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GPS News

Office of the Dean of Graduate & Professional Studies

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Faculty Urged to Take Advantage of the Forum Provided by Graduate and Professional Studies Council

The governance structure at the University of Houston includes multiple sources of input for decision-making. From the faculty perspective, four separate and independent bodies (Faculty Senate, Graduate and Professional Studies Council, Research Council, and Undergraduate Council) are charged with advising the administration. These bodies constitute the means for faculty and administration to share information and ideas during the decision-making process.

The Graduate and Professional Studies Council is the academic governance committee charged with the responsibility of advising and making recommendations to the Dean of Graduate and Professional Studies about the quality and uniform oversight of graduate and professional programs at the University of Houston. Specifically, the Graduate and Professional Studies Council works with me in formulating recommendations and advice to the Provost and the President. It is rare that I make a policy-related decision or recommendation without input from this Council.

Since the establishment of my position three and one-half years ago, GPSC has gradually moved from having a primarily administrative function to a body which is charged with debating substantive policy issues including, to name a few, the admission of graduate and professional students, approval/disapproval of academic programs, changes in student grievance procedures, and determining scholarship standards. These are tough questions that take a lot of time and effort, but input from members is invaluable in deciding how the University should proceed on the road to excellence.

Each college has two members assigned to the GPSC, whose names are indicated on the last page of this newsletter. I encourage all faculty to use this vehicle to voice concerns, issues, and ideas relating to graduate and professional studies by communicating with these members who, in turn, can communicate your concerns in Council meetings.

Furthermore, I know the Council is very interested in ensuring that information runs both ways, so recently we've made changes to our web-site to include the Council's agenda and minutes. Please keep in mind that GPSC exists to represent faculty, and discussing issues with GPSC members is one way -- a very important way -- for you, as faculty, to be heard.

Marco J. Mariotto, Dean
Graduate & Professional Studies

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Special points of interest:

- A new graduate student assistantship title will be available Spring 2003.
- A new Master of Science degree in Technology Project Management has been approved by the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board.
- All pre-graduation curricular practical training requires the approval of graduate academic advisors.
- The Graduate and Professional Studies Council recently rejected a proposal to change the grading policy which would have allowed graduate students to receive a grade of "Q" (for "quit") very late in the semester or term.

Did you know . . .

Section 21.010 of House Bill 1976 requires that each State agency provide employment discrimination training to employees. The University of Houston (UH) is a State agency and graduate students who are employed by UH in graduate assistant categories (TA, TF, IA, RA, GA) must undergo such training.

With House Bill 1976 in mind, training for graduate/professional student employees will be conducted by the Office of Affirmative Action/EEO not later than 30 days after they are hired.

The required supplemental training may be received in web-based training or the classroom instruction method. Each member should work with each student's supervisor to hold those students not in compliance accountable to complete the training within the time frames.

The goal is for 100 percent of employees hired to be trained not later than their 30th day of employment and for 100 percent of employees to receive supplemental training every two years.

If departments have questions regarding student training, or required disability accommodations for employees, please call OAA at extension 3-8835.

Presidential, Cullen, Ehrhardt Fellowships

These two-year fellowships are available for outstanding students who are entering graduate or professional programs at the University of Houston in Fall 2003. Preference is given to those whose degree objective is the doctorate. The potential for academic excellence is the main criteria for selection. The Dean of Graduate and Professional Studies will review the nominations and award the fellowships.

Recipients will be awarded a fellowship that will match the departmental/college supplemental award 2-to-1 up to a designated amount based on comparable awards nationally in the discipline.

If additional information is needed, please contact Mani Kuffel at 713.743.9118 or mfkuffel@central.uh.edu.

Among Many Issues, GPSC Considers Measures of English Language Proficiency

The Graduate and Professional Studies Council (GPSC) is one part of the system of shared governance at the University of Houston. Along with the Undergraduate Council, Research Council, and Faculty Senate, the GPSC helps shape the policies and practices of the university. "One of the main purposes of this council is serving as one direct conduit from faculty to the upper administration and back," says Debbie Roberts, a representative from the Cullen College of Engineering who also serves as chair of the council. "Faculty can bring any questions or concerns involving graduate and professional studies to the council either directly, or through a school's representative." The council's job is then to analyze the problem, and suggest a course of action to the Dean of Graduate and Professional Studies.



*Deborah J. Roberts
Chair
Graduate and
Professional Studies Council*

Dr. Roberts is an Associate Professor and Program Advisor in Environmental Engineering. She is also Director of the Environmental Engineering Laboratories.

As chairperson, Dr. Roberts is in charge of setting the agenda at the meetings, conducting the meetings, serving as the council's representative in the Faculty Senate Executive Committee, and organizing and appointing members to the council's various subcommittees. She is also responsible for meeting with the President and the Provost of the university to convey any concerns that may arise in the meetings, and to help suggest the council's solutions to these problems.

One of the many important issues the GPSC is currently considering is demonstrating and improving the English proficiency of our graduate students. Dr. Roberts states that, "determining English language proficiency is important, since many graduate students also function as teaching assistants." A number of tests have been devised over the years, ranging from the TOEFL (Test of English as a Foreign Language) and TSE (Test of Spoken English), to the SPEAK (Speaking Proficiency English Assessment Kit) and FSI (Foreign Service Institute) exams. The biggest challenges are determining the basic elements of proficiency and deciding which test demonstrates this in the best and most efficient way. The TOEFL is a widely accepted admissions test, and the university has been using the TSE and SPEAK to evaluate the English speaking ability of its graduate student assistants for some time. "English proficiency has been a long-standing issue," says Dr. Roberts. "It's still an issue we are dealing with."

Dr. Roberts has enjoyed her position as chair, despite the problems that arise and the amount of work involved. It is an educational experience, allowing her to learn about different academic disciplines, and how they interact at the university level. "As chair, I would like to let the members know that their efforts are appreciated, since they are over and above the normal workload of the university."

By Jared Counts

GPSC agendas and minutes can be found at:
<http://www.uh.edu/gs/council>



Student Profile: Katharine Forth

Motor control has always been a subject of interest to Katharine Forth. "I was always fascinated with how we can move our bodies, and the more you think about it, the more complex it gets," says the British-born graduate student. This broad interest has taken some time to narrow down to a single discipline, and it was this interest that led Katharine to the University of Houston.

Katharine Forth received her Bachelor's of Science in Biology from the University of Bristol, and went on to receive her Master's of Science in Exercise Physiology from St. Mary's College at the University of Surrey. She has been very active in her field helping organize a symposium held last June in Sweden by the European Space Agency, of which the University of Houston was one of the two American universities chosen to participate. She also helped organize a Children's Space Camp, which was held in the Texas Learning and Computation Center on campus by U of H faculty and members from NASA. Katharine has received some acclaim for her research thus far, such as the Young Researcher Award at the World Expo in Germany her first year here. Katharine also presented her work at the World Space Congress held at the George R. Brown Convention Center in October, and has published this work in [Neuroscience Letters](#). Her current research involves investigating how pressure to the sole of the foot can maintain the muscles and coordination of the legs. This has applications not only for astronauts in zero gravity situations, but also for the elderly and those that are bed-ridden for long periods of time.

After completing her Masters in England, Katharine began searching for a college with the equipment and people that would help further her studies, which led her to Dr. Charles Layne. "We seemed to share the same interests and perspectives, which helped my decision a lot," says Katharine. The faculty in the Motor Control and Coordination Group is in a state of growth, and plans to move into the new Lab of Integrated Physiology, alongside the Exercise Physiology Group. Katharine has been enjoying her stay, and is in awe of the size of the university. "The thing that struck me the most is the diversity of the university, and the breadth and depth of the things offered here." While UH successfully encourages the integration of different areas of study and research, she says, "It's imaginable that someone in another field on the other side of such a large campus could even be doing something related to my research without me knowing about it!"

By Jared Counts

Graduate & Professional Studies Council Bylaws 2002-2003

I. PURPOSE and CHARGE

The Graduate and Professional Studies Council (GPSC) is the academic governance committee responsible for advising the Dean of Graduate & Professional Studies (hereafter referred to as "the Dean") about the quality and uniform surveillance of graduate and professional programs at the University of Houston. It is also charged with recommending changes in existing policies or suggesting the need for new ones, and approving new courses, course changes and/or deletions for final approval by the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board.

Specifically, the Graduate and Professional Studies Council will work with the Dean of Graduate and Professional Studies in advising the Provost and the President on matters relating to:

- A. The admission and selection of graduate and professional students including international graduate students;
- B. The development and assessment of graduate and professional programs together with criteria for admission, standards of instruction, and standards for graduation aimed at excellence;
- C. The review and advice on programs and courses in graduate and professional curricula;
- D. Other matters identified by the Provost or of interest to the administration, the faculty, and graduate and professional students.

Find the complete text of the bylaws at
www.uh.edu/gsc/council



*Katharine Forth
Third year PhD student (Kinesiology)*

*Presenting at the World Space Congress,
October 2002*

Deadlines

College/Department Grievance Policies

These are due now to the Office of Graduate and Professional Studies.

Common on-Line Application

November 18-20; 22-27
 Campus-wide testing occurred.
 Contact Janet Fleming with questions.

GATF Exception Requests

December 18
 Requests are due to the Office of Graduate and Professional Studies.

Fee Bills

December 18
 First Spring fee bills mailed.

Spring 2003 Classes

January 13
 Classes begin.

DORP Reports

January 17
 Initial spring 2003 DORP reports will be available to the colleges.





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The mission of the Office of Graduate and Professional Studies is to cultivate and support academic excellence in graduate and professional education at the University of Houston.

Graduate & Professional Studies Council Members 2002-2003

College of Hotel and Restaurant Management:

JeAnna Abbot
Ronald Nykiel

College of Technology:

Farouk Attia
Shirley Ezell

College of Architecture:

Larry Bell
Nora Laos

Law Center:

Mary Ann Bobinski
Robert Ragazzo

College of Optometry:

Roger Boltz (Vice Chair)
Earl Smith

College of Natural Sciences and Mathematics:

Henry S. Chafetz
Garret Etgan

College of Engineering:

Joe Charlson
Keith Hollingsworth
Deborah Roberts (Chair)

College of Education:

John Gaa
Robert Williams

College of Liberal Arts and Social Sciences:

H. Julia Hannay
David Tomatz

Graduate School of Social Work:

Karen Holmes
Paul Raffoul

College of Pharmacy:

Brian Knoll
Thomas Lemke

College of Business Administration:

Archer McWhorter
Ron Singer

Graduate Student Representatives:

Rosalyn Adigun
Andrew Rodney

Ex Officio:

Marco J. Mariotto, Dean
Graduate and Professional Studies