

TEXAS HIGHER EDUCATION COORDINATING BOARD
Division of Academic Quality and Workforce
1200 E. Anderson Lane, Austin, Texas

Graduate Education Advisory Committee

September 30, 2016
10:00 AM – 2:00 PM
Board Room

Committee members present:

Blance Abuer	Holly Hansen-Thomas	Arabhi Nagasunder	Meharvan Singh
DeBrenna Agbenyiga	Douglas Hermond	Dean Neikirk	Angela Spaulding
Karen Butler-Purry	Dmitri Litvinov	Les Riding-In	Kandi Tayebi
JoAnn Canales	James Lumpkin	Cynthia Rutledge	
Andrea Golato	Gregory Maddox	Mark Sheridan	

Committee members absent:

Blanca Bauer
Richard Berry
Sharon Hileman
William Kritsonis
Bonnie Melhart
Rial Rolfe
Lisa Thompson

Coordinating Board staff:

James Goeman
Allen Michie
Rex Peebles
Stacey Silverman

Others in attendance:

Charles Goldman

1. Welcome and call to order – Dr. Meharvan “Sonny” Singh

2. Consideration of summary notes from the April 1, 2016 meeting – Dr. Meharvan “Sonny” Singh

A motion to approve the summary notes was approved.

3. Presentation on the upcoming RAND Corporation study on graduate education in Texas – Dr. Charles A. Goldman, RAND

Dr. Goldman presented research and summary findings from the upcoming RAND report, *Managing the Expansion of Graduate Education in Texas*. He said that the final document would be published in February. He invited comments and discussion.

4. Discussion and questions about the RAND study – Dr. Allen Michie

In response to a question about job demands from Dr. Sheridan, Dr. Goldman responded that corporations and organizations hire different proportions of candidates with graduate degrees. Education and Engineering are areas of growing projected demand.

Dr. Singh followed up on Dr. Goldman's statement that Texas institutions of higher education will need to increase their capacity by around 80 percent in order to reach *60x30TX* goals, asking how institutions can gauge capacity. Dr. Goldman replied that the study does not address that, but stated that institutions may have untapped potential or unused capacity. Dr. Singh responded that it is difficult to know how to grow graduate programs when extramural, non-state funding is necessary.

Dr. Tayebi suggested that online programs be separated out for formula funding. Dr. Goldman responded that RAND's recommendation is for online programs to access a separate line of funding. Dr. Golato added that there would be an incentive for institutions to go with third-party providers if the formula funding for online programs is reduced. Dr. Maddox and Dr. Lumpkin agreed that online programs are more expensive than face-to-face programs, and there needs to be a sophisticated funding model to account for different types of degree programs.

Dr. Tayebi asked how exactly proposals for new graduate degree programs would be linked to an institution's strategic plan. Dr. Goldman replied that RAND does not recommend new doctoral programs for institutions where that is not part of their mission and where there is not already a strong infrastructure for research. There would need to be a commitment to doctoral education from the entire institution, not just from the department proposing the new program. Sample commitments would include a policy on the teaching loads of research-active faculty and institutional funding for graduate student stipends.

Dr. Sheridan pointed out that the institutions would be restricting themselves if they limited program growth to only those areas where there is immediate workforce demand. The National Institute of Health and other funding sources request interdisciplinary programs where it is difficult to measure job demand. Dr. Goldman replied that interdisciplinary research is essential, but whole interdisciplinary degree programs are less so. Some employers contacted by RAND said that they do not have confidence in multidisciplinary degree programs that are not anchored in any one degree area. Dr. Butler-Purry responded that her feedback from employers is that students are sometimes over-specialized and the emphasis needs to be on transferrable skills for jobs that do not yet exist.

Dr. Neikirk pointed out that Texas produces graduates for about half the cost as California does, when measured by federal grant funds. Texas is already being highly economical, and it would be impossible to expand degree production without a substantial increase in funding.

Dr. Canales asked about increases in the attainment rates for graduate degrees. Dr. Goldman replied that attainment has increased in Texas, but slower than in some other states. Increases in degree attainment will be an ongoing challenge for Texas, because the population segments that are growing are the populations that tend to participate less in secondary education. The result of this may be that Texas imports more skilled workers from other states. Dr. Agbenyiga said that increasing the population of underrepresented students will be a matter of funding, because students who are forced to work are taking longer to complete degrees. It is difficult for Texas to compete with other states for the best students without increased levels of student support. Dr. Tayebi agreed and said that many other states waive tuition for graduate students, making it difficult for Texas to compete.

Dr. Golato said that while the report recommends tracking the job placement of graduate students and providing additional funding for domestic students in STEM programs, the report does not state strongly enough that extra funding is absolutely essential to meet these targets.

In answer to a question from Dr. Spaulding about the expansion of master's degree programs, Dr. Peebles stated that the *60x30TX* plan has two goals for graduation and completion, including students with master's degrees. The completion goal includes people who were educated in other states.

5. Update on Coordinating Board procedures and requirements relating to graduate education – Dr. James Goeman

Dr. Goeman reported that the Board is considering approval of a change to rules on planning notification. Institutions would need to notify the Coordinating Board if they plan to take "any action in preparation for a new program," including hiring, purchasing real estate, building, or designing a new curriculum. Professional programs would need to submit planning notification one year prior to submitting a proposal. The intention is to give the Coordinating Board advance notice before large amounts of money is spent on new initiatives, not afterwards. Institutions may be requested to present to the Board directly. Dr. Goeman said that notifications will not be approved or disapproved, that it is only notification. Institutions will hear back from Coordinating Board staff, or in rare circumstances from the Board, so that planning can proceed.

Dr. Riding-In asked if the new rule applies to existing programs considering major changes. Dr. Goeman replied that it is a judgment call when a major change to an existing program counts as a new program. Indicators would include a change in title, CIP code, curriculum, or workforce goals for students. In response to a question from Dr. Canales, Dr. Goeman added that existing programs going online are not considered to be new programs.

Dr. Goeman reminded GEAC members to always use the most recent available application files from the Coordinating Board website because changes have been made to some of the content and wording. For example, the certification form for new degree programs costing less than \$2 million has changed. CAOs will get a memo when new forms are uploaded and active.

7. Discussion of the Characteristics of Doctoral Programs – Dr. Allen Michie

Dr. Michie reported that changes have been made to the 18 Characteristics of Doctoral Programs, which from this point would be called simply the Characteristics of Doctoral Programs. If approved by the Commissioner of Higher Education, the Characteristics would require the participation of professional doctoral degree programs.

Dr. Goeman gave a brief history of the Characteristics, stating that it is time to update them since they have not changed since 2010.

The revised Characteristics are split into three groups: all doctoral programs, research programs only, and professional programs only. Coordinating Board staff made use of GEAC input when writing the definitions.

GEAC members had questions and comments about how publications are counted, since some publications have multiple authors and could be counted twice. Dr. Maddox and Dr. Singh stated that it does not matter if co-authored publications are listed for both faculty and students, as those are two different sets of information with two different purposes. Dr. Goeman replied that it would be best to have one consistent definition that applies to both faculty and student productivity. Dr. Michie added that unusual or complex situations can be detailed in explanatory notes. Institutions can indicate in a footnote if their publications are unique or duplicative.

Dr. Hermond and Dr. Litvinov asked if the number of faculty are measured by headcount or full-time equivalency. Dr. Goeman responded that "core faculty" is the headcount, which can include "other individuals integral to the program." That includes people supervising dissertations and serving on committees. GEAC members recommended against language that specifies core faculty as at least "50 percent" assigned to the program, and Dr. Maddox suggested the language "appropriately credentialed individuals integral to the doctoral program." GEAC members agreed by consensus.

Dr. Butler-Purry recommended not using the word "equivalent" to define full-time student enrollment (FTSE), since the "full-time" standard can vary by program. Dr. Goeman suggested that the definition of FTSE be the same as that used in the reporting manuals for consistency. GEAC members agreed by consensus.

Dr. Sheridan asked how to determine if a program is a "research doctorate" or a "professional program." Dr. Goeman replied that Coordinating Board staff decided to let institutions make that determination.

After some discussion about variation among types of medical and academic programs, GEAC members agreed by consensus to remove the "teaching load" characteristic.

8. Update on Strategic Plan for Graduate Education – Dr. Allen Michie

Dr. Michie said that Coordinating Board will review the final recommendations from the RAND report and incorporate them into an outline for future GEAC comment. Dr. Singh made a motion

to create a GEAC subcommittee, including members from different types of institutions, to work closely with Coordinating Board staff on the development of the Strategic Plan. The motion carried.

9. Open discussion of issues affecting graduate education – Dr. Sonny Singh

Dr. Singh announced that there was good discussion at the recent Association of Texas Graduate Schools meeting, including enthusiasm for the organization taking a more active role in shaping state policy on higher education.

The meeting was adjourned.

