

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

**FACULTY MEETING  
September 10, 2020 – 3:00PM**

**MINUTES**

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**Present:** Joya Chandra, Chair & Jeffrey Frost, Chair; Actor, Akbani, Akimzhanov, Albuquerque Almeida Santos, Allison, Andreeff, Arur, Azhdarinia, Bannon, Bartholomew, Bedford, Bednar, Beierlein, Benavides, Berdeaux, Bernstam, Blackburn, Bluebond, Bover, Cantor, Carlin, S. Chang, H. Chen, K. Chen, L. Chen, T. Chen, F. Cole, Corredor, Cunha, Czerwinski, Dabaghian, Dash, R. E. Davis, De Lay, Dent, Dessauer, Dickey, Eckel-Mahan, Eisenhoffer, Ekmekcioglu, Erwin, Evans, B. Fang, Farach-Carson, Fries, Frigo, C. Fuller, Galko, Gandhi, Garsin, Gorfe, Gottlieb, Green, Gunther, Hagan, Harrington, Hart, Hashmi, Hecht, Heidelberger, Hildebrandt, Hofmann, Horton, Jain, Jayaraman, D. Johnson, F. Johnson, K. Jones, Ju, Kaplan, Karras, Kasper, Keyomarsi, H-E. Kim, M. Kim, Klegerman, Koehler, Korkut, Krahe, Lane, Liang Li, Yi-Ping Li, C. Lin, B. Liu, Y. Liu, Lizee, Margolin, Marrelli, Marshak, Mattox, McCrea, McCullough, Miller, Moghaddam, Mok, Morales, Morano, Mork, Morrison, Moses, Mosher, Mowrey, Nagayama, Nowlen, O'Brien, Olson, Pagel, S. Pan, Parker-Thornburg, Pickering, Qualmann, Ramdaney, Richie, Sahni, Salehpour, Sastry, Shete, J. Shen, Shadding, Singletary, Sirianni, Stevens, K. Sun, Swindell, Taylor, Teng, Titus, Tong, K-L. Tsai, Tsvetkov, Urayama, van Hoof, Venna, Viale, C. Wagner, V. Wagner, Walker, Walss-Bass, Walters, B. Wang, G. Wang, H. Wang, W. Wang, Waxham, Waymire, Weinstein, Wong, J. Wu, L. Yang, X. Yang, Yee, C. Yin, You, Young, D. Yu, S. Zhang, M. Zhu

**Staff/Administration:** Barker, Barnett, Carter, Clark, Cruz Bruesch, D'Agostino, Deen, Fern, Gaughan, Lau, Lindheim, Moore, Orlando, Pannu, Patterson, Salinas, Snow, Spitzenberger, Weinberg, Williamson

**1. February 13, 2020 Faculty Meeting minutes were unanimously approved.**

**2. Dr. Joya Chandra passed the gavel to Dr. Jeffrey Frost the 2020/2021 Faculty President.**

**3. Nomination of candidate(s) for 2020/2021 Vice President/President-Elect of the Graduate Faculty: Michael Galko, PhD**

The Faculty voted unanimously to elect Dr. Michael Galko as Graduate Faculty Vice President/President-Elect for 2020/2021.

**4. Vote on chairs and new members of 2020/2021 Standing Committees**

The Faculty voted unanimously to approve the slate of candidates as presented.

**5. Faculty By-Law Change**

Dr. Mattox reported:

- The following verbiage in red is the changes proposed to the Faculty Bylaws:

**1.2 Associate Members of the Graduate Faculty**

Individuals who meet **the above** criteria **for members** but are not presently qualified to direct student dissertation research may be appointed as Associate Members of the Faculty for a term of up to five years. **In addition, biomedical professionals who are employed as staff by the Graduate School of Biomedical Sciences or a University of Texas institution in Houston, and who hold appropriate graduate degrees may be appointed as Associate Members upon nomination by the Deans and approval by the Membership**

**Committee.** Responsibilities of Associate Members include those of Members except for the supervision of student dissertation research. Associate Members may apply for Regular Membership as appropriate.

- The rationale behind this change is as follows:
  1. MD Anderson Genetic Counselors do not hold faculty titles at MDACC. An appointment as a GSBS Associate Members currently requires them to first obtain an adjunct faculty appointment at another UTHealth School/Department. The change would allow Genetic Counselors to be appointed to the GSBS without holding such an adjunct appointment.
  2. So that qualified GSBS Staff members may serve as a course director and/or sit on student committees.

In both situations, appointments would be made upon nomination by the Deans and approval by the GSBS Membership Committee. For further context you may wish to review the current [GSBS Faculty By-Laws](#).

- The Faculty unanimously approved this change.

## 6. Deans' Report

Dr. Blackburn reported:

- GSBS Leadership
  - Dr. Barton and I have jointly lead GSBS for eight years and it worked well. Since Dr. Barton's retirement, the Presidents of both MD Anderson and UTHealth have asked that I lead the GSBS and move to a one dean model.
  - Dr. Barton had many administrative duties and served on a number of committees. Dr. Joya Chandra has agreed to serve as the Co-Director of the CCTS TL1 grant.
  - Dr. Bill Mattox has been promoted to Senior Associate Dean and will be serving on many of MD Anderson's committees that Dr. Barton was serving on. We have a wonderful working relationship and he has similar values that Dr. Barton has by putting the students first.
  - I continue to meet with both Presidents and continue to facilitate those relationships and advocate for GSBS.
  - As of right now, we are going to continue to do what we have been doing, but also adapt and change when needed especially during the pandemic.
  - I would like a team approach and want faculty and student input especially from our leaders on our Standing Committees so that we continue to grow and improve.
  - I have an open door, please bring any comments, issues, complaints and suggestions to me.
- Status of Research at MD Anderson and UTHealth
  - Research is essential to both of our parent institutions for both our faculty and students, however, safety is key.
  - To keep our students and faculty safe from COVID, we need to continue to work diligently and adhere to safety protocols in our labs. Each institution has their own way of approaching the pandemic, but we continue to communicate this information to everyone.
  - In order to do our part to keep our students safe, we have provided them with face shields.
  - As faculty, we expect you to model good behavior and utilize PPE and other safety protocols.
  - Thankfully, we have very few COVID cases within our research spaces and incidents of outbreaks or clusters of infections. Out of 480 GSBS students we have only had four positive COVID cases and none required hospitalization. In the past two weeks, we have not had any students with COVID.
- GSBS Executive Committee Recommendations on COVID-19
  - The GSBS Executive Committee created a task force to provide recommendations about how GSBS should respond to issues presented by COVID. The task force broke up into four subcommittees to address Classes, Rotations, Current Students, and Scenarios. Recommendations can be found in the Executive Committee report.

- The GSBS 10-year SACS-COC accreditation is coming up. We have successfully submitted the UTHealth packet last week which consisted of over five thousand pages. Thank you all for all your hard work.

## 7. Diversity and Inclusion at GSBS

Dr. Shadding reported:

- Roughly 300 people responded to the Climate Survey. An outside consultant will analyze the data.
- We are currently requesting faculty and students to sign up to join the Recruitment Ambassador Program in order to assist the Office of Diversity, Career Development & Alumni Affairs in virtual recruitment fairs. If you are interested, please email [gsbs-dcaa@uth.tmc.edu](mailto:gsbs-dcaa@uth.tmc.edu).
- We are looking into NIH funding to support training on both anti-racism and unconscious bias training for the entire school.

## 8. Mentoring Works! & Culturally Aware Mentoring Study

Drs. Shadding & Mattox reported:

- Mentoring Works! was started about 5 years ago, but was put on hold during the pandemic, however, we plan on holding sessions again virtually and enhancing the diversity component.
- Ideally, we want all faculty to take in *Mentoring Works!* and are working on making this a mandatory requirement of all GSBS faculty.
- We are in need of more facilitators, if you are willing, please let us know.
- GSBS is participating in a study called Culturally Aware Mentoring. One requirement for faculty to participate in this study is to have participated in *Mentoring Works!*. We will need 20-25 faculty volunteers and the study will involve a pre and post survey and a 2-3 hours online training. GSBS is excited to participate look forward to participating in this study. More communication about this study will be forthcoming.

## 9. Admissions Report

Dr. Eric Swindell reported:

- The end of the year Admissions Report is still being finalized.
- Below are the final numbers for Fall 2020:
  - PhD
    - Accepts: 54
    - Deferrals: 12
  - MS
    - Accepts: 23
    - Deferrals: 6
  - SMS
    - Accepts: 11
    - Deferrals: 0
  - Total Accepts: 88
  - Total Deferrals: 18
  - Total MD/PhD: 8
  - Total Entering Class: 78
- The 18 students that deferred were largely international students that were unable to secure a visa stamp due to the pandemic. Many deferred to the Spring, but these students can defer for up to a year.
- Last year, there was a large increase in international applicants, but this year there was an increase in domestic applicants.
- We would prefer to hold Visitation in person, but we will likely have some, if not all virtually.
- The only way Visitations will be held in person is if the national and international infection rates significantly decline. We are looking at alternative ideas and looking at options for applicants to see Houston. We will be

reaching out to other schools to see what they are doing. We are open to ideas, please let us know suggestions on how to showcase the school and who we are virtually.

**10. Old Business**

No old business was discussed.

**11. 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 4:04 p.m.**

Jeffrey Frost, PhD  
2020-2021 President, GSBS Faculty