

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

**FACULTY MEETING
March 21, 2017 – 3:00PM**

MINUTES

Present: Ambro van Hoof, Chair; Akbani, Barton, Bean, Bedford, Beierlein, Blackburn, Bratton, Broaddus, Carlin, Cole, Daiger, Darkoh, Dent, Frost, Gan, Heidelberger, Hittelman, D. Johnson, Kaplan, Karmouty-Quintana, Keyomarsi, Klegerman, Koehler, Krahe, Liu, Mattox, McBride, Milewicz, Miller, Nagayama, O'Brien, Plunkett, Pollard-Larkin, Ram, Rhim, Ribelayga, Richie, Sawakuchi, Schluns, J.J. Shen, Shouval, Smith Callahan, X. Sun, Swindell, Taegtmeier, Wang, Volk, Weinstein, Wendt, Yin, Yu, Shuxing Zhang, Zsigmond

Staff: Barnett, Cruz Bruesch, Fern, Gaughan, Lau, Moore, Safayi, Spitzenberger, Valladolid, Weinberg, Williamson

1. September 8, 2016 Faculty Meeting minutes were unanimously approved.

2. GSBS Reshaping

Drs. Barton and Blackburn reported:

Organizational Meetings Summary

- The Deans had Program Organization Meetings with all Programs and they discussed the following topics: timeline of program readiness for Fall 2018, tracks/sections, curriculum changes, governance and by-laws, student affiliation, and budget.
- The new PhD Programs are:
 - Biochemistry & Cell Biology
 - Cancer Biology
 - Genetics & Epigenetics
 - Immunology
 - Medical Physics
 - Microbiology & Infectious Diseases
 - Neuroscience
 - Quantitative Sciences
 - Therapeutics & Pharmacology
- The Charter leadership of these Programs are as follows:

Program	Director	Co-Director(s)
Biochemistry and Cell Biology	Darren Boehning, PhD	Jeffrey Frost, PhD
Cancer Biology	Khandan Keyomarsi, PhD	Menashe Bar-Eli, PhD & Scott Kopetz, MD/PhD
Genetics and Epigenetics	Richard Behringer, PhD	David Johnson, PhD
Immunology	Jagannadha Sastry, PhD	Kimberly Schluns, PhD
Medical Physics	Richard Wendt, PhD	TBD
Microbiology & Infectious Diseases	Ambro van Hoof, PhD	Danielle Garsin, PhD
Neuroscience	Harel Shouval, PhD	John O'Brien, PhD
Quantitative Sciences	Prahlad Ram, PhD	Liang Li, PhD & Wenyi Wang, PhD
Therapeutics and Pharmacology	William Plunkett, PhD	Varsha Gandhi, PhD

- The Charter Leaders will be leading these programs for roughly a year or until there is an election for new.
- Each Program has been working with the Deans to set up the Program Steering Committees.
- The Programs will be creating subcommittees – membership, curriculum, community, bylaws and others as needed.

Curriculum and Training Working Group Recommendations

- Charge 1: Develop a system for defining the core competencies of each program and for identifying courses that meet those core competencies
 - Eliminate overlap: When similar subject areas are identified as core competencies by more than one program, programs should work together to develop a course or courses that cover this shared interest.
 - Dr. Richard Behringer put together a Charter Program Director Meeting in order to address this concern.
 - Improve pedagogy: Courses should, as appropriate, include case studies, student presentations, problem-solving exercises, written critiques and/or summaries of publications, workshops, etc., with fewer didactic lectures.
 - Newly developed courses may be:
 - Conventional - a semester-long course.
 - Modular - a course composed of shorter units that may each be taken as a stand-alone course.
 - Nano - a course on a specific subject/skill that may be completed over a short period within a semester.
 - Open courses to all GSBS students: All courses/modules must be available to all GSBS students, regardless of their program affiliation.
 - Courses covering common and/or fundamental program competencies should be offered every year.
 - Courses with more specialized content might be offered less frequently, depending on student needs.
- Charge 2: Develop a system for defining the core competencies for additional training foci (therapeutics, translational, etc.) and for identifying the standards that must be met in order to list training foci on student diplomas.
 - Given the diversity of disciplines and interests across the GSBS, each program may define additional competencies for tracks within each program, as needed.
 - These additional competencies, along with general core competencies for each program, set a baseline for essential knowledge and in-depth understanding that students need to achieve.
- Charge 3: Survey existing courses to identify areas of strength as well as need and identify courses that should no longer be offered or should be consolidated.
 - While providing students the best coursework and training is the primary goal, avoiding overlap in GSBS coursework follows closely.
 - Each program will work with the GSBS Curriculum Committee to minimize overlap in new curriculum/coursework/training and identify opportunities for cross-program coursework offerings.
- Charge 4: Identify mechanisms for maintaining academic standards in curriculum and PhD candidacy exams within the new structure.
 - Program-independent core skills include basic competencies in scientific writing, presentation and reading/critical thinking/discussion.
 - These core skills should be incorporated into Program curriculum as appropriate.
 - Program Curriculum Committees should develop clear Program-specific expectations for students.
 - Program Curriculum Committees will review coursework to identify areas of overlap/redundancy in collaboration with the GSBS Curriculum Committee.
 - Program Curriculum Committees will review the curriculum requirements every two to three years and suggest changes based on evaluation of current coursework.
 - Ph.D. Candidacy Standards will be addressed separately at a later date.
- It's important to mention, that all faculty, even junior faculty, have the opportunity to teach.

Community Working Group Recommendations

- The Community Working Group submitted their final report to the Deans last week. This report will be presented at a later date

Next Steps

- The goal will be to have curriculum plans developed and approved by the Curriculum Committee prior to the Fall 2017 semester.
- The current first year students will have until September to affiliate with a Program whether it be a new or legacy program.
- Legacy programs will continue and will have a teach out plans in place.

3. First Author Paper Requirement

Dr. William Mattox reported:

- At the GSBS Faculty Meeting in September 2012, the faculty voted and approved that PhD students who enter in Fall 2014 and after must publish at least one first-authored research paper in a peer reviewed journal prior to graduation. Previously the rule was that a PhD student was required to submit at least one first authored research paper in a peer reviewed journal before defense.
- At this point, no students have been affected by this change, but the first class that this is impacting is now finishing their candidacy exam. Please keep this change in mind for your students.
- When this requirement was introduced it was intended as a minimum standard.
- The student's Advisory Committee determines the requirement and can require that they have more than one published paper by the time they graduate.
- The peer review process can be complicated and can have lengthy delays, which leads into exceptions to the rule – this is a valid exception. The student should discuss the exception with their Advisory Committee. If the Committee is supportive, they should submit the request and rationale to the Academic Standards Committee.
- Considerations can include: coauthor publications while at GSBS, the role of student in publications, unusual delays in peer-review, the best interest of the student.

4. Admissions and Visitation Update

Dr. Andrew Bean reported:

- There were 576 PhD applications received
- Of these applications, 128 applicants were interviewed.
- There were 92 offers of admission made and as of March 21st, 27 applicants accepted our offer and 10 declined. The deadline to accept our offer is April 15th.
- The average GPA for the applicants that were interviewed was 3.59.
- Over the past 5-years the average GPA hasn't varied significantly.
- There has been roughly a 20% increase in diversity recruitment.
- There are three levels/tiers of review.
 - The first is to review the applicants based off quantitative measures.
 - If they meet these, then they move to the Admissions Committee for review and are considered Tier 1.
 - The other applications are considered Tier 2 and are reviewed by an internal group at the GSBS Deans' Office. If this group agrees they are a good applicant, then they will be reviewed by the Admissions Committee with the Tier 1 applicants.
- Domestic and international students are reviewed together.

5. Career Development Director

Dr. Sina Safayi reported:

- The traditional career path of a PhD was after graduation they would go into a Postdoctoral position and then primarily into academia, but now more PhD students are going into the private sector and possibly have a part-time faculty position.

- The best model would be for students to choose multiple mentors while at GSBS to help them navigate different career options/paths.
- Students will need the support of their faculty advisor and your encouragement to attend our Career Development workshops and events.
- The [Career Development website](#) along with the [L.E.A.D calendar](#) will provide information on upcoming events.

6. M.S. Program

Dr. Eric Swindell reported:

- M.S. students should graduate within two and a half to three years.
- All M.S. students are under the assumption that they are self-funded.
- However, their mentor can opt to provide stipend support anywhere between \$15,000 - \$29,000 per year. If the mentor provides the student with a stipend, then the student will be eligible for benefits and resident tuition and fees.

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 4:00PM

Ambro van Hoof, Ph.D.,
2016-17 President, GSBS Faculty