

**Tennessee Conference of Graduate Schools  
Fall 2016 Meeting Minutes  
Friday, October 23, 2015  
Tennessee Tech University, TJ Farr Building 108  
Cookeville, TN 38501**

**Attendees**

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|----------------------------|---------------------------|
| Karin Bartoszuk, ETSU      | Mary Kyle, U of Memphis   |
| Ernest Brothers, UTK       | Brian Maxson, ETSU        |
| Alice Camuti, TTU          | Cecilia McIntosh, ETSU    |
| John Cox, UTHSC            | John Robinson, TSU        |
| Stephanie N. Galloway, UTK | Joanne G. Romagni, UTC    |
| Mike Gotcher, APSU         | Alex Sekwat, TSU          |
| Scott Handy, MTSU          | Mark Stephens, TTU        |
| Carolyn R. Hodges, UTK     | Don Thomason, UTHSC       |
| Pamela Knox, TBR           | Felicia Washington, UTCHS |
| Jim Kierulff, U of Memphis |                           |

**Call to Order**

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

**Approval of Spring 2015 Minutes**

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Dr. Maxson, TCGS secretary, stated that institutional updates did not make it into the spring minutes, and asked that institutional updates for the fall 2015 meeting be provided in an email in the weeks after the meeting. Minutes for spring 2015 were approved.

**Treasurer's Report**

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The beginning balance was \$9,544.16 and ending balance is \$9,666.42. Treasurer's report was approved.

**Institutional Updates**

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Updates were provided by each institution present, and the following summaries reflect the information provided to the secretary in the weeks after the meeting.

1. ETSU
  - a. Current enrollment exceeds 2300 students.
  - b. New programs have begun to be offered in Digital Marketing and an Ed.D. in Global Sport Leadership.
  - c. Continued success with the Graduate Student Support Specialist. The program presently has an 80% retention rate among students using the service.
  - d. The Thesis Dissertation Boot Camp continues to thrive.
  - e. The GRE Prep course is offered every semester and fills to capacity every time. This

semester a second section was opened up which also filled to capacity.

- f. Professional development remains an emphasis for our graduate school. We offer six professional development classes for faculty and other classes for graduate students.
- g. ETSU is continuing to use technology to try to address staffing needs.

## 2. University of Memphis

- a. A new application system, with applicant committee review support, is being sought for implementation before the next academic year. Decision Desk and CollegeNet have been reviewed at this time.
- b. Graduate student professional development seminars continue this semester with titles such as Pedagogy, Negotiation Skills, and Stress Management.
- c. The Graduate School moved to the FedEx Institute of Technology to bring more visibility and momentum toward innovation and collaboration.
- d. A health plan is now being offered to graduate students.

## 3. Tennessee Tech University

- a. Working on streamlining the admissions process:
  - 1. All applications must be complete including successful entrance exam scores prior to sending to a department. This means less provisional status based on test score.
  - 2. “Auto-denial”-several departments are allowing the Graduate College to automatically deny admission if the student admissions criteria does not meet a minimum standard (as defined by the department).
  - 3. Separated processes to allow more efficiency: hired part-time workers to scan and index student documents; pulling daily reports on applicants; emailing applicant immediately about their missing application items; pulling daily ‘ready to process’ reports to ensure applicants flow to the department as soon as the application is complete.
- b. Streamlining graduation processes:
  - 1. No longer sending out thesis/dissertations for binding. Instead, students order directly through Proquest.
  - 2. Created a Graduate Assistantship website for departments to use for all GA processes and procedures and forms.
- c. Digital marketing endeavors:
  - Focusing on on-line digital advertising with FindaPhd.com sites and LinkedIn; also creating new ‘landing pages’ for these digital ads to point to.
- d. Hobson’s CRM implementation:
  - 1. After 9 months we are finally moving forward with our implementation
  - 2. Visiting with UTC on November 17 to discuss Hobson’s and Banner programming interface.

## 4. University of Tennessee

- a. Enrollment for the fall 2015 semester was 5,257, which is slightly up (42 students) from a year ago.
- b. New Programs include a PhD in Entomology, Plant Pathology, and Nematology with

multiple concentrations; a new Doctorate in Public Health; a Master of Law degree; a new accelerated dual program in the College of Veterinary Medicine; and a new concentration in the M.S. in Comparative and Experimental Medicine.

c. Staff Changes:

1. October 2015- Hired an Information Specialist, Dr. Sean Hendricks, to reconstruct the website, develop marketing materials, and manage communications.

2. Dr. Joy DeSensi, Associate Dean, retired in May of 2015.

d. Other Events/News:

1. There are 13 current students in the NSF Graduate Research Fellowship Program.

2. Held first annual Graduate and Professional Student Appreciation Week, April 6th-10th, 2014.

5. MTSU

a. On-going development and implementation of dynamic forms (by the company Radius) and electronic degree plans and advising (DegreeWorks).

b. Proposed increase in English language proficiency standards (ideally for Fall 2017). The new standards will be a TOEFL of 79 and an IELTS of 6.5 as well as iTEP of 4.5 and two different English language training partnerships (ELS and IEI).

c. New programs: MS in Finance; an MA in Liberal Arts; a concentration in Agricultural Education Leadership within the M.Ed. in Administration and Supervision (starting spring 2016); and Master of Library Science (starting Fall 2016); there are additional new concentrations in Healthcare Management and Music Management.

6. University of Tennessee Health Science Center

a. Thanks to everyone for sharing your CAS system efforts and experience. We have chosen Liaison's WebAdmit/Uni CAS system. The choice was made, in part, to be consistent with professional CAS systems (e.g., PharmCAS, Nursing CAS) and Liaison's ability to turn it around quickly. We set an aggressive timetable of four months to go-live, and are on target to be ready Nov. 4.

b. SACS accreditation. Full accreditation July 1 with no findings..

c. New VC for Academic, Faculty, and Student Affairs, Dr. Lori Gonzalez.

d. Monetary fellowship incentives are being treated as financial aid. Any other options?

e. UTHSC has implemented ACAlog for catalog management.

7. University of Tennessee Chattanooga

a. The University is experiencing change

1. Dr. Joanne Romagni joined us in July as Vice Chancellor for Research and Dean of the graduate school.

2. Dr. Joanne Romagni is one of three new members of the executive team supporting Chancellor Angle.

b. Tennessee Promise

1. The impact of Tennessee Promise resulted in a decline in the size of the freshman class of 2015.

2. Due to this, the decision was made to strengthen enrollment services at both the undergraduate and graduate levels by implementing a customer relations management system-Hobson's Radius. Graduate applications, using this system, went live September 1, 2015.

c. Graduate Programs

1. We have a number of graduate programs actively developing accelerated graduate programs, also known as advanced bachelor's to master's programs.

2. Our hope is to encourage our stronger students to continue their education at UTC.

## **Discussion Items**

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1. International transcript analysis – how is each school vetting and converting international transcripts? Some schools are vetting in house, while others are using outside services. Some schools use WES, while other schools rely on other services.
2. Pam Knox from TBR extended regrets from Betty at THEC that she could not attend the meeting. She reminded the members present that the moratorium had ended in July. She also stated that there have been recent policy modifications, and asked that THEC policies be read as they might differ from TBR. She pointed to programs that are both moving forward and in development. Finally, she stated that traditionally TBR has often focused on community colleges and undergraduate education, but that graduate education is going to be the new focus. She wants feedback on this to maximize the opportunity.
3. EVEA – How are different schools verifying/not verifying residencies for EVEA, and then determining who is eligible for public financial aid and who is not? UT stated that the director of admissions is in charge of that procedure, and if there is a problem then it goes to a different office. At times legal counsel is consulted. The question was asked, can a driver's license take care of EVEA? The answer was that no, a driver's license no longer is enough to verify residency for EVEA purposes. Group members offered examples of specific types of cases that they have been encountering at their schools, and some worried that it may not be possible to create a system that would catch the most complicated and idiosyncratic situations.
4. Application Fees – The request to change the TBR policy regulating application fees was approved. Schools may now request application fees within the new policy using the normal process. The question was asked if a school can change and/or charge different application fees for domestic versus international applications. The answer was yes, that is possible.
5. FLSA change – in order for postdocs and graduate students to be exempt from FLSA they have to make less than \$50,400 a year, otherwise there are various restrictions on their work, such as they receive time and a half after working forty hours in a week. How can this be addressed? One idea is to classify all postdocs and graduate students as students and then to create certain percentages of work and education as their primary duties. For graduate students the issue seems straightforward, but the issue is complicated for

postdocs, particularly as at some schools postdocs are not handled by graduate schools, and at some schools postdocs are classified as employees.

6. Transcripts – Should transcripts reflect disciplinary actions taken against students? The problem is that students could be dismissed and then, if that is not noted on a transcript, they could then be admitted into a new program where the admission committee could potentially be unaware of the student's past indiscretions. One concern is that legal offices might argue that the university is liable for the student if there is no note on the transcript. Some institutions do not list any such notes on transcripts. One member brought forth a national survey that suggests that 5% of institutions list all such infractions, 15% list only major infractions. One concern raised was that notes on transcripts might lead to more conflicts, which all present agreed was a possibility. Another concern is that, without transcript notes, a student could leave a program without consequences, and a note could potentially stop that mindset. One member suggested that a student could just apply elsewhere without mentioning enrollment at a previous school. The response was that policies state that falsification or omission of that type on an application is grounds for dismissal. Members present thought the debate was an interesting one, and suggested that the idea be taken up for discussion by CGS at the national level. The issue does not seem to violate FERPA regulations. The suggestion was that this topic be presented to the organizers of CSGS for discussion at the next meeting in Charlotte.
7. An initial thought was presented that graduate education/research day on the Hill will be February 16, 2016. The question was posed, should graduate education week correspond with this day on the hill? The consensus was that it should correspond, and that TCGS should be present to organize a space at the capital for the graduate education/research day. The suggestion was presented to have dinner on Sunday, February 14, the TCGS meeting on the 15<sup>th</sup>, and then day on the hill on the 16<sup>th</sup>. Members objected to this timeline because of the conflict with the Valentine's Day holiday. A counter proposal was offered to have the spring 2016 meeting of TCGS correspond with the meeting of CSGS. The motion was made and seconded and the motion was opened to discussion. The question was posed, what of the student presentation for the thesis award? The group did not have a hard answer to this, but agreed to continue to explore options with an aim towards meeting at CSGS. The motion was carried. Further discussion pertained to the date for the day on the hill. The suggestion was made to have it be February 24. The motion was made to set the day for February 24 and to request that graduate education/research week should correspond to the week of the 24<sup>th</sup>. The suggestion was made to try to get mezzanine again like last year. The motion passed.
8. The question was posed: Who is chairing the thesis committee? The committee in the past consisted of Karin Bartoszuk, chair Randy Walker, Scott Handy, and Jasbir Dhaliwal. The question was asked, does the committee have expected terms of service? The answer was no. The job of the committee chair was explained: The chair makes sure that the announcement goes out and that there is a flyer for the award. The nominations solicited go to the chair of the committee. The chair then sends the nominations out to the committee members and then collects the votes on the winning thesis. The chair then

informs the president of TCGS and the nominees. The decision of the group was that John Cox would become the new chair of this committee, while Karin Bartoszek would remain on the committee as a member. The suggestion was made to formalize the award process, committee duties, and terms and then to put in the TCGS by-laws.

9. The question was posed: How about organizing a recruiting event for the state of TN? The response was that something like that exists already in west TN, where several recruitment fairs are coordinated. The group agreed that a recruiting event sounded like a good idea and asked, would the event be only for graduate recruitment or also serve other purposes? One response was that, on the career side, there is a career fair in Knoxville and one in Nashville, and perhaps the event could tie into those fairs? One response suggested that the Knoxville career fair did not have a heavy graduate focus and thus might not be a good event to tie into. In Memphis, the graduate recruitment event is only for graduate schools, but it takes a lot of work to coordinate it with other schools. The comment was made that ETSU has a nice recruitment fair, but that the group would like to see recruitment become more organized beyond the local level.

The business portion of the meeting concluded at 11am for a tour at Tennessee Tech and for lunch.