

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

**FACULTY MEETING  
September 9, 2021 – 3:00PM**

**MINUTES**

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**Present:** Jeffrey Frost, 2020-2021 Chair; Michael Galko, 2021-2022 Chair; Actor, Akimzhanov, Albuquerque Almeida Santos, Aldrich, Arur, Azhdarinia, Bankson, Bar-Eli, Bednar, Beierlein, Berdeaux, Bernstam, Blackburn, Bover, Brock, Cameron, Cantor, Carlin, Carmon, Chandra, Shine Chang, Jichao Chen, Ken Chen, Lisa Chen, Taiping Chen, Yiwen Chen, Zheng Chen, Xiaodong Cheng, F. Cole, Corredor, Cunha, Dabaghian, Daniel-MacDougall, De Lay, Dessauer, Dickey, Eckel-Mahan, Gomez-Manzano, Eisenhoffer, Ekmekcioglu, Flores, Fornage, Fries, Frigo, Gandhi, Garsin, Gorfe, Gonzalez Cendejas, Green, J. Gu, EY Han, Harrington, Hart, Hildebrandt, Hittelman, J. Horton, Jain Hu, K. Jones, Jun, Karmouty Quintana, Kaplan, Karras, H-E. Kim, M. Kim, Klegerman, Koehler, Komatsu, Konovalova, Kudchadker, Jayhun Lee, Tae Jin Lee, Yi-Ping Li, Yisheng Li, Ziyin Li, Chunru Lin, Lorenz, Lozano, Z. Lu, J. Ma, Marrelli, Marshak, Mattox, McCrea, McDonnell, M. Melancon, Milewicz, Miller, Moghaddam, Morales, Morano, Morrison, Mosher, Nagayama, Naora, Ni, Olson, S. Pan, Perez, Pickering, D. Piwnica-Worms, Plunkett, Pollard-Larkin, Post, Poulsen, Richie, Rong, Sahni, Sastry, Scaini, Seymour, JP Shen, Shadding, Singletary, Mary Ann Smith, Stavoe, Taegtmeier, Titus, K-L Tsai, Tsvetkov, Urayama, van Hoof, Venkatachalam, Venna, Walker, Bin Wang, Guocan Wang, Hongyu Wang, Jihong Wang, Linghua Wang, Xin Wang, Waxham, Weinstein, Wong, Danielle Wu, J. Wu, Liuqing Yang, Yao, C. Yee, C. Yin, H. Ying, Yoshimoto, You, Young, D. Yu, Z. Zhao, J. Zhang, S. Zhang, M. Zhu

**Staff/Administration:** Barker, Barnett, Carter, Chehab, Cruz Bruesch, Fern, Lademora, Lau, Lindheim, Orlando, Patterson, Rademacher, Sevilla, Sirisaengtaksin, Snow, Spitzenberger, Williamson

- 1. February 11, 2021 Faculty Meeting minutes were unanimously approved.**
- 2. Dr. Jeffrey Frost passed the gavel to Dr. Michael Galko the 2021-2022 Faculty President.**
- 3. Nomination of candidate(s) for 2021-2022 Vice President/President-Elect of the Graduate Faculty:  
Claire Singletary, MS, GCG**  
The Faculty voted unanimously to elect Claire Singletary as Graduate Faculty Vice President/President-Elect for 2021-2022.
- 4. Vote on chairs and new members of 2021-2022 Standing Committees**  
The Faculty voted unanimously to approve the slate of candidates as presented.
- 5. Dean's Report**  
Dr. Blackburn reported:
  - Thanked Drs. Frost and Galko for their service and expressed gratitude to Ms. Singletary for the job she did as Chair of the Program Directors Committee and as upcoming President Elect.
  - Thanked all the faculty that served on our Standing Committees in FY21 and those that will continue and begin serving in FY22. Our Standing Committee allow for the GSBS to run efficiently and are extremely important to our continued success.
  - New Staff Introductions

- Wassim Chehab, PhD is a Program Manager with Academic Affairs with Dr. Mattox. He will be advising MS students and working on curriculum and assist with the Core Course.
- Laura Rademacher, MSE is a Program Manager with the Office of Diversity and Student Affairs. She will be working on career development and internships.
- Development Update
  - We have a total of four new endowments for FY21.
    - One at UTHealth – The Genetic Counseling Research and Education Endowed Fund which will support students enrolled in the genetic counseling program.
    - Three at MD Anderson –
      - James E. Tempesta M.D. Endowed Scholarship
      - Fernando Aron Yarrito Scholarship
      - John P. and Sydney L. Welsh Scholarship
      - All of these endowments will support student scholarships
  - Overall, we have a total of eight endowments at MD Anderson and 43 at UTHealth.
  - Current Endowments now exceeds \$21 million and provides more than \$1.3 million in annual support for students and faculty.
- Other
  - The GSBS website has been redesigned to help with recruitment and assist our current students and faculty. If you have any comments about the new site, please let us know.
  - Orientation was a virtual week-long event. Due to COVID numbers at the time, we decided it was best to avoid in-person. Overall, orientation was a success and we look forward to meeting all these students again in-person.
- COVID
  - We have a COVID-19 Information page on our website which provides a lot of information but also provides links to UTHealth and MD Anderson COVID related pages. Please utilize this page if you have questions.
  - The Core Course is being held in a hybrid model with about 80% of the class attending in person. All of the students that attend in person are required to wear a mask and a majority are vaccinated. The students are engaged both in-person and online.
  - If COVID number continue to rise GSBS, UTHealth and MD Anderson all have plans in place.
  - Faculty and students are working in labs and clinics safely and many courses are in-person.
  - So far, this calendar year we've only had one student test positive and since the very beginning we've had ten students total with none requiring hospitalization.
  - We have had low levels of infection due to the high vaccination rate and PPE requirements being followed.
  - The booster is an active discussion. You should hear from us soon.
  - It's possible that we will need to continue to change or postpone events and activities, your continued patience and flexibility is appreciated.

## 6. Diversity Student Affairs Report

Dr. Shadding reported:

- End of the Year Admissions Report
  - We wanted to highlight a few points of data from the End of the Year Admissions Report, however, the full report can be found on the GSBS website.
  - Total Applications for 2021 = 1187
  - Total Entering Class = 105\*
    - \*excludes 3 deferment
  - Entering PhD Class = 69
    - 61 Biomedical Sciences
    - 8 Medical Physics

- Entering MS Class = 20
- Entering SMS Class = 11
  - 10 Genetic Counseling
  - 1 Medical Physics
- Entering MD/PhD Class = 5
- Overall there was a decrease in domestic apps. 10.5% decrease in PhD applications and 7.5% decrease in MS applications this year.
- There was a 21% increase in SMS applicants for 2021.
- Overall more students accepted our offer this year than last year. Actual percentage was 55% in 2021 vs 40% in 2020.
- URM applicants that accepted our offer of admission increased from 36% last year to 64% this year.
- Our “top” competitors are Baylor College of Medicine, Johns Hopkins and Washington University with Baylor being the highest.
- Applications for Fall 2022 opened on September 1. So far, we have three applications submitted which includes 2 PhD and 1 MS with 165 applications in process.
- Proposed Faculty By-Law Addition – Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Standing Committee
  - We are proposing a create a new GSBS standing committee that will provide oversight for DEI concerns.
  - We presented this addition to the Executive Committee and we received the appropriate number of sponsors to present this addition to the faculty bylaws to the GSBS faculty at-large.
  - Proposal:  
The GSBS Committee for Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion shall consist of members from the GSBS community: students, faculty, and staff. The committee will be comprised of members from each parent institution. The committee will meet at regular intervals as determined by its members, but shall meet no less than twice in an academic year. The committee will include ad hoc members (less than 25%), including individuals external to the GSBS and/or parent institutions, as determined necessary to meet the goals. All membership will be approved by the GSBS Dean’s Office.

The primary goal of the committee will be to ensure that the GSBS creates and maintains an environment that is inclusive and equitable for GSBS students maximizing their success. Duties of the committee shall include but are not limited to: regular assessment of the community, establishing impactful training and programming for the community, reviewing GSBS data and setting benchmarks, surveying GSBS policies and mission and making recommendations to the Deans.

- Reasons for adding as an official committee:
  - Outcome from Climate Survey was to create a task force
  - Provides a school complement to the UTHealth DEI council for more streamlined communication and implementation of DEI efforts
  - Dedicated committee for DEI efforts that can provide useful feedback, innovations, checkpoints for the Dean’s office
- Until the committee can be an official standing committee of the GSBS, it will be held as an ad-hoc committee.
- We are currently finalizing the faculty and student members that will serve on the committee for this year. Ideally, there will be three to four faculty, students and staff.
- Outside members would be determined by the committee based on special expertise and would serve as an ad-hoc member.
- The Committee will look at data - nationally, state, our climate survey/GSBS data to determine programs and initiatives that would improve our environment.
- From the climate survey, we created a new program called the Academy. We had first cohort start this summer. We believe this program helped to attract underrepresented minorities accept our offer of admission, though we have no data to prove this at this time.

- Comments:
  - Dr. Galko expressed that multiple faculty at the Executive Committee were supportive of the creation of the DEI committee and urged the faculty at-large about how important this committee will be in moving forward to address DEI climate change and improvements at the GSBS.
  - Dr. Pollard-Larkin said – “Great job on increasing URM yield for the entire GSBS! This is a great start for the DEI committee.”
  - Claire Singletary said – “I think it is an important committee to add as a standing committee for GSBS.”
- Lighthouse Implementation
  - The GSBS has partnered with Lighthouse Services to create the GSBS Incident Reporting System that provides several anonymous reporting options (web, hotline, phone app) for students (not faculty) to report incidences of bias, harassment, discrimination, and other forms of mistreatment.
  - The implementation of this service was a direct outcome from the GSBS Climate Survey and went live on September 1, 2021.
  - This service should not replace reporting systems already in place at MDA and UTHealth, but provides an anonymous option.
  - See details on the new GSBS reporting webpage at <https://gsbs.uth.edu/current-students/reporting>.
  - We have cards and posters to print and hand out if anyone wants information.
- Career Development Update
  - Fellowship and Training Grant Assistance
    - Dr. Raquel Salinas is now the point person for student F awards.
    - She will provide coaching for students applying for NIH F Grants and other external fellowships and grants.
    - In addition, she will hold the course, GS21 1171 NIH Fellowship Proposal Development, which will start at the end of the month and run for 6-weeks. This course will assist student in creating competitive F grant applications by focusing on writing training plans and supporting documents - “ Everything but the science.”
  - Individual Development Plan (IDP)
    - We revised the IDP process to increase compliance with creating and maintaining an IDP.
    - An annual IDP is part of the milestone requirements for PhD students.
    - Students may now use GSBS Stage Specific Forms.
    - Three sessions will be offered in September to help students use the IDP and to help prepare and encourage students to engage in IDP discussions with their research advisor.
    - Third year Biomedical PhD students will be required to meet with the Career Development Office.

## 7. Old Business

- *Mentoring Works!* started back virtually in January – June, and then we took a break for the summer. At each session we had roughly 15-25 faculty attend.
- The next session is set for September 21 from noon-5:00PM via Zoom. Additional sessions for the fall will be finalized soon.

## 8. New Business:

No new business was discussed.

*The following reports were not presented at the meeting but were available on the GSBS website prior to the meeting:*

1. [Report of the Standing Committees](#)
2. [Report of the Executive Committee](#)
3. [Report of the Graduate Student Association](#)

**MEETING ADJOURNED at approximately 4:03 p.m.**

Jeffrey Frost, PhD  
2020-2021 President, GSBS Faculty

Michael Galko, PhD  
2021-2022 President, GSBS Faculty