

**The University of Texas MD Anderson Cancer Center UTHealth
Graduate School of Biomedical Sciences**

**FACULTY MEETING
February 14, 2019 – 3:00PM**

MINUTES

Present: Michael Lorenz, Chair; Albuquerque Almeida Santos, Barton, Bartholomew, Berdeaux, Blackburn, Broaddus, Chandra, L. Chen, T. Chen, Cole, Cunha, De Lay, Evans, Gladden, Hart, D. Johnson, Karras, Klegerman, Konovalova, Yi-Ping Li, C. Lin, Mattox, McCrea, Moghaddam, Moreno-Gonzalez, O'Brien, Parker-Thornburg, Pickering, Plunkett, Ribelayga, Sahni, Schadler, Singletary, Smith Callahan, Swindell, van Hoof, Volk, Walters, B. Wang, Hongyu Wang, Wendt, Wong, Wood, J. Wu, L. Yang, Yates, Yin, Ying, Yu, Zsigmond

Staff: Barker, Barnett, Carter, Cruz Bruesch, Fern, Gaughan, Lindheim, Moore, Orlando, Perez, Spitzenberger, Turner, Valladolid, Weinberg

1. September 13, 2018 Faculty Meeting minutes were unanimously approved.

2. Deans' Report

Drs. Barton and Blackburn reported:

- Associate Dean of Career Development, Diversity & Alumni
 - Cherilynn Shadding, PhD will start her new role on March 1st.
 - She received her PhD from Meharry Medical College.
 - She currently works at Washington University School of Medicine in St. Louis as the director of Diversity & Student Affairs in the Division of Biology and Biomedical Sciences and assistant professor in the Department of Genetics.
 - Once she is onboard, one of her first tasks will be hiring an Assistant Director of Career Development.
- UTHealth Alcohol Policy Changes
 - The request for policy changes came from both leadership at UTHealth and UT System.
 - What changes should be implemented to ensure a safe environment?
 - Proposed Changes:
 - Must submit form at least 10 days before event.
 - There must be a sponsor approval and dean approval.
 - Sponsor must attend the entire event and cannot drink.
 - The dean is ultimately responsible for any incidents that may occur, but can drink during the event.
 - Cannot bring own alcohol beverages to any event.
 - Balance events with and without alcohol.
 - Deans can make their own rules as long as it complies with the minimum requirements of the alcohol policy.
 - 2 drinks max
 - Recommend to have a tracking system with tickets (not required)
- Visitation dates are listed below: (3 weeks in a row!)
 - Feb. 22nd
 - March 1st
 - March 8th
- Commencement 2019

- Commencement will occur on May 18th at 10:00AM at Rice University, Shepherd School of Music, Alice Pratt Brown Hall.
- The Keynote Speaker will be MD Anderson Cancer Center, President, Peter WT Pisters, MD, MHCM.
- Graduate Student Research Day
 - GSRD will be on June 27th from 10:00AM – 4:30PM.
 - The Keynote Speaker is Janelle Ayres, PhD, Salk Institute
 - New this year: Faculty and student reception and poster preview on June 26th from 5:00-6:00 pm
- Mien-Chie Hung Retirement
 - Dr. Hung will be returning to Taiwan and be president of the China Medical University. He has been with MD Anderson and GSBS for 34 years.
 - He received the McGovern Outstanding Teaching Award four times – an all-time winner.
- Wayne Turner Retirement
 - First started at UTHealth as a contractor in the late 1990's and created the student and faculty database and roughly 12 years ago became a full-time GSBS employee. He won the GSBS Staff Recognition Award in 2016.
 - His retirement party will be on March 22nd in GSBS Large Classroom at 2:30-4:00PM and his last day at GSBS will be March 29th.
 - Yi Fang will be taking over his position on March 1 and will have a month overlap so that Wayne can train her.
- The GSBS Annual Report is in the back of the room – please pick up one on your way out.

3. Social Media Presence

Ms. Tracey Barnett reported:

- **Facebook**
 - Main page: www.facebook.com/mdandersonuthgrad/ (@mdandersonuthgrad)
 - Alumni group: www.facebook.com/groups/mdandersonuthalumni/
- **Twitter**
 - https://twitter.com/MDA_UTHGrad (@MDA_UTHGrad)
- **LinkedIn (Login required to view links below.)**
 - Company page: <https://www.linkedin.com/school/uthealth-md-anderson-cancer-center-biomedical-sciences>
 - Career development group: <https://www.linkedin.com/groups/12035576/>
 - Alumni group: <https://www.linkedin.com/groups/3903065/>
- **YouTube**
 - www.youtube.com/user/UTGSBS
- GSBS is currently developing an Instagram profile.
- If active on social media, please use our hashtag: #WeAreGSBS
- If you are interviewed indicate that you are a GSBS faculty member.
- If you have any stories, research successes, awards, etc. contact Tracey Barnett, Senior Communications Specialist at Tracey.R.Barnett@uth.tmc.edu.

4. Candidacy Exam Outcomes

Dr. Bill Mattox reported:

- No student has failed or had to be reexamined since Spring 2017.
- Even though the fail/reexamine rates have decreased, the rate of conditional passes have increased over the past two years.
- There has now been a complete transition to the on-topic exam format even though some Programs do allow students to opt for an off-topic.

- The On-topic exam is correlated with more Conditional Pass results.
- The written proposal is cited most often when students receive a conditional pass. Most often research design and logic are areas where students have difficulty.
- Exam results vary substantially between PhD Programs based on data collected since reshaping. However, numbers are small and these variations may not be significant.
- Question: How does our data compare to other institutions? Dr. Mattox tried to search for this information but it is difficult to find public sources. He will continue to research the subject.

5. Admissions/Visitation Update

Dr. Eric Swindell reported:

- Thank you to everyone. The only reason we get great students each year is because of the time everyone devotes. Whether it be at admissions committee meetings, visitations, interviewing, and/or reaching out to applicants after their visit. Again, thank you!
- I will be focusing primarily on PhD applications - We had a 26% increase in completed applications from last year.
- The Admissions Committee reviewed 509 applications and we have invited 149 applicants to interview in person at one of the visitation dates or via Skype.
- At the first visitation on February 8, 31 applicants were interviewed.
- Next week, February 22, 38 applicants will be interviewed. Of those 38, six will visit Science Park on Thursday and then come to Houston on Friday and nine MD/PhD applicants will attend portions of visitation.
- The third visitation on March 1, 32 applicants will attend and nine will visit Science Park.
- At the fourth and final visitation on March 8, 28 applicants will attend and six will visit Science Park.
- In addition, there will be 19 Skype interviews.
- Faculty have already received requests for interview availability for next week's visitation and we will be reaching out for additional assistance for the Skype interviews and subsequent visitation dates.
- All faculty and students received an Outlook calendar invite for all four visitation Friday Afternoon Clubs (FACs).
- Applicants are informed that they will have four interviews and to specify faculty they are interested in meeting.
 - We try our best to place each applicant with at least one or two of the faculty they are interested in meeting, but this isn't possible in all cases.
 - We are aware how impactful it is, when an applicant can meet with the faculty they are most interested in.
- How can a faculty member volunteer to interview applicants?
 - Admissions requested a list of faculty interested in interviewing from the Program Directors and they provided a list.
 - If you are interested in interviewing, please let Admissions, either Dr. Eric Swindell or Karen Weinberg, know.
- If you interview applicants, please complete and submit the new online evaluations as quickly as possible.
 - There is no specific deadline, but sooner rather than later.
 - The Deans meet with the Admissions group at GSBS roughly a week after each visitation to discuss which applicants should receive offer letters.
 - Your evaluations heavily impact the decisions the Deans make.
 - As of today, we had 86% returned their evaluations without a reminder. Karen sent out a reminder this morning to faculty that had not completed their evaluation(s).
- The plan is to extend roughly 100 offers since we typically have a 50% acceptance rate.

- Last year we extended roughly 140 offers because we feared students may be dissuaded from coming to GSBS because of Hurricane Harvey. That wasn't the case – we had a 54% acceptance rate.

6. Increase in F-Awards

Dr. Kelly Moore reported:

- In the five years since GSBS began assisting students in external fellowship applications, the overall success rate has increased by over 30% from 6% in the first year. In addition, the number of applications submitted this year more than doubled than in previous years.
- This success is mainly due to one on one meetings with students, sending emails to students reminding them of deadlines, and providing workshops on the application process.
- Now that we are receiving so many applications each cycle, the GSBS has decided to create a new course to utilize time and resources more efficiently.
- GS21 1171: NIH Fellowship Proposal Development will be offered every semester. The course will meet once per week for two months and will go through every aspect of the application except for the science since the students should receive training in either GSBS's Scientific Writing course or a program specific writing course. The course will also bring in students that have been successful in securing funding and faculty that have served on study sections to provide additional insights and assistance. The course is pass/fail, however, passing the course is not dependent on submitting an application.
- The best time for students to apply for these awards is Post-Candidacy. Success rate of students that had an on-topic exam were more successful than students who had an off-topic exam or were pre-candidacy.
- Questions:
 - Are resubmissions part of the success rate provided?
 - Yes – resubmissions are included in the data. Separate calculations regarding the success of resubmissions has not been completed yet.
 - Even though the number of applications submitted have increased, are there still more that can apply but aren't?
 - Some students don't apply because they are ineligible due to their visa. Another possible reason is because NIH fellowships are geared towards those interested in academia and receiving this type of award doesn't hold as much weight in other sectors such as industry. Additionally, the time needed to devote to this application could be a factor as well.

7. Old Business

No old business was discussed.

8. New Business:

No new business was discussed.

The following reports were not presented at the meeting but were available on the GSBS website prior to the meeting:

1. **Report of the [Standing Committees](#)**
2. **Report of the [Executive Committee](#)**
3. **Report of the [Graduate Student Association](#)**

MEETING ADJOURNED at approximately 3:50 p.m.

Michael Lorenz Ph.D.,
2018-19 President, GSBS Faculty