Chair James Cox called the fourth meeting of the Graduate Assembly for the 2018-2019 academic year to order on Wednesday, March 27, 2019, at 1:30 PM in the Lee Jamail Academic Room, Main Building, 212.

**Faculty Members Present:** James Cox, Tasha Beretvas, John Deigh, Andrew Dunn, Alison Frazier, Elizabeth Gershoff, Linda Golden, Michael Holleran, Christopher Jolly, Stephen Limberg, Andreas Matouschek, Julia Mickenberg, Francisco Polidoro, Kavita Radhakrishnan, Sharon Strover

**Faculty Members Absent:** Hina Azam, James Buhler, Allan Cole, Sue Cox, Andrew Dunn, John Hasenbein, John Hatfield, Thomas Hunt, Maria Juenger, Wonsuck Kim, Lack Lee, Christina Markert, Karen Rascati, Loriene Roy, Jo Worthy

**Student Members Present:** Payton Anderson

**Ex Officio Members Present:** President Greg Fenves

**Representatives from the Office of the Graduate Studies Present:** Dean Smith, Deans Broadway, Neikirk, Dalton, Rebekah Sylvia, Nancy Riley

**Visitors:** Jackie Salcedo, Susan Heinzelman, Julie Lekstutis, Marilyn Tyus, Mylon Kirksy, Kate Canales, Kathryn Flowers, Juan Gonzalez, Doreen Lorenzo, Monica Penick, Eric Roe, Matteo Vestrucci, Nino Bariola, Sherry Melecki

Order of Business

I. Approval of the minutes of the 02/20/2019 meeting.

The minutes were approved unanimously.

II. Report of the Graduate Dean (Mark Smith)

A. A pilot program will be tested where PhD graduates get hooded by their major professor during the PhD graduation ceremony.

B. Climate survey results have been shared and the Graduate Education Task Force will be using some of the results to inform their decision making.

C. UT is a member of the California Alliance AGEP, which has a program called Science Futures Alliance, whose goal is to increase the number of underrepresented minority PhD graduates who seek faculty positions. This involves campus visits of PhD graduates and post-doctoral students between members of the Alliance.

D. Applications have increased compared to last year – 5.2% overall and 7.3% for international applications.
III. Report of Chair James Cox

A. Chair Cox introduced President Fenves and opened the floor for questions/comments.

Comments from President Fenves:
The climate survey provides us with some information on satisfaction rates and areas where students are not satisfied. More respondents from the most recent survey (71% vs. 60%) agreed or strongly agreed that they would feel comfortable using the UT Counseling and Mental Health Center. Although the percent of respondents who indicated that they experienced discrimination was down (8% vs 17%), it is still an issue of concern. The most common form was gender discrimination, especially in the sciences.

The *US News & World Report* 2020 rankings listed 47 of our graduate programs in the top 10. For overall graduate programs, UT is ranked as number 3 among public universities. Attracting the best graduate students is essential for continued success.

Question 1 is about mental health services: Mental health is an important issue, as national surveys show the level of stress for graduate students is high, and financial pressure is a top stressor. About 20% of graduate students indicated they have received services from the Center for Mental Health and Counseling (CMHC). Due to increased referrals, the funding and staffing of the CMHC was increased. Seeking counseling still has a stigma attached to it, so the “Counselors in Academic Residence Program” (CARE) was created to distribute counselors across schools and colleges, including the Graduate School. Information is on the Graduate School website.

Question 2 is about graduate student housing: Major changes in graduate housing accommodations came out right before Spring Break, and the changes may cause some difficult adjustments for many students. President Fenves agrees that the communication about these changes was poor. Since that time, housing has re-worked the definition of ‘family members,’ agreed to postpone some of the changes, and will work one-on-one with students in special situations. Putting it into perspective, these three units house only 15% of all graduate students, and they were originally intended for families. There have been some practices of renting out rooms to those who would not qualify to live there while there is a 2-year waiting list for those who are qualified, so changes were needed, although the communication and roll-out of these changes was mishandled.
Question 3 relates to micro-credentials: While we want to be responsive to the changing job market, we want to ensure the high quality of our graduate programs. So a clear understanding of the goals of the program and the ways to assess the quality of the program are essential when considering micro-credentials.

Question 4 and 5 concern graduate funding: Tuition reduction benefit (TRB) rates have not been raised along with tuition increases, and stipends may not be competitive. President Fenves has been working to increase graduate fellowships and understands that funding is an issue. He suggests looking at the overall costs, not specifically at TRB rates or stipends. These vary by College/School. Deans, who have many competing financial concerns, need to be involved in these issues.

Julia Mickenberg (American Studies) followed up by explaining she had asked students in the American Studies department via e-mail if they were struggling financially to the extent that it takes away from their scholarship, and she was deluged with responses. In addition, due to the discrepancy in stipends, some students are switching to other departments at UT; so stipends need to be raised across the board.

President Fenves replied that incoming College of Liberal Arts Dean Ann Stevens and Provost Maurie McInnis are aware of these issues in the College of Liberal Arts.

Julia Mickenberg (American Studies) also brought up that there seemed to be fewer recruitment scholarships for underrepresented minority recruiting. Mark Smith said that recruiting and support must be tied. If you spend money to get the student here, but with no long-term commitment of support, they may leave.

IV. Academic Committee (Sharon Strover substituting for Catherine Weaver)

A. A proposal to create a Master of Arts (Option III) degree in Design was introduced based upon the unanimous recommendation of the Academic Committee. Department Chair Kate Canales introduced the program proposal. She noted that the health sector has demonstrated a demand for more designers and that the first track of the new MA program would be Design in Health, offered in partnership with Dell Medical School. She also explained that the MA (Option III) degree is meant to be more applied in nature than the existing MFA degree.

The Assembly voted unanimously to approve the MA (Option III) program in Design.
B. A proposal to establish Graduate School policy related to the delivery of graduate certificates was introduced based upon the unanimous recommendation of the Academic Committee. Sharon Strover explained that the committee developed the current policy recommendation over the past two academic years. The current recommendation reflects the input of graduate program faculty and the Academic Committee that was collected during that time.

The Assembly voted unanimously to approve the proposed policy related to graduate certificate programs.

C. A proposal to add a self-funded (Option III) track to the Doctor of Education (Ed.D) degree in Educational Leadership and Policy was introduced based upon the unanimous recommendation of the Academic Committee. Department Chair Victor Saenz introduced the program proposal. He noted that historically, the formula-funded Ed.D. program has trained many education administrators (K-12 and higher). The department has redesigned the program to accommodate the needs of working professionals. The Assembly voted unanimously to approve the Ed.D. (Option III) program in ELP.

D. A proposal to create a graduate portfolio program in Integrated Behavior and Health was introduced based upon the unanimous recommendation of the Academic Committee. Katherine Flowers, the Education Coordinator at the Dell Medical School’s Department of Psychiatry, was in attendance as a representative of the program proposal. She explained that, over the past two years, partnerships between Dell Medical School, the School of Social Work, the Department of Educational Psychology, and the School of Nursing have provided interprofessional training to students, that graduates are extremely competitive in the workspace, and that the proposed portfolio program will bring this opportunity to more students.

No comments or objections were received, and a vote of the Assembly is not required. The proposal will be routed to Dean Smith and Provost McInnis for further review and approval.

E. A proposal to create a five-year, integrated program in Women’s and Gender Studies was introduced based upon the unanimous recommendation of the Academic Committee. Susan Heinzelman, Director of the graduate program in Women’s and Gender Studies summarized the proposal for the members of the Assembly, noting that they want to attract students who want to make a change through policy and other changes. The proposed program will follow the structure of other integrated programs offered at UT. During their 4th year, students in the integrated program will begin taking graduate-level courses; and in the 5th year, they will complete coursework and the thesis or report required for the graduate
degree. In this arrangement, both degrees are awarded simultaneously at the end of five years.

The Assembly voted unanimously to recommend approval of the five-year, integrated program in Women’s and Gender Studies.

V. Administrative Committee (Elizabeth Gershoff)

No report

VI. Admissions and Enrollment Committee (Tasha Beretvas)

A. A proposal to waive the GRE admissions test-score requirement for select applicants to the Women’s & Gender Studies BA/MA integrated-degree program was introduced based upon the unanimous recommendation of the Admissions Committee. Susan Heinzelman explained that the Center of WGS has experienced a huge increase in undergraduate enrollment and that almost all of their students are interested in the graduate program. In addition, she noted that the BA/MA program in WGS will be the first integrated degree program in the College of Liberal Arts.

The Assembly voted unanimously to recommend approval of the GRE test-score waiver.

VII. Graduate Student Assembly (Payton Anderson on behalf of Samantha Fuchs)

A. GSA elections for President and Vice President:
   1. Christina Baez (STEM education) elected President
   2. Lucy Blevins (LBJ/Social Work) elected Vice President

B. Invest in Texas efforts at the Legislature

C. Latest Legislative efforts in GSA

D. TA training – need more information about what is offered already in various Colleges/Schools. There are two members on the Graduate Education Task Force representing the students on issues discussed here today.

IX. Adjournment at 3:23 PM

Karen Rascati, Secretary