

**Tennessee Conference of Graduate Schools  
Spring 2017 Meeting  
Wednesday, February 8, 2017  
Sheraton Hotel  
623 Union Street  
Nashville, TN 37219**

**Attendees:**

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Jasbir Dhaliwat, U of M  
Felicia Washington, UTHSC  
Karin Bartoszuk, ETSU  
Greg Linton, Johnson University  
Roger Kreuz, U of M  
Daleniece Higgins, U of M  
Ramona Whiteworth, TSU  
Stashia L. Emanuel, TSU  
Isaac Donker, UTHSC  
Don Thomason, UTHSC

Mary Kyle, U of M  
Pam Knox, THEC  
Scott Kirkby, ETSU  
Chad Brooks, APSU  
Marian Levy, U of M  
Ernest L. Brothers, UTK  
Trudie E. Thomas, TSU  
Lucian Yates, III, TSU  
Scott Handy, MTSU  
Ethan Carver, UTC

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**Call to Order:**

At 12:05pm the TCGS meeting was called to order by Jasbir Dhaliwat, the president, following introductions of previous presidents, attendees (see above), and thanking FedEx for sponsoring the lunch.

**Presentation:**

Don Thomason presented: *Tennessee Graduate Schools: Building the Workforce for the Future*

**Cake Cutting:**

Honoring former TCGS presidents, and 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary

**Announcement and Presentation of the TCGS Thesis Award:**

Kyra M. Bryant, *The Rise and Fall of the Drag Coefficient in Wind Stress Calculations for Hurricane Wind Speeds with a Case Study*, (directed by Dr. Muhammad Akbar).

**Approval of Spring 2016 Meeting:**

The motion was made (Ethan Carver) and second by Chad Brooks. (no changes were requested)

**Bylaw changes:**

Changes to the Bylaws were discussed prior to the meeting, to extend the terms for president (2 years), secretary (2 years) and treasurer (3 years). A handout was provided prior to the meeting

The motion was made (Don Thomason) and second by Ethan Carver. The motion was approved by nine votes unanimously.

### **Treasurer's Report:**

The beginning balance was \$8,151.72 (Feb. 2016) and the ending balance was \$8,522.79. The report was distributed to all attending members. A motion for approval was made (Chad Brooks) and second (Don Thomason).

### **Institutional Updates:**

Updates were provided by each institution present, and presenters were asked to provide the notes via e-mail to the secretary.

#### 1. Austin Peay

In the fall of 2016, graduate students experienced a 9.2% drop in graduate enrollment with no apparent link to cause. However, renewed energies from faculty, chairs and deans, plus a targeted marketing plan has collectively resulted in a 6% gain for spring 2017 enrollment. For fall 2017, APSU is adding a few new graduate programs to expand the scope of offerings which will hopefully increase enrollments and reduce enrollment-volatility. Administratively, APSU has had several recent changes in leadership in the past two years with a new president, new provost, two interim deans, one new interim associate provost and two new associate provosts. APSU's undergraduate enrollments appear good and growing. Fall 2016, APSU launched a new strategic plan initiative that appears well received by faculty and staff. In preparation of the Focus Act, APSU is reformatting all policies and preparing to welcome the new Board of Trustees and the new processes of THEC.

#### 2. ETSU

- a. Record fall enrollment for a second year, stayed steady for spring
- b. New programs approved: ETSU/TTU joined DNP with 6 concentrations, Certificate in Response to Intervention (education), three different certificates in special education areas, online MS in Human Services in fall 2016
- c. Like other TBR universities we are preparing for transition to governing board
- d. Professional development opportunities are increasing for faculty and students: thesis/dissertation boot camp, research grants and awards will be provided in the spring, six courses offered for faculty professional development, GRE preparation workshops continue to fill quickly, *Meet the Deans* is increasing attendance, and a presentation about mentoring will be given at CSGS.
- e. New application system is being explored and hopefully launched soon.

- f. Applications continue to increase including international applications. We will track to see if there is any potential impact regarding recent events.
3. Johnson University
  - a. No updates received
4. MTSU
  - a. No updates received
5. Tennessee State  
Not present
6. TTU
  - a. No updates received
7. U of M
  - a. Graduate enrollment is up 4.75%
  - b. We are marketing graduate certificates as a pathway to a Master's degree
  - c. Implementation of Decision Desk application software for a centralized admissions process
  - d. Emphasizing growth based on existing 120 graduate degree programs
  - e. Concerned about THEC processes for new programs given the transition from TBR to our own governing board
  - f. Looking to get private sector support for graduate assistantships
8. UTC  
Our enrollment counts increased for both Fall 2016 (4.5%) and Spring 2017 (2.8%).  
Our full-time equivalency increased for both Fall 2016 (5.1%) and Spring 2017 (4.7%).

We are digitally marketing the Graduate School using Facebook marketing and Google Ads that target a specific group (Graduate School eligible in Facebook), and region (local area). We have two large umbrella groups "Urban Systems and Smart City" and "Healthy Living" that most of our graduate programs can participate. This is driving an increase in school inquiries over the same time as last year, and we hope to convert some of these inquiries into enrolled students. This is a small project and we will be tracking the outcomes of this closely over the next year.

We are undergoing significant program revisions with many curriculum changes in the graduate school to update programs. Also, we are working within the system and THEC to bring a few new programs to campus.

## 9. UT Health Science Center

- a. We are beginning to complete our second application cycle with UniCAS/WebAdmit. Very pleased.
- b. We have begun posting dissertations on Digital Commons, and will begin posting theses and Masters projects there now. We observed approximately 4000 downloads in the first 7 months of operation. This success aligns with an item in our Strategic Plan.
- c. UTHSC decided honor its commitment to raise exempt employee salaries, including postdoc stipends, to the FLSA minimum that was set to go into effect December 1, 2016.
- d. We have decided on a productivity measure for postdocs that is the number of papers published or submitted for publication, and the number of presentations in an academic year.
- e. The new clinical simulation center should open this summer. We believe this will be an important component for a planned Healthcare Quality Improvement Certificate.
- f. The students are doing their first 3 Minute Thesis competition at Graduate Research Day (April 7, 2017). The plan is to develop the competition to send a student to the CSGS competition in 2018.
- g. We have added two new tracks to existing programs: Health Informatics and Information Management to the Health Outcomes and Policy PhD Program, and Operative, Cariology, and General Dentistry to the Master of Dental Science Program. We are working on adding a Genetics, Genomics, and Informatics track to the Biomedical Sciences PhD Program.

## 10. UTK

- a. 2016 was a year of transition for the Graduate School at University of Tennessee, Knoxville. After many years of dedicated service, Dr. Carolyn Hodges returned to the faculty, and we began the year with Dr. Mary Albrecht serving as the Interim Dean. In April, Dr. Dixie Thompson became Vice Provost and Dean of the Graduate School. Several important things happened during 2016 and highlights are listed below.
- b. Completed campus-wide online survey – We launched an online survey to hear from students, faculty, administrators and staff. The purpose was to understand the things working well and also areas for improvement. We received over 250 completed surveys and have been using that data as a basis for making changes.
- c. Launched our new website and enhanced communications – Improvements to our website include: an easier to navigate site, more frequent updates to the site, and information targeted toward a variety of users (prospective students, current students, faculty, etc.). Additionally, we revamped our communications

strategy with students and academic units to help improve the flow of information into and out of the Graduate School.

- d. Announced the Tennessee Fellowships for Graduate Excellence – This program applies \$4M in recurring money to help attract exceptional graduate students to our campus. Goals for this plan include: helps with recruitment of high quality students, enhances the ‘brand’ of graduate education at UTK, allows for careful tracking of these Fellows, and sets the stage for development initiatives (college, department, and university).
- e. Enhanced centralized support for recruitment of graduate students – Two major changes were made in fall 2016 to enhance centralized support for graduate student recruitment. We opened the Prospect software tool to departments across campus. This software tool is a communication platform that can be used to interact with and track prospective students. We already have over 45 departments participating. Additionally, we created a network of graduate recruiters from academic units. There are now approximately 20 people from around campus who meet periodically to share ideas and approaches on graduate student recruitment.
- f. Diversity initiatives – Dr. Ernest L. Brothers guided several diversity initiatives during 2016. As the Associate Dean of the Graduate School, Dr. Brothers currently serves as a Co-PI for the Program for Excellence and Equity in Research (PEER), a NIH training grant designed for the purpose of recruiting and professionally developing more underrepresented students to pursue PhDs in the biomedical and behavioral science fields. He serves as the Associate Director for Diversity Enhancement for the National Institute for Mathematical & Biological Synthesis (NIMBioS), advisor to the Multicultural Graduate Student Organization, a member of the Library Diversity Committee, and a member of the Equity and Diversity Committee in the Department of Public Health. Nationally, he served as member of the Diversity Committee for the National Association for Graduate Admissions Professionals (NAGAP). Dr. Brothers also served as an External Reviewer for the University of Minnesota’s Office of Diversity in Graduate Education.
- g. Dr. Brothers was recognized in 2016 for the ***Hardy Liston Jr. Symbol of Hope Award***, which goes to a faculty member, staff member, or friend of the University of Tennessee who demonstrates a commitment to diversity, multiculturalism, and appreciation of the differences in people and cultures on that campus.
- h. Diversity and Inclusion Academic Presentations and Publications

***Diversity and Mentoring in Academia***

Oak Ridge National Laboratory CareerLink Event Day, Oakridge, TN November 2016

***How Generational Diversity Can Influence Graduate Education***

2016 Annual Meeting North Carolina Council of Graduate Schools, Raleigh, NC October 2016

***Co-Presenter - The Portrait of NAGAP***

National Association of Graduate Admissions Professionals, Nashville, TN April 2016

***The Impact of Generational Diversity on Graduate Education***

Conference of Southern Graduate Schools, Charlotte, NC February 2016

Brothers, E. L. (2016). Generational diversity in graduate education. *GradEdge: Insights and Research on Graduate Education*. 5(6), 10-14.

Brothers, E. L., & Robinson, V. (2016). The portrait of nagap. *Perspectives*. 28(2), 7-9.

i. Recruitment

- Hosted **(9)** McNair students from the University of Montevallo for a campus visit to learn about the graduate school process and available graduate programs.
- Hosted **(3)** TRIO students from the University of Kentucky for a campus visit to learn about the graduate school process and available graduate programs.
- Worked with Jackson State University to provide a host department (Chemistry) at UT for one of their Research Initiative for Scientific Enhancement (RISE) students. RISE (R25) is a developmental program that seeks to increase the capacity of students underrepresented in the biomedical sciences to complete Ph.D. degrees in these fields.
- Co-sponsored and presented at the National Graduate Degrees for Minorities in Engineering and Science, Inc. (GEM) Graduate Lab with the Tickle College of Engineering. The mission of The National GEM Consortium is to enhance the value of the nation's human capital by increasing the participation of underrepresented groups (African Americans, American Indians, and Hispanic Americans) at the master's and doctoral levels in engineering and science. Recruited **(18)** potential URMs.
- Attended Southeastern Association of Educational Opportunity Program Personnel (SAEOPP) annual conference and recruited **(20)** potential McNair scholars.

- Attended FAMU Graduate Feeder School Program (GFSP) with PEER and Dr. Barry Bruce and recruited **(72)** potential URMs. The GFSP affords FAMU students the opportunity to receive advanced study in graduate programs not available at FAMU. The feeder arrangement was conceptualized and created in response to the national need to increase the number of African Americans participating in advanced graduate education.
  - Attended the Alabama State University Fall Career Fair and recruit **(44)** potential URMs.
  - Attended Fisk University Fair and recruited **(25)** potential URMs.
- j. Launched the Tennessee Doctoral Scholars Program – This program provides financial and academic support for three in-state doctoral fellows over a 3-year period. This program focuses on recruitment of racial and/or ethnic minority students. This program supplies three years of support with an annual stipend of \$20,000, \$2,500 for academic support, and tuition and fees. Other departmental expectations include providing a mentor that will enhance the scholar’s professional development and teaching expertise, and developing an Individual Development Plan for the fellow to ensure intended academic, professional development, and career goals are accomplished
- k. Conferred more degrees than in 2015 – We certified 1552 Master’s and Specialist in Education degrees (5% increase over 2015), 359 Doctoral (doesn’t include JD or DVM) degrees (7% increase), and 126 Graduate Certificates (7% increase) across spring, summer and fall 2016. In addition, we awarded 157 JD degrees and 79 DVM degrees in 2016.

11. Vanderbilt (not present)

12. THEC

- a. Betty was unable to attend but sends her greetings
- b. THEC is a regulatory commission and not a governing board
- c. Some THEC policies date back to 1988; all Academic Affairs policies will be reviewed in light of the FOCUS Act
- d. There are four people at THEC; two have been working on academic policy since mid-summer 2016
- e. Currently there are 19 academic affairs policies and all policies as they are being written are vetted through each campus
- f. Will be sent to provosts and presidents
- g. March 24, first four policies were approved by the Commission and the campuses were notified to start using them. They all relate to academic programs new and existing and establishing new academic units

- h. One component of the new program approval process to pay greater attention to is that of a feasibility study. The policy suggests using an external consulting group to determine if this is really the program the institution wants to invest in developing (UTK has done this in the past)
- i. Another set of Academic Affairs policies go to the Commission on May 11 and the final set in the fall.
- j. THEC is building into the approval policies 15-30 day response to campus
- k. All THEC meetings are open to the public, invited to join

### **Election and Executive Committee**

New presidents and executive committee were discussed and voted in:

President – Don Thomason (motion by Jasbir Dhaliwat, second by Chad Brooks)

President Elect—Ernest Brothers (motioned by Isaac Donker, second by Don Thomason)

Secretary – Mary Kyle (self-nomination, second by Jasbir Dhaliwat)

Treasurer—Chad Brooks (self-nomination, second by Jasbir Dhaliwat)

### **New Business**

Discussion about marketing graduate programs and the revision of brochures. Information should be sent to Don and Jasbir

Meeting was adjourned at 2:59 pm.