the Graduate Assembly and was deemed minor legislation. (D&P 3215c, 11/11/15)
• The recommendation on defining issues related to multi-author/article dissertations was passed unanimously by the Graduate Assembly and was deemed minor legislation. (D&P 3215f, 11/11/15)

• The proposal to create a dual-degree program in Information Studies and English was unanimously approved by the Graduate Assembly and it was deemed minor legislation, (D&P 3217c, 2/3/16)

• The proposal to revise the Guidelines for Option III Degree Programs was unanimously approved as amended by the Graduate Assembly and it was deemed minor legislation. (D&P 3217c, 2/3/16)

IV. Report from the Graduate Dean, ad interim (Marvin L. Hackert)

Interim Dean Hackert gave an overview of the work of the Graduate Assembly and encouraged members to serve as messengers to their departments and programs. Hackert first commented on the spectacular character of President Fenves’ inauguration. Secondly, he proposed that the Graduate Assembly adopt the Faculty Council tradition of taking a group photograph. On a third topic, Hackert noted the changes in President and Athletic Director and mentioned the ongoing search for Provost.

Finalists for another important search, for the Vice President for Research, were being interviewed on campus that week with the outcome likely being announced the following week. Additionally, searches were underway for Deans in the Business School, College of Communications, and the Lyndon B. Johnson School, as well as for Chief Financial Officer.

In other news, the Regents were expected to discuss tuition increases at an upcoming meeting. Hackert also reported on Fall enrollment figures.

In Graduate School news, $100,000 has been added to the professional development awards, which represents a 50% increase in funds to support graduate student travel. Also, steps are being taken to improve compliance with the Milestones system.

In addition, Dean Hackert reported that four finalist architectural firms have been selected for the graduate student housing project, with project completion projected for July 2018.
Finally, Interim Dean Hackert commented on the changes underway in Perry-Castañeda Library, including the new scholar’s commons area, and he invited the new Director of Libraries, Lorraine Haricombe, to speak about the libraries and the topic of open access. Director Haricombe stated her commitment to providing resources for graduate students, such as the new academic social spaces -- the learning commons area that currently is open and additional space under renovation that will open in Spring 2016. She then presented information on the open access requirements for government-funded research. Haricombe noted that the University of Texas does not yet have an open access policy and invited faculty to work with the library on this. Haricombe also answered questions regarding the state at which data should be made open and the infrastructure for data storage. At that time, scholarly communications librarian Colleen Lyon talked about the Texas Advanced Computing Center (TACC) being available for storage. (D&P 3213-3213b, 9/23/15)

Dean Hackert provided a brief update on the graduate student milestones: the Graduate Advisers will not be required to sign off on students’ agreements to verify that they have been advised; instead, students will indicate that they have been advised by a faculty member.

On accreditation and seven-year reviews, the Graduate School is seeking to uncouple from the seven-year cycle professional Masters degree programs that have a national accreditation process.

The Graduate School has modified the signature page and is moving toward making it electronic.

There is a Tuition Policy Advisory Committee that will be meeting with student organizations and holding public forums. The committee is considering possible tuition increases of 2 to 4%.

An architect has been selected for the new graduate and professional housing project, which is a roughly $90 million, 750-bed project east of IH-35. The contractor selection process is at the finalist stage. The planned completion date is summer 2018. (D&P 3215 – 3215a, 11/11/15)

Dean Hackert reported that the new provost, Maurie McInnis, will be at the University of Texas in May as Provost Designate and will officially take office on July 1. In addition, two new deans have been appointed: Angela Evans will be Dean of the LBJ School and Jay Hartzell will be Dean of the McCombs School of Business.
President Fenves has forwarded the Tuition Policy Committee’s recommendation for a 3% tuition increase for the coming year and another 3% increase the following year. He added in the $5 green fee that the students wanted to have reinstated, so the actual increase is about 3.1%.

The President had not yet submitted his recommendations on Campus Carry, but that would be happening soon.

Turning to the level of the Graduate School, the graduate and professional housing project is moving ahead with architects and contractors selected and layout being developed.

Dean Hackert noted that it was fellowship season and that the Graduate School was preparing to review nominations. He noted that the fellowship budget and funds have continued to grow.

Dean Hackert mentioned that he would be meeting with the new provost several times during the spring and planned to discuss with her how to better publicize the achievements of graduate students.

In response to a question from Deigh, Dean Hackert reported that the concern had been raised with the Association of Texas Graduate Schools about national accreditation review cycles that differ from the seven-year cycle mandated by the Higher Education Coordinating Board. It seemed likely that the affected programs will be permitted to substitute the report for the external review on the national accreditation cycle. (D&P 3217 – 3217a, 2/3/16)

Associate Dean Neikirk gave the report because Dean Hackert was returning from a trip to Belgium. Neikirk noted that the general information catalogue is revised each year, and he asked that anyone noticing relevant outdated information or other inaccuracies report that information to the Graduate School. (D&P3219, 3/23/16)
V. Report from the Chair

Chair Juenger said that the goal of the meeting would be to learn about work happening in committees and take that information back to departments and get feedback before voting. She then turned the floor over to Andrea Gore, Chair of the Faculty Council.

Faculty Council Chair Gore first provided an update on the University’s policy on Title IX. A policy, Prohibition of Sexual Discrimination, Sexual Harassment, Sexual Assault, Sexual Misconduct, Interpersonal Violence and Stalking, was approved on July 1, 2015, and it has taken effect.

Chair Juenger added that any staff person who has contact with students -- including faculty and staff -- is obligated to report. A question from Deigh led to discussion about the implications of this policy for faculty/student interactions, including the possibility that it may discourage students from talking with faculty about incidents and concerns. It was also reported that the new Title IX Coordinator is Latoya Hill. (D&P 3213b-3213c, 9/23/15)

Chair Juenger reported that the Faculty Council Executive Committee is developing a resolution on Campus Carry that will be voted on at the November 16 meeting.

Chair Juenger suspended the agenda order to address unfinished business from the Admissions and Enrollment Committee. (D&P 3215a, 11/11/15)

Chair Juenger gave a brief update on the policy on unanimous decisions on dissertations that previously had been approved by the Graduate Assembly. That policy will not be enacted immediately but instead will be returned to the Administrative Committee who, after obtaining input from the faculty who had raised concerns about the policy, will consider revisions to that policy.

Chair Juenger then asked Faculty Council Chair Gore to give a report. Chair Gore gave an update on Campus Carry:

In response to a question about guns in garages, Chair Gore noted that there was some confusion about that, and she mentioned that the resolution passed at the previous Faculty Council meeting called for clarification about the law and exemption zones.

Dean Hackert mentioned that the work hours of Facilities staff would be changed beginning in the next academic year and that staff overtime charges would be assessed if meetings go beyond 3:30 p.m. He suggested that
meetings might begin earlier, possibly at 1:30 p.m., to accommodate this change. (D&P 3217a – 3217b, 2/3/16)

Chair Juenger asked Faculty Council Chair Gore to give an update on Faculty Council business. Gore reported on the joint UT Austin/Texas A&M meeting that had taken place at Texas A&M. Themes of the meeting were (1) Title 9, including reporting processes; and (2) diversity, particularly challenges associated with having a diverse campus.

Gore then reported on a Faculty Council presentation by Rachel Osterloh, President of the Student Senate, who asked that information about a mental health crisis line be included on syllabi. The Faculty Council had voted to endorse her request. Gore asked whether the Graduate Assembly might be interested in a similar endorsement. She suggested that Dean Hackert could assign the endorsement request to a committee, which would review it.

In her report, Chair Juenger noted that Graduate Assembly elections were complete, and newly elected members were being notified and would be invited to the April meeting. A nominating committee had been convened to select nominees for Chair-elect for the next academic year and Secretary for the next two years. (D&P 3219 – 3219a, 3/23/16)

VI. Standing Committee Reports

A. Academic Committee (Prabhudev Konana)

Chair Konana reported on five changes to the Option III Program Guidelines that had been proposed in Spring 2015. The committee reported it has since decided to revise the Guidelines more fully and those changes were discussed.

Michelle Broadway elaborated on the budget changes, saying that faculty proposing Option III programs should get a standard template from the Provost’s office.

Discussion followed about the implications of the demand for Option III programs for the nature of graduate education.

Konana reported on the committee’s work on the topic of “what is a dissertation,” the required sign-off for multi-authored works and managing disputes on questions of contribution; and he asked for feedback from the Assembly members. (D&P 3213c-3213d, 9/23/15)
The proposal to update name of graduate program and degree major from “Mexican American Studies” to “Mexican American and Latina/o Studies” was approved by the committee and Laura Gutierrez, Associate Chair of the Department of Mexican American and Latina/Latino Studies, was invited to present. After a brief discussion, the proposal to update name of graduate program and degree major from “Mexican American Studies” to “Mexican American and Latina/o Studies” was approved unanimously by the Graduate Assembly and was deemed minor legislation.

The proposal to add an Option III track to the existing MS Marketing Degree program was approved by the committee. Wayne Hoyer, Chair of the Marketing Department, and Jade DeKinder, Assistant Professor of Marketing, were invited to present an overview of the proposal. The proposal to add an Option III track to the existing MS Marketing Degree program was approved unanimously by the Graduate Assembly and was deemed minor legislation.

The policy review and recommendation: What is a dissertation - defining issues related to multi-author/article dissertations was discussed and suggestions were made; catalog issues were also discussed. A decision was reached to postpone the vote until later in the meeting to allow time for word-smithing the language. The language revision was later considered: “And in the case of multi-authored papers, include a statement about the contribution of the dissertator to each paper included in the dissertation and an acknowledgement of any previous publication of each paper in another dissertation or other venue.” The recommendation on defining issues related to multi-author/article dissertations was passed unanimously by the Graduate Assembly and was deemed minor legislation.

The policy review on Guidelines for Option III Graduate Degree Programs was discussed and the guidelines are still being modified so the Academic Committee plans to bring it to the February 3, 2016, Graduate Assembly meeting. A draft template for the annual Option III reviews had been provided to Assembly members and, based on votes earlier in the meeting to monitor GPAs of students obtaining waivers, the template would be modified to incorporate GPA information. (D&P 33215b – 3215f, 11/11/15)

Chair Konana presented a proposal to create a dual-degree program in Information Studies and English. The proposal is for a joint degree between the Department of English in the College of Liberal Arts and the School of Information that permits students to complete two Masters degrees in three years.
• The proposal to create a dual-degree program in Information Studies and English was unanimously approved by the Graduate Assembly and it was deemed minor legislation.

Chair Konana presented the proposal to revise the Guidelines for Option III Degree Programs, and he summarized several major issues addressed in the revised guidelines. After discussion it was decided that language would be added back into the document, stating that an Option III program should reimburse the academic department, but not the faculty member, for in-load teaching.

• The proposal to revise the Guidelines for Option III Degree Programs was unanimously approved as amended by the Graduate Assembly and it was deemed minor legislation. (D&P 3217b – 3217c, 2/3/16)

Academic Committee Chair Konana reported that the MS Marketing Degree Program was approved by the Regents, and the first class will be coming in this year. He then called on Graduate School Assistant Dean Michelle Broadway to discuss the Option III annual report.

Broadway first mentioned that when it was sent to the UT system, the proposal for the MS Marketing Program had been flagged for review by the full Board of Regents because the size of the proposed budget exceeded $2 million. After discussion, UT System agreed that tuition for Option III programs is covered by a different set of policies so is under the purview of the President. Broadway then gave an update on the annual report that Option III directors will complete and submit to the Graduate Assembly each year with a comprehensive review of the reports by the Graduate Assembly every three years. (D&P 3219a, 3/23/16)

B. Administrative Committee

Chair Kintner reported on the proposal to modify the requirement of the dissertation committee members from the unanimous to a non-unanimous decision for passing the final oral examination. Kintner described proposed changes to modify the requirement for dissertation committees from a unanimous to a non-unanimous vote.

Discussion followed regarding clarification of the proposal language, including a discussion of the degree to which the scholarly contribution of the dissertation and performance at the oral defense constitute two distinct requirements.
The Dean of Graduate Studies would determine an adjudication process, but the majority of the committee had to agree with the Dean’s decision.

That language has since been modified so that the Dean of Graduate Studies makes the final determination.

Chair Juenger asked that comments about the proposed policy be e-mailed to Administrative Committee Chair Kintner or to other committee members. (D&P 3213d-3213e, 9/23/15)

Administrative Committee Chair Kintner explained that the current written policy requires a unanimous decision of a dissertation committee. If there is a non-unanimous decision or one dissenting member, the student can petition the Graduate Dean. The Dean generally decides in favor of the majority, so the proposed language effectively would reflect current practice. It would allow for one faculty member who is not the supervisor or co-supervisor to dissent. The recommendation of non-unanimous decision on dissertation was approved unanimously by the Graduate Assembly and was deemed major legislation.

Chair Kintner explained that the current policy requires that either (a) the supervisor and all committee members except one must meet in person or (b) all committee members must meet using a virtual or electronic option. The Committee’s recommendation is that, for consistency, the attendance requirements for the traditional option be extended to the electronic option. So, the student and supervisor would have the traditional option of meeting in a room or an electronic option of meeting using technology. The recommendation of change in the structure of the dissertation defense, that it be extended to the electronic option, was approved unanimously by the Graduate Assembly, and it was deemed minor legislation. (D&P 3215d – 3215e, 11/11/15)

Chair Kintner had no report, but she did announce that the committee would be meeting on February 17, 2016, to discuss the topic of unanimous decisions on dissertations. (D&P 3217c – 3217d, 2/3/16)

Chair Kintner had no report. She did note that the committee was continuing discussions on the topic of non-unanimous decision on dissertations. They would meet the following week on that topic and also discuss the “Graduate Student Bill of Rights and Responsibilities.” (D&P 3219a, 3/23/16)
C. Admission and Enrollment Committee

Committee Chair Knopf reminded the Graduate Assembly members that new guidelines had been approved for programs seeking standardized score waivers. The Doctorate of Nursing Practice Program has requested authority for the program director to waive the GRE requirement at his/her discretion for an applicant with a graduate GPA greater than 3.25 and strong professional experience. There were some major concerns, including that we might be setting a low precedent for future requests for GRE waivers. After a brief discussion between Chair Juenger and Committee Chair Knopf, a decision was made to hold off on voting because a number of Graduate Assembly members had already left the meeting, but to have some discussion. Additional questions strengthened the need for further discussion. (D&P 3213e-3213g, 9/23/15)

Admissions and Enrollment Chair Knopf reminded the Graduate Assembly that a GRE waiver request for the Doctorate of Nursing Practice had been discussed at the end of the previous meeting. In the interim, the Graduate School had provided data on the performance of students who had received GRE waivers. The committee had developed a consensus recommendation: The Committee recommends approval of the DNP waiver request under two conditions: (1) The waiver is subject to review at the first standard review of the DNP program, and (2) waivers are not to exceed 50% of total admissions. Additionally, the Committee does not want to consider new waiver requests for doctoral programs until data are available from this program. The recommendation regarding the DNP waiver request was approved unanimously by the Graduate Assembly and was deemed minor legislation.

Chair Knopf reported that the Admissions and Enrollment Committee had voted unanimously to approve the Human Dimensions of Organizations GRE waiver request under the conditions that the waiver be subject to review at the first standard review of that Option III program and that the waivers not exceed 50% of admissions. The recommendation regarding the HDO waiver request was approved unanimously by the Graduate Assembly and was deemed minor legislation.

The Admissions and Enrollment Committee recommended that all standardized test score waivers that previously have been awarded to Option III programs be made subject to review by the Admissions and Enrollment Committee during the standard Option III program review. Academic Committee Chair Prabhudev Konana reported that his committee was developing a template for the annual reviews and would include this item in the template.
The proposal for periodic review of previously granted Option III waivers was approved unanimously by the Graduate Assembly and was deemed minor legislation. (D&P 3215a – 3215b, 11/11/15)

The Admissions and Enrollment Committee had no report. (D&P 3217d, 2/3/16)

The Admissions and Enrollment Committee had no report (D&P 3219a, 3/23/16)

VII. Graduate Student Assembly

Graduate Student Assembly President Brian Wilkey was unable to attend so Jennifer Clegg, Academic Affairs Director for the Graduate Student Assembly, gave his report. The GSA is planning a Graduate Professional Development week in October, which will focus on resilience. Clegg also reported that a few graduate students would attend the Fall Summit of the Student Advocates for Graduate Education in San Diego. (D&P 3213g, 9/23/15)

Graduate Student Assembly President Wilkey mentioned that the GSA Academic Affairs Committee had put together a highly successful week of graduate student professional development events. The GSA also plans to distribute a professional development needs assessment, which will be shared with the Graduate Assembly so that Graduate Assembly members can distribute it to their departments.

Attendance at the GSA has doubled, and the organization is putting on events such as a healthy eating event and an entrepreneurial workshop with local startups. (D&P 3215e – 3215f, 11/11/16)

Graduate Student Assembly (GSA) Chair Brian Wilkey report that the GSA would be meeting in a special session to work on a resolution to be sent to President Fenves regarding SB-11, Campus Carry.

Wilkey also reported that delegates from GSA would travel to Washington, DC, in mid-April to advocate on behalf of graduate education with members of Congress. (D&P 3218d, 2/3/16)

Wilkey announced that Graduate and Professional Student Appreciation Week would occur the second week in April. Also GSA representatives would travel to Washington, DC to join the Student Advocates for Graduate Education on such issues as H1B visa reform, increased research funding, and graduate student debt relief.
Wilkey also announced that the “Graduate Student Bill of Rights and Responsibilities’ would be coming to the Administrative Committee. Wilkey reported that one issue is with the grievance procedures. Graduate students often are unaware of the process and their rights. A second issue concerns a periodic review of graduate student requirements and performance, which could build on the existing Milestones program, to ensure that graduate students have adequate warning of potential problems.

Broadway clarified the process, which is that the Administrative Committee would discuss the “Graduate Student Bill of Rights and Responsibilities” at its next meeting. If they choose to endorse it, the Graduate Assembly will vote on endorsing the document at its next meeting.

Wilkey reported the names of the newly elected president and vice president of GSA: Wills Brown and Francesco Cicero, respectively. (D&P 3219a – 3219b, 3/23/16)
Chair Maria Juenger called the fifth meeting of the Graduate Assembly for the 2015-2016 academic year to order on Wednesday, April 27, 2016, at 2:18 PM in the Harry Ransom Center, Tom Lea Room, 3.206.

Faculty Members Present: Alper, Balhoff, Brustad, Busch-Armendariz, Canning, Castelli, Cox, Deigh, Frazier, Harrison, Juenger, Kim, Knopf, Konana, Mueller, Murray, Ostrower, Schallert, Srinivasan, Strong, Trace, Worthy

Faculty Members Absent: Anderson, Arapostathis (excused), Kintner (excused), Landsberger (excused), Mackert, Matouschek (excused), Pollak (excused), Rascati (excused), Srinivasan, Thompson

Student Members Present: Swaim, Tarlaci, Wilkey

Ex Officio Members Present: none

Representatives from the Office of Graduate Studies Present: Bancroft, Broadway, Hackert, Neikirk, Sylvia, Riley

Visitors: Alu, Brown, Chen, Cicero, Clark, Cole, Cozzolino, Hasenbein, Miller, Nelson, , Radhakrishnan, Weaver

Prior to the beginning of the meeting, those newly elected members of the Graduate Assembly who were in attendance introduced themselves.

Order of Business

I. Approval of the minutes of the November, 11, 2015, February 3, 2016, and March 23, 2016 meetings

The minutes were approved unanimously with one correction.

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

Dean Hackert thanked the outgoing Graduate Assembly members and committee chairs and summarized some of the Graduate Assembly accomplishments for the year.

He then provided the following updates on Graduate School policies and initiatives: Graduate advisors are no longer required to sign off on graduate students’ Milestones Advising Agreements. The dissertation signature page will no longer require signatures from all of the committee members but, instead, only the GSC chair. The Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board has agreed to permit alignment of programs’ professional accreditation review cycles with Coordinating Board 7-year review cycles.
The Graduate School is now administering more than $20 million in fellowships, including $5 million in external awards. The site plan for the Graduate and Professional Housing Project, which will provide about 750 new beds, has been approved.

Dean Hackert thanked Maria Juenger for her service as Graduate Assembly Chair. He then extended a special thank-you to Karen Bancroft, who would be retiring at the end of May, for all of her behind-the-scenes contributions to the Graduate Assembly.

III. Report of Chair (Maria Juenger)

Chair Juenger called on Nominating Committee Chair Konana to present the 2016-17 slate of officers.

Konana reported that James Cox was selected as Administrative Committee Chair and Diane Schallert as Admissions and Enrollment Committee Chair. No vote was required for these positions.

Charlotte Channing was nominated as Secretary of the Graduate Assembly. Canning’s nomination was approved unanimously by the Graduate Assembly.

Hal Alper was nominated as Chair of Academic Committee, which is also Chair Elect of the Graduate Assembly. Alper’s nomination was approved unanimously by the Graduate Assembly.

Graduate Assembly Chair Juenger noted that Academic Committee Chair Konana will be 2016-17 Chair of the Graduate Assembly.

IV. Academic Committee (Prabhudev Konana)

A. Proposal to create a graduate portfolio program in Security Studies

Paul Miller, Associate Director of the Clements Center for National Security, gave an overview of the proposal: This transcript-recognized interdisciplinary portfolio in Security Studies responds to a University-level interest in security studies and the Chancellor’s desire to create a network for national security. The program could benefit master’s and Ph.D. students in, for example, the History and Government Departments and the LBJ School.

The proposal had been approved by the Academic Committee and did not require a vote of the Graduate Assembly. It would be forwarded to the Graduate Dean and Provost for final approval.
V. Administrative Committee (Dean Neikirk for Eileen Kintner)

A. Report regarding unanimous decisions of committees

Associate Dean of Graduate Studies Neikirk presented for Administrative Committee Chair Kintner, who could not attend. The Graduate Assembly had passed legislation to change the requirement for unanimous decisions on Ph.D. dissertations at the November 11, 2015, meeting. Because this was major legislation, it was distributed to all Graduate Studies Committees, Deans and Department Chairs; and, given that more than 10 protests were received, it was referred back to the Administrative Committee. The Committee scheduled a meeting for discussion with those who filed protests and, following that discussion, recommended that the legislation be withdrawn. This decision did not require a vote of the General Assembly.

The concerns raised by those who protested included concerns that, with the recent decrease of the required committee size to four members, the non-unanimous decision would leave the decision with a small group of individuals. It could disenfranchise the outside member of the committee and affect the prestige of the University.

B. Resolution endorsing the spirit expressed in the GSA document on graduate student rights and responsibilities

Neikirk reported that representatives of the Graduate Student Assembly met with the Administrative Committee on March 30 to discuss an earlier version of the document. The current version incorporates Administrative Committee feedback, so the Committee recommended that the Graduate Assembly pass a resolution endorsing the spirit expressed by the Graduate Student Assembly document of Graduate Student Rights and Responsibilities.

Brian Wilkey, Chair of the Graduate Student Assembly, was invited to present the document. He asked the current and former chairs of that committee, Margaret Clark and Beth Cozzolino, respectively, to present the document. Clark noted that the document describes a set of principles that faculty, students and administrators can agree are reasonable expectations for one another. Many of the principles are already in place, so the document serves to codify them in one place. Some recommendations for small policy changes also are included.

The resolution to endorse the spirit expressed in the GSA document on graduate student rights and responsibilities was approved unanimously by the Graduate Assembly.
C. Proposal to establish Dell Medical School representation on the Graduate Assembly

The Administrative Committee recommended that the Graduate Assembly pass a resolution (1) acknowledging that the Medical School and associated degree program had received final approval from the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board and, (2) that representation of the Dell Medical School be added to the Graduate Assembly. Neikirk noted that the Graduate Assembly currently has 31 members so adding a member would require either taking a member from another program or increasing the number to 32.

Discussion followed about the timing of any changes in representation and/or apportioning of seats.

In response to a question, Neikirk clarified that the apportionment of Graduate Assembly representation is determined by number of members of Graduate Studies Committees as well as the number of doctoral and master’s degrees granted over the preceding three years. Discussion followed about how the number of representatives for the Medical School would be determined.

In response to a question about whether the decision had to be made at that meeting, Dean Hackert suggested that it was important that Dell Medical School representation be in place by the beginning of the fall semester; among other upcoming issues, the dual-degree programs planned by the Medical School will have to be approved by the Graduate Assembly.

Beth Nelson, Associate Dean of Medical Undergraduate Studies, was asked to describe the Medical School’s Graduate Studies Committee. Nelson indicated that what she believed to be the comparable body in the Medical School would include tenured and tenure-track faculty. Michelle Broadway, Assistant Dean of Graduate School, believed that the Graduate School had received from Dr. Sue Cox, Executive Vice Dean of Academics and Chair of Medical Education, a list of proposed Medical GSC; it was her understanding that the Medical School faculty would include approximately 30 to 35 tenure-track faculty along with a larger group of clinical faculty. Broadway also noted that Dr. Cox seemed to expect a single representative on the Assembly.

In response to concerns raised about the lack of clarity in the proposal, Dean Hackert indicated that there would be a single Medical School representative.
After additional discussion, Neikirk recommended the following proposals for Graduate Assembly vote:

(1) An acknowledgement that the Medical School degree program has received final approval from the Coordinating Board and
(2) that one member from the Dell Medical School be added to the Graduate Assembly, increasing the total Graduate Assembly membership from the current 31 to a new 32, and the member be elected using the normal and stated procedures in the Graduate Assembly by-laws.

A vote was taken, and the proposal was unanimously approved by the Graduate Assembly.

VI. Admissions and Enrollment Committee (Dan Knopf)

A. No report

VII. Graduate Student Assembly (Brian Wilkey)

Graduate Student Assembly Chair Wilkey reported that the GSA had a successful lobby day in Washington DC, talking with representatives about the reinstatement of subsidized graduate student loans, increased research funding and funding for campus mental health and wellness. He thanked the Graduate Assembly for its receptivity to the Graduate Student Statement on Rights and Responsibilities, which will be forwarded to the Faculty Council C-12 Committee on Graduate Student Rights and Welfare. As a member of the campus carry implementation task force, Wilkey is creating training modules for faculty and graduate and teaching assistants. He closed by reporting that the incoming President would be Wills Brown and the incoming Vice President would be Francesca Cicero.

Before the meeting was adjourned, Academic Committee Chair Konana thanked Michelle Broadway and Rebekah Sylvia for their contributions. He then presented Graduate Assembly Chair Juenger with a gift in appreciation for her leadership.

Dean Hackert noted that, starting in the fall, the Graduate Assembly meetings would be beginning at 1:30 p.m.

IX. Adjournment at 3:15 p.m.