

**Tennessee Conference of Graduate Schools
Spring 2014 Meeting Minutes
Tuesday, April 01, 2014
Tennessee Board of Regents
1415 Murfreesboro Pike, Nashville TN**

Attendees

Dixie Dennis, APSU
Mark Stephens, Tn Tech
Karin Bartoszuk, ETSU
Brian Maxson, ETSU
Pamela Knox, TBR
Isaac Donkor, UTHSC

Mary Kyle, U of Memphis
Donald Thomason, UTHSC
Cecilia McIntosh, ETSU
Michael Orok, TSU
Vicki Glasscock, Lee University
Betty Dandridge Johnson, THEC

Call to Order

The TCGS Meeting was called to order by Dixie Dennis, TCGS President at 8:30 a.m.

Approval of Fall 2013 Minutes

A motion was made by Cecilia McIntosh and seconded by Michael Orok to approve the Minutes as presented. Motion carried.

Treasurer's Report

- *Presented by Michael Orok, TCGS Treasurer – (See attachment.)
- *Two spreadsheets were distributed. One provided updated information concerning membership dues. The other detailed payment of conference registration fees for 2013-2014.
- *Cecilia McIntosh made a motion to approve the report; Dixie Dennis seconded. The motion carried.

Institutional Reports

UTHSC – Don Thomason

- *The UTHSC SACS accreditation process is ongoing, awaiting a system-wide audit
- *The THEC 5-7 year cycle of periodic program review is bringing up the Nursing Ph.D. program for review in 3 weeks
- *The College is going to begin offering pre- and post-doctoral fellowship application incentives - \$200 for first-time submissions
- *Participation in the Graduate Student Executive Committee is not outstanding, so we are considering an incentive stipend. We would appreciate any thoughts or experience with this.
- *The ET/D process is undergoing re-evaluation and long-range strategic planning with a reinvigorated working group.

- *Implementing an Outstanding Mentor Academy, with a cohort of five each year who will work over a two-year period to implement innovative ideas for training graduate students and postdoctoral trainees.
- * Submitted a BEST proposal for non-academic career awareness and strategies for graduate students and postdocs. Partnering with Memphis Bioworks and PeopleFirst to develop training models, including focus group strategies for identifying successful techniques.

TSU, Michael Orok

- *Fall enrollment remained flat. The graduate school gained 10 students as compared to last spring with just a little under 2000 total graduate student population. Largest increase is in the area of international students. TSU enrolled a total of about 176 graduate students this spring semester.
- *Since fall 2013, the graduate school participated in about 10 recruitment/career fairs.
- *Graduate School is working with Ellucian company to electronically upgrade its application and admissions processes.
- *Diversity and Inclusion Summit on HBCU's held at TSU March 23-25, 2014
- *TSU celebrated 50 years of Honors Program on March 26, 2014 with News Anchor, Soledad O'Brien as keynote speaker
- *Dean Orok elected as VP of the Conference of Minority Public Administrators (COMPA) and Executive Committee member of the Conference of Southern Graduate Schools (CSGS)
- *TSU held Research Symposium on March 31, 2014
- *TSU Women Basketball team finished the 2013-2014 season with a winning OVC record for the second consecutive season (9-7)
- *TSU Day on the Hill on March 18, 2014
- *Deputy Ag. Secretary Harden visited College of Agriculture at TSU
- *TSU Agriculture Day on the Hill March 24-25, 2014
- *Graduate School awarded Helen Barrett Research Scholarship to Helen Maziku Of the College of Engineering
- *TSU president will keynote Annual Scholarship Banquet in Jackson, Tn on April 6, 2014

ETSU, Cecilia McIntosh

- *Fall 2013 was flat, but spring enrollment was up a record 100 students
- *New certificate program in athletic administration, offered online and on campus
- *Research forum conducted this week with a record of 230 students
- *Award ceremony in the spring with 50 awards
- *Piloted Outstanding Graduate Mentor Award
- *Thesis/dissertation boot camp four weekends, Friday night and Saturday
- *GRE and GMAT prep workshops conducted
- *Official training site for Olympic weight-lifting, now canoe/kayaking with two

Ex-Olympians

*Moved to “digital commons” – Library owns this – thesis and dissertations

Austin Peay, Dixie Dennis

*New president and interim Provost

*Completing new dorm and football stadium

*Focus on marketing and recruitment. Established a new graduate program event

*Dixie’s position has been split so that it is now “Dean of the College of Graduate Studies”

TBR, Pam Knox

*Thanks to Celia for doing her job. Before her time, TBR and THEC want to change adversarial relationship with campuses. Now more collaborative, trying to condense work and streamline down to three months

*Moratorium coming up – July 1st deadline

*Fifteen graduate programs in process of doing letters of intent

*Communication suggested some programs will never see the light of day – stop wasting time – recognize that priorities change and may withdraw their letter of intent

*Betty commented that if they have graduate programs in the queue there will be an opportunity to discuss with both systems beginning July 1st. Campus will review programs, THEC will review academic policies, public agenda 2015 planning

*Pam – Going on thirty day review process – ongoing (communicated on Jan 22nd per Betty). Part of trying to improve process is looking at piloting electronic submission of forms through D2L before moratorium is over. THEC may have access as well.

*Betty – Excellent idea...bypasses file size issue...sharing files is easier...includes draft guidelines for development of interdisciplinary programs and development of accelerated UG to GR programs, makes “how to’s” available; encourages people to work on cutting edge programs.

THEC, Betty Dandridge Johnson

*Program productivity review should have trickled down – low producing programs – minimum of five grads per year (for Dr. 3 per year) 13% of programs on that list

*Graduate Certificates – Need queue approved by governing board, minimum of 9 credit hours up to 18; 150 graduate certificate programs exist. These represent forty per cent of degrees awarded last year. Forty per cent just exist (Celia commented that some students work on certificates while also working on a degree. Some students begin certificate programs and then move to a degree program. Pam – Certificate programs serve as “skill Builder” programs.

Memphis University – Mary Kyle (in for Karen Weddle West)

- *Introduced Emily Elderbrock, first winner of the TCGS Graduate Student Thesis Award
- *New President and new Provost...time of transition
- *New Ph.D. in Health Systems and Policies

Election of Officers

The following officers were elected and approved unanimously:

- *Don Thomason – President
- *Mark Stephens – President-Elect
- *Michael Orok – Treasurer
- *Vicki Glasscock – Secretary

***Presentation by TBR Chancellor, John Morgan: The Complete College Tennessee Act and Its Role in Graduate Education**

- Post-secondary policy in Tennessee and where Graduate Education fits
- Bredesen – March 09 conversation started regarding higher education – not out loud but there was conversation about the structure of public education in Tennessee – consolidation or pulling apart different ideas.
- Gates Foundation involvement brought to Tennessee help in technical expertise. Once they entered the focus became – what is it that public higher education needs to do to contribute to the state’s economic development? Tennessee is a poor state. The issue is more about what higher education needs to do – never clear connections between state government and higher education. We see institution-specific missions. The **Complete College Tennessee Act 2010** – gave clarity to what state government thinks higher education should be doing with certificates, diplomas, associates, bachelors, masters and higher, if Tennessee is going to be participating in this “flat world.” Emphases include:
 - Student progression at all levels
 - Outcome-based levels – funding tied to formulas and a huge piece (80%) will be driven by outcomes – mostly driven by what we *not* doing.
 - Differentiate among universities – research and service, expenditures, production of graduate students; relative value of graduate students with weights adjusted according to college missionExamples:
 - 1)Element one is very much a Bredesen creation of the expectation that UTK will be more closely related to the Oak Ridge laboratory – UTK may be elevated to a top twenty-five public research institution.
 - 2) Element two – Research Memphis University consortium with Health Science community (St. Jude, etc.) with continued interest to make it work. This

will be a focus of new president at Memphis University.

*The conversation is frustrating right now for private and public graduate schools. It is all about the work force. This does not mean that graduate degrees or academic degrees are not important. Eight per cent of the work force has graduate degrees now – can project to 2020. Politics have people focused on higher education – too focused on workplace skills. We need to improve the *quality* of the work force. We also need to focus not so much on the current economy but on the economy we want to have – regarding the expansion of knowledge required to meet the broader needs of future. That discussion will evolve but we must do a better job of producing successful students. Graduate education plays a critical role in undergraduate success by involving undergraduate students in research, attracting highly qualified faculty, by creating vibrant robust graduate programs critical to their success.

Following Dr. Morgan's comments, discussion of the issues ensued as follows:

- *Celia McIntosh Is there discussion happening regarding the requirement of graduate degrees in jobs in certain fields like the health industry, counselors, nurse practitioners, or physical therapy?
- *Morgan – DNP is a good example. We must get past the hurdles of moving forward. There is lots of discussion at THEC/TBR, but this is not a big part of the policy discussion at the state level right now. The need is recognized but it is not currently part of the discussion.
- *Michael Orok – Is it possible for institutions to change the conversation?
- *Morgan – I wish I knew. Graduate education is recognized as *outcome*. It is there, but is not explicitly talked about. The weight will change over time. The elevation of post-secondary education is so much a part of the priority that we don't question the funding mechanisms. Priorities get funded. We need to figure out how to elevate the importance of what we do (including higher education). The sixty-seven per cent of the population who do not have a higher education degree find it hard to convince the legislature, business leaders, etc. to act on funding, but we are working on it.
- *Celia McIntosh – Does the educational attainment of the legislature mirror the population in general?
- *Morgan – Generally, the state house is educated but must be re-elected by the general population. In politics in Tennessee, there has been a significant shift to right with extreme positions – if the moderates do not convey the right view, they may be replaced. Politics is driven by the extremes to avoid opposition. There is a clear role to play to make our state the kind of place we want to be.
- *Pam Knox – What about the corporations coming into Tennessee? Most of those jobs are related to community colleges and undergraduate level. The personnel with graduate degrees they bring with them will eventually leave. We can provide qualified replacement personnel.
- *Morgan – The creation of jobs in Tennessee is not because big companies create jobs. Job numbers come from small business startups, etc. Jobs are created by highly educated people. Tremendous home grown businesses come out of business development. These are the real numbers. As big company people leave, they recruit locally.
- *Isaac Donkor – A solid highly educated workforce is a good attraction for companies locating here.

- *Don Thomason – If students complete college in Tennessee, they often go out of state for a job.
- *Michael Orok– It appears while current conversation drives public policy, the noises from policy-making environment affects decisions at our institutions. This is bothersome.
- *Morgan – We must look at the outcome-based formula...the *value* of graduate education. This represents the very real economic benefit to your institution. We need to help others to understand. We need to show how graduate education helps undergraduate education, general between retention, graduation rate, etc. and how it affects the outcome of institution

TCGS Business

- *The meeting site for Fall, 2014 will be in Memphis October 19-20. UT Health Science personnel will communicate details to members.
- *Michael Orok will send out membership renewal notices and registration for Fall, 2014.
- *Don Thomason noted that, per Karen Weddle West’s suggestion, consideration will be given to moving the legislative session earlier.

Lunch

***Presentation – Dr. Tristan Denley: Implications of Architected Choices at the Undergraduate Level on the Future of Graduate Education**

*The idea of architected choices is to help frame decisions undergraduates make as they work through their degree. First generation students are often overwhelmed by the number of choices they face. This assists them in making more informed choices. If they know, let’s help get them there. If they do not know, let’s provide them with an opportunity to talk, to craft a schedule to help guide their decisions. Some students know *generally* what they want to do – we want them to recognize how we can help them move through the program (4 year plan – 8 semester sequence) to meet all academic and other requirements. It is not easy. Curriculum issues are important to know.

*This is an effort to look afresh at gateway classes – revitalize pathways – consider deterrents to success. Classes they need are not offered when they need them. This affects the success of these students. We will help students but also help ourselves. This is not unique to undergraduates, but also graduates. We need to make sure what is needed is what is offered. We are very committed to graduate education. Graduate programs do not articulate well how undergraduates can link up to graduate degrees. The professional master’s degree is the new wave. We need to provide opportunities to provide additional education for working professionals. “Critical conversations” by TBR – Seek to understand all research activity that takes place in the system. They videotaped interviews with fifty chairs of excellence to determine the effects of what they do in order to...1) help people outside the organization understand the relevance of what they do; 2) inform faculty and graduate students that what they do can be collaborative with others doing the same thing; 3) let legislators know. We want to reassure you that although I am talking more about undergraduate, we are committed to graduate education.

Follow-up comments/discussion...

Pam Knox – Architected choices assists in getting the student to identify a field of interest. If the students get through the choices, they finish faster. It opens door for more accelerated master's degrees.

Denley – Eight semesters is the way to do it. Complete a masters in a year; 3+1 programs – accelerated programs. These change the pathways to student success. For a student contemplating two majors, which do they prefer – undergraduate, or Undergraduate *and* master's?

Mark Stephens question – Has there been any movement on the “lecturer position” non-tenure, rolling 3-yr contract? Would this free up tenure-track professors to teach graduate-level? Hiring a large number of tenure-track people is not a good thing to do financially right now.

Graduate Education Week in Tennessee

The date for Graduate Education Week in Tennessee was changed. The Legislative Plaza event was the week before this year. This was out of our control. Celia McIntosh asked if legislators all received electronic copies of the booklets/abstracts. Copies can be provided if needed. Next year all abstracts will go to Karen Weddle-West rather than to the graduate assistant. We will need to do the Legislative Plaza session earlier – first or second week in February.

Dixie Dennis expressed gratitude for Senator Kyle for his help and support.

Meeting Registration Policy

A question arose concerning whether the registration fee for TCGS meetings should be changed for those who are not able to attend the dinner the night before or should it remain the same for all. Celia McIntosh commented that it is fine to keep as is. A motion was made by Don Thomason and seconded by Celia McIntosh to keep the current policy. The motion was carried.

Thesis Award Discussion

There was a discussion regarding whether thesis award recipients should be eligible to receive the stipend if they are unable to do the presentation. Celia noted that the presentation is an opportunity for refinement and recommending changes. The idea of the presentation was to up the profile. Dixie asked what should happen if the student does not present. Celia responded that no stipend should be awarded if the student does not present. Mary commented that that policy is stated in BOLD print on the form. Karin noted they had had this discussion because the student graduated last year and may have moved to other state and was not able to do the presentation. Michael stated that if the designated winner does not do the hill presentation he/she should forfeit the award. Following additional discussion, a motion was made by Celia that the recipient of the thesis award must present to the TCGS group in person or by Skype in order to receive the stipend. The motion was seconded by Don Thomason and was carried.

A second related motion was made by Celia and seconded by Michael Orok that the student recipient be required to present on the hill during Graduate Education Week in Tennessee in order to receive the award. The motion was carried. Celia noted that nominations would need to be submitted in the fall if the date is moved to February. Mary indicated that weather may become a factor in February and that she would check with her father concerning the date.

Karin expressed thanks to the Thesis Committee and shared the following issues:

- 1) Add Master's Thesis (not Dissertation)
- 2) Nomination letter from nominating professor w/link to PDF (for easier access)
- 3) Printed name of Dean w/signature of Graduate Dean, not a faculty member
- 4) Deadline Date included

Michael questioned whether the submission is fair if the student has already finished the thesis and is currently in a Ph.D. program. One student had a doctorate and was going back for a second masters. Is this fair? Celia asked if they submitted a master's thesis. If so, who are we to pre-suppose? If the university submitted it, it is ok. A motion was made by Michael Orok and seconded by Celia to accept the minor additions as per Karin's committee. The motion was carried. Don Thomason will decide on the deadline. The Legislative session date will be the first Wednesday in March. Campuses will send nominees by January 10th.

TCGS Business Continued

Michael Orok expressed concern over the lack of response and registration for meetings on the part of members. Don Thomason indicated that he will call the membership list to encourage involvement and attendance. Celia noted that people retire or move to different positions and the information does not filter down. She also noted the need to make ourselves relevant. The fact that meetings take place TBR or THEC may be more attractive to prospective members. We also need to make members aware that there are TCGS members on board of CGS and that the state of Tennessee is recognized at the national level. There is also the need for relevance to private institutions.

The meeting was adjourned.

