

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

Executive Committee Report

Dr. Michael Lorenz, Chair

Meeting on August 16, 2018

I. GSA Report

Robert Williams reported:

- Elections were held and Robert will serve as the new GSA president. Other officers include Daniela Branco, Vice President; Medina Colic, Secretary; Wayne Jiang, Treasurer; and Tristen Tellman and Jeff Ackroyd, Student InterCouncil GSBS Representatives.
- The GSA organized a housing survey to find out from current students what complexes flooded during Harvey, which stayed dry. Also gathered information about transportation to and from work. The results were compiled and sent to the incoming class.
- The GSA continued its Peer Mentoring Program this year, which pairs incoming students with post-candidacy students. This year they did not have as many students volunteer, each current student was paired with two incoming students. Matches were made based on program and extracurricular interests. The program is not a large time commitment – 3 luncheons, otherwise email communication only. Looking for advice on how to increase participation in the future.
- This year the GSA's focus is on career development. The NatureJobs Career Expo will be on October 27th, 2018.
- The GSA will work closely with Alumni Affairs and the Alumni Association to develop more events with Alumni-Student interactions. Including potentially bridging together the Peer mentoring program with the E-mentoring program to develop a mentoring triade between, new students, current students, and alumni.
- The GSA has been meeting with the other student groups at GSBS to identify new collaborations and reduce overlap between group events.

II. Deans' Report

Deans Barton & Blackburn reported:

- Changes at GSBS
 - Dr. Andrew Bean has accepted a new position as Dean of the Graduate College at Rush University in Chicago. Dr. Bean will help with the transition in Admissions and Career Development on a part time basis until November 2nd.
 - Dr. Marenda Wilson-Pham will be leaving the GSBS. Her last day will be August 17th.
 - Dr. Sina Safayi's last day at the GSBS was on August 10th. He accepted a new position as Assistant Dean of Professional Development and Career Planning at Emory University.
 - New position descriptions are in the process of being finalized and will be announced accordingly. It is a priority to fill these positions as soon as possible.
- MD/PhD Program
 - The NIH Medical Scientist Training Program was successfully funded. The NIH doubled the program budget and size.
 - Cullen Trust for Higher Education Physician Scientist Training Program has been renewed for another 5 years.
- GSBS student, Brittany Jewell, was appointed as Student Regent for The University of Texas System Board of Regents. She will serve a one-year term that began on June 1, 2018.
- UT student housing has set aside apartments for our current GSBS students. Hopefully there will be more in the next 6 months.
- B Cycles have been installed at several locations throughout the medical center with more locations planned in the near future.
- MD Anderson is piloting a new shuttle route that runs directly between North and South Campus. Named the Lime Green route, it will run between Pickens' Tower and SCRB 3/4. Two shuttles will

run starting by September 10th. Usage will be tracked and if the route doesn't have enough users it will be cancelled.

- Dr. Laurence Court has been named the recipient of the 2018 Paul E. Darlington Mentor Award. The award will be presented to Court at this year's Lab Coat Ceremony on Friday, September 21.
- The GSBS has received generous support from donors for new student scholarships.
 - Mercedes Benz of the Woodlands Scholarship: There are two awards that will provide \$5,000 each. One scholarship for a pre-candidacy PhD Student and One scholarship for an MS or SMS Student.
 - Terry and Janet Klebe Fellowship: \$200,000 that will provide 4 fellowships to pre-candidacy students. 29 applications were received, winners will be selected soon.
 - Dr. John J. Kopchick Research Award: Will provide 1 \$50,000 research award. 50 applications were received and are in the process of review.
- New Student Orientation – 8/20 -8/24
- NatureJobs Career Expo – 10/27 – all day Saturday at TMCx. Typically, this Career Expo has been held on the east or west coast. Dr. Safayi has branded it out of our school and 2 parent institutions. Other institutions throughout the TMC will be sponsoring tables. Primary audience is students and postdocs. Marketed to biomedical scientist students. Nature is in charge of bringing in roughly 40 exhibitors. Postdocs and students at UTHealth and MDA in charge of recruiting speakers. Registration will open up 6-8 weeks before and open to MDA / UTHealth students first. Funds were requested from UT System to offset speaker travel expenses as well as provide travel for attendees from other UT System schools.

III. New Business

- Proposed Standing Committees for 2018-2019
 - Proposed committees were voted on and approved.
- F-awards: 16 students submitted for the August deadline. Normally we have 16 total applications for the year.
 - The Immunology program is working closely with Dr. Moore to develop a fellowship application incentive program for students.

IV. Old Business

No old business was discussed.

Dr. Joya Chandra, Chair

Meeting on October 18, 2018

I. GSA Report

Robert Williams reported:

- *Naturejobs* Career Expo registration has maxed out in under a week with 975 people registered. GSBS students had the opportunity to register first before registration opened to everyone else. At the Expo, there will be workshops, career panels, and exhibitors from different institutions. UTSystem is providing funds for 60 students at other UTSystem schools to travel to attend. Nature representative are already talking about what can be done "next year" and will track session popularity and have post-event surveys ready to go.
- Student Town Hall with the Deans will occur on November 8th at 2:00PM in the GSBS Large Classroom.
- The GSA will hold a First-Year Q&A session.
- There will be a Friday Afternoon Club (FAC) on December 7th at 5:00PM to celebrate the end of the Fall 2018 semester.

II. Deans' Report

Deans Barton & Blackburn reported:

- Dr. Andrew Bean, Associate Dean of Graduate Education will be leaving GSBS effective November 2nd.

- Dr. Eric Swindell will be taking over Admissions and has been promoted to Associate Dean.
- Ms. Karen Weinberg has been promoted to Associate Director of Admissions.
- Dr. Marenda Wilson-Pham left GSBS in August and is now an Associate Dean at Rush University. Dr. Sina Safayi left GSBS in August as well.
- We currently have a new position posted for an Associate Dean for Diversity, Alumni Affairs and Career Development. The search committee is meeting every week to review applications in order to find the best 3-5 applicants. Interviews will be set with staff, students groups and faculty. Our goal is to have them in place January 1st.
- For career development, the Deans are discussing the idea of having a larger career development office that spans the Graduate School and the MD Anderson and UTHealth postdoctoral fellows in conjunction with Bob Tillman, Diane Bodurka, and Kevin Morano. Surveys have been sent to the students and postdoctoral fellows to find out what the needs are.

III. Recruitment & Visitation

Dr. Eric Swindell & Ms. Karen Weinberg reported:

- This year, there will be four Visitation weekends instead of three as in years past. Below are this year's dates:
 - February 8, February 22, March 1, March 8
- Emails will be sent out to all faculty along with calendar invitations for each Friday Afternoon Club (FAC).
- A goal for this year is to improve faculty availability to interview students. If you have any suggestions, please let Dr. Swindell or Ms. Weinberg know.
 - Can someone else in the lab interview an applicant if the GSBS faculty member is unavailable? For the official interview and evaluation, no, but if the applicant wants to learn more about the lab, yes.

IV. Internships

Dr. William Mattox & Ms. Patricia Cruz Bruesch reported:

- With the increased focus on career development, we have seen an increase in the number of students participating in internships.
- It has come to our attention that students and faculty do not know the internship process. The student and their faculty advisor should contact GSBS a couple months in advance of the internship so that all details can be worked out in time. (i.e. will the internship delay their dissertation, is this a paid or un-paid internship, health insurance issues, visa issues, etc.)
- We are looking for information on how to educate faculty and students about the protocol to complete an internship.
- This item will be discussed at the next Program Directors Meeting so that the Program Director's can disseminate this information to their program faculty and students.

V. GSBS Scholarships

Dr. William Mattox reported:

- The Fall Common Application has been moved to EMBARK.
- The Kopchick Fellowship Awards have been moved to the fall cycle.
 - There are eight new spots for the John J. Kopchick Fellows and a new Charlene Kopchick fellow.
 - The previous John J. Kopchick fellows are eligible to renew for another year.
- The decision to move the Kopchick Fellowship to the fall awards cycle is to limit the number of times students have to request letters of recommendations.
- The Student Scholarship Committee will select the Kopchick Fellow finalists and then the finalists will be interviewed for the final selection.
- Mercedes-Benz award is new this year - one award is for pre-candidacy and one award is for a master's students. Each award is for \$5,000.
- Student Scholarship Committee has changed from a 6-page to a 2-page application so that there is less emphasis on "the science" since these awards are more about the student than the science.

- Is feedback given to the student? Yes, but the amount varies by reviewer.

VI. New Business

- No new business was discussed.

VII. Old Business

- No old business was discussed.