GRADUATE FACULTY MEETING
September 10, 2009

MINUTES


Staff: Chappell, Cruz Bruesch, Gaughan, Porter, Solberg, Spitzenberger, Valladolid, Weinberg, Williams

1. Approval of the minutes of the February 12, 2009 meeting

Minutes were approved by acclamation.

2. Dr. Guillermina (Gigi) Lozano, the 2008/2009 Faculty President, passed the gavel to Dr. Michael Blackburn, the 2009/2010 Faculty President

3. Appreciation Award to Dr. Gigi Lozano, 2008/2009 Faculty President

Dr. Blackburn gave an appreciation award to Dr. Lozano to acknowledge her efforts as Faculty President and thanked her for making time in her busy life for graduate education and GSBS. Dr. Lozano said she enjoyed the experience and thanked the faculty for electing her and the GSBS staff for its great support.

4. Report from the Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs, M. D. Anderson Cancer Center

Dr. Tomasovic reported:

- He is happy that the new fiscal year has begun because last year was quite stressful due to the recession’s impact on revenue and the effort it took to prepare for the upcoming
accreditation review by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS). The SACS documentation was submitted on Tuesday and Dr. Tomasovic thanked the GSBS faculty, students and staff who helped in its preparation, which is a huge task. An off-site SACS committee will begin the process by reviewing the documentation and determining which areas require further investigation and then the on-site review team will arrive in March 2010. Dr. Tomasovic is hopeful that both the MDA and HSC reviews will go well (the HSC is also being reviewed by SACS).

- Anderson’s Graduate Education Committee has been formalized as a standard institutional committee which is an important status at MDA. The Committee is doing great work in supporting and strengthening graduate education at Anderson.
- MDA’s clinical faculty and staff worked extra hard over the last half of the past fiscal year and the administration believes that Anderson is in a good financial position going forward, although there are still some unknowns related to health care reform and recovery from the recession. The FY2010 budget had a 10% cut on average across the institution but there was no decrease in the funds allotted to GSBS.
- The UT Academy of Health Science Education has about 82 members now and a number of them are from MDA and the HSC. The Academy is currently soliciting nominations for next year. The nomination is made through the president, dean or faculty senate at each institution. The names of nominees and nomination letters must be submitted to Dr. Buja by September 18 and then his staff will contact the nominees to collect the additional information. Faculty members are encouraged to nominate colleagues who are outstanding educators and deserve recognition by the UT System.

5. Report from the Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs, Health Science Center –

Dr. Buja reported:

- As Dr. Tomasovic indicated, both MDA and the HSC have undergone a rigorous 1-2 year self-study to produce the complicated documents required for the SACS accreditation review. The HSC also submitted the documentation for its Compliance Report on Tuesday and its on-site visit will occur in April. GSBS is participating in both reviews. SACS now requires a “Quality Enhancement Plan” (QEP) for which each institution must identify an area of its educational program that needs improvement. The HSC’s QEP will focus on professionalism and ethics and Dr. Thomas Cole from the McGovern Center for Health, Humanities and the Human Spirit will lead that effort. His team will produce a plan that will be submitted at the on-site review.
- Dr. Buja thanked Dr. Tomasovic for updating the faculty on the UT Academy of Health Science Education and encouraged those who are interested to check out the Academy’s website. The Academy sponsors awards and small educational grants.
- The HSC’s building activity at the South Campus is progressing nicely. The Advanced Biomedical Imaging building, an MDA facility that will share some activities with the HSC, is scheduled to be completed in March 2010. At about the same time, the HSC’s Behavioral and Biomedical Sciences building will be completed. Several years ago the HSC agreed that MDA would take over the property where the Mental Sciences Institute is located and so the behavioral building will be home to a significant part of the HSC’s psychiatry department. And finally, the Board of Regents recently gave final approval for construction of the new Dental Branch building which will also be in the South Campus area.
6. **Dean's Report**

Dr. Stancel reported:

- Dr. Stancel thanked Drs. Lozano and Blackburn for their advice and counsel during the past year. Some big issues came up during that time and he’s very grateful that he was able to count on them.
- GSBS just enrolled an incoming class of 148 students -- 106 Ph.D. students, 37 M.S. students and 5 M.D./Ph.D. students. Dr. Stancel said it took a lot of time and effort but it was well worth it and he thanked the admissions staff for a job well done.
- Dr. Vicki Knutson, former Associate Dean for Admissions, is our new Associate Dean for Academic Affairs and we are actively searching for her replacement in Admissions. The search committee has identified several very strong candidates. Dr. Stancel is discussing the position with the candidates and hopes to name someone in the next 2-4 weeks.
- As Drs. Tomasovic and Buja mentioned, the dean’s office has been working hard to get ready for our accreditation reviews by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS). Dr. Stancel gave special thanks to Associate Dean Eric Solberg who has done a great job on SACS issues during his two years at GSBS. He has saved the administration and the faculty a lot of time and his efforts are sincerely appreciated. Dr. Stancel also said that while it’s true that SACS takes a lot of work, it also prompted good discussions with the Curriculum and Academic Standards Committees about how we can improve things. We got some fresh ideas and insights and Dr. Stancel is looking forward to implementing them in the coming year.
- Our two presidents have asked GSBS to develop a new Ph.D. degree program in Clinical Sciences. The goal is to create a program that will put the HSC and MDA at the forefront of training the next generation of clinical investigators. A prestigious committee headed by Dr. Ed Jackson will develop recommendations for the program. It’s important to note that the new program will not take resources from the current GSBS program. Dr. Stancel is forming a parallel committee to consider how we might organize the Graduate School into divisions to accommodate programs with different resources and goals. The committee will be a subcommittee of the GSBS Executive Committee and Dr. Stancel has already met with Drs. Lozano and Blackburn to discuss possible members. Other schools, e.g., UT Southwestern, have a divisional structure that works well so we can learn from them. This endeavor is in the beginning stages and will likely take some time to come to fruition, and Dr. Stancel will keep the faculty informed as developments occur.
- Since approval for a new small “p” program in Cancer Metastasis would be sought later in the meeting, Dr. Stancel outlined the history of these programs at GSBS. Small “p” programs were instituted in 2002 to allow faculty to provide training in specialized areas without requiring them to develop full-blown Programs. Dr. Stancel recently wrote guidelines for small “p” programs because the documentation we had was sketchy. These guidelines have been endorsed by the Program Coordinating and Executive Committees. The dean’s office realizes that the name ‘small “p” program’ is clumsy and is working to come up with a better one.
- We were recently selected by the UT System to be the first school to award the new “Jess Hay Fellowship” – named after a former chair of the Board of Regents. This prestigious award carries a $10K prize. The award will rotate every year among the different health components and Dr. Stancel was very pleased that Dr. Kenneth Shine, Executive Vice Chancellor for Health
Affairs for the UT System, asked us to be the first to select a recipient. Along with Dr. Stancel, Drs. Gigi Lozano, Mike Blackburn, Ray DuBois and Peter Davies comprised the selection committee. We received 7 terrific applications and the committee had a hard time making its selection. The winner will be announced soon in Austin.

7. Report of the Office of Academic Affairs

Dr. Knutson reported:

- After having a “fun ride” in Admissions for the past 8 years, Dr. Knutson said she is looking forward to interacting with faculty and students as part of the educational mission of GSBS which is what we’re all about. In the 2 months that she’s served as Associate Dean for Academic Affairs we’ve enrolled a bumper crop of incoming students. Plans for orientation were already well underway when she arrived and she thanked Ms. Cheryl Spitzenberger for organizing such a successful program.

- This year Dr. Knutson required the new students to meet with her, Dr. Tom Goka or a Program Director prior to registration in order to discuss their course and tutorial selections. It was hoped that by having such discussions students would choose their courses more thoughtfully – sometimes they’re not aware of how demanding graduate-level courses can be. Students were also provided with a detailed road map of what to do and when to do it during their first 1-2 years of study, i.e., when to choose an advisor, form an advisory committee, take the candidacy exam, etc. Time will tell if this helps them stay on track but at a minimum we think it gave students confidence that they know what’s expected of them. In response to a comment from the audience, Dr. Knutson said she would be happy to share the road map with the faculty.

8. Old Business

No Old Business was discussed.

9. New Business

A. Vote on chairs and new members of 2009/2010 Standing Committees

Slate of Candidates

Motion was made, seconded and unanimously approved to accept the slate as presented, with the understanding that when an alternate member of the Curriculum Committee is chosen by the Dean’s Office, the individual will be approved by the Executive Committee.

B. Nomination of candidate(s) for 2009/2010 Vice President/President-Elect of the Graduate Faculty

Dr. Varsha Gandhi: Curriculum Vitae and GSBS Educational Activities
Dr. Blackburn called for nominations from the floor; there were no nominations from the floor.

**Motion was made, seconded and unanimously approved to elect Dr. Gandhi as Graduate Faculty Vice President/President-Elect for 2009/2010.**

### C. Proposed Ph.D. Program in Experimental Therapeutics

As the organizer and future Program Director of the proposed [Program in Experimental Therapeutics](#), Dr. Varsha Gandhi presented the rationale for developing the Program and described its various components. She noted that the proposal has been reviewed and approved by all 6 GSBS standing committees. She thanked Drs. Stancel, Wiener and Knutson for their assistance over the past 3 years during the Program’s development and noted that Dr. Stancel, in particular, was instrumental in helping to get the proposal into its final form. Dr. Blackburn thanked Dr. Gandhi and said she did a wonderful job of putting together the proposal, which will serve as an excellent template the next time a new Program is developed.

**Motion was made, seconded and unanimously approved to establish the Ph.D. Program in Experimental Therapeutics.**

The Program will now be sent to the presidents (or their designees) of MDA and the HSC for their consideration and transmittal to the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board for approval.

### D. Proposed Small “p” program in Cancer Metastasis

To begin, Dr. Stancel spoke on behalf of the proposed [small “p” program in Cancer Metastasis](#). Dr. Gary Gallick was awarded a training grant from UT System in Cancer Metastasis and this program will support the students associated with it. The program has the full support of the dean’s office and the Executive Committee. Dr. Stancel said this is a perfect example of why small “p” programs were created – it’s a way to get a training grant without having to go to the Coordinating Board to seek approval for a new area of concentration. He noted that it was quite an honor for Dr. Gallick to receive the training grant; only 7 were awarded in Texas and 2 of them came to UT Houston -- this one in Cancer Metastasis and another in Neuroscience at the Medical School.

Dr. Gallick then spoke briefly. For several years he and a few colleagues had discussed the possibility of putting together a program in metastasis. The opportunity to receive funding from UT inspired them to write a proposal and they were very pleased to receive the training grant. They’re happy with the program’s small “p” status and hope that it will help attract talented students who have a passion for metastasis research. In response to a question, Dr. Gallick said that students will not be permitted to acknowledge their affiliation with the Cancer Metastasis program on their diplomas since it is, in fact, only a small “p” program. Dr. Stancel agreed and
noted that while we can’t say that we have a Program in Cancer Metastasis, we can say we offer specialized training in Cancer Metastasis.

Motion was made, seconded and unanimously approved to establish the small “p” program in Cancer Metastasis.

E. Proposed Guidelines for Program-Based Recruitment Awards

Dr. Knutson explained the proposed Guidelines for Program-Based Recruitment Awards. To put it simply, if approved, the policy would allow Programs or organized groups of faculty to give merit awards to our top applicants in addition to those given by the GSBS dean’s office. The goal is to attract more outstanding students to GSBS. Two key features are that only Programs or organized groups of faculty would be permitted to do this (no individual faculty members or informal groups of faculty) and there will be no strings attached to the awards whatsoever. Students receiving these awards will have the same flexibility as all other GSBS students in the selection of their tutorials, advisors and Program affiliation.

Motion was made, seconded and nearly unanimously approved (only 1 vote against) to approve the Guidelines for Program-Based Recruitment Awards.

F. Guidelines for Referencing GSBS Affiliation in Publications

Dr. Stancel said he hoped the Faculty would give its strong endorsement to the Guidelines for Referencing GSBS Affiliation in Publications. The policy states that all GSBS faculty and students are expected to reference their affiliation with GSBS on all of their scientific publications. The three main reasons for doing so are (1) to capture electronically data we need for required reports, (2) to increase GSBS visibility which will help our standing in ranking and reputational surveys, and (3) to attract outstanding students. Basically, it’s free advertising that will be seen by the kind of students we want -- those who read the scientific literature. Dr. Stancel said he hoped the faculty would reference GSBS on their publications and encourage their colleagues to do so as well.

One faculty member commented that while it would make sense to reference GSBS when a student is an author, on clinical papers where no students are involved and many of the authors aren’t GSBS faculty members, it would not. The response was that the reference should be attached to the institutional affiliation of the GSBS faculty member(s), not to authors who aren’t members.

Another person said his chair would prefer to list their department first in the reference, not GSBS. Dr. Stancel replied that the format provided in the guidelines was just a suggestion – the decision about which institution would be mentioned first would be made by individual faculty members. The important thing is that the actual reference to GSBS be phrased exactly the same way every time (“The University of Texas Graduate School of Biomedical Sciences at Houston”) so that it may be found in
Motion was made, seconded and unanimously approved to endorse the Guidelines for Referencing GSBS Affiliation in Publications.

G. Appreciation Awards to Outgoing Program Directors: Dr. Carmen Dessauer (Cell and Regulatory Biology) and Dr. Samuel Kaplan (Microbiology and Molecular Genetics)

Dr. Stancel presented an appreciation award to Dr. Carmen Dessauer, the outgoing Director of the Cell and Regulatory Biology Program. Dr. Stancel thanked her for her hard work on behalf of the Program’s faculty and students and assured her that GSBS really appreciates her efforts.

Although Dr. Sam Kaplan was out of town and unable to attend the meeting, as the outgoing Director and founder of the Microbiology and Molecular Genetics Program, his commitment to graduate education over the years was also acknowledged and is much appreciated.

The following reports were not presented at the meeting due to time constraints but are available on the GSBS Website

9. Report of the Graduate Student Association


11. Report of the Executive Committee

MEETING ADJOURNED at 1:15 p.m.

Michael Blackburn, Ph.D.
2009-2010 President, GSBS Faculty