TEXAS HIGHER EDUCATION COORDINATING BOARD

Graduate Education Advisory Committee
THECB Building, 1200 E. Anderson Lane
Board Room
Austin, Texas

February 27, 2018 Summary Notes
As Amended and Approved May 16, 2018

Members attending:

DeBrenna Agbenyiga	Carolyn Kapinus	Dean Neikirk
Blanca Bauer	Bruce Jones	Joseph Oppong
Richard Berry	Thomas Krueger	Les Riding-In
Karen Butler-Purry	James Lumpkin	Rial Rolfe
JoAnn Canales	Kathryn Matthew	Cynthia Rutledge
Andrea Golato	Bonnie Melhart	Mark Sheridan
William Harn	Arabhi Nagasunder	Meharvan "Sonny" Singh

Members absent: Kenneth Hendrickson, Sharon Hileman, and William Kritsonis.

THECB Staff attending: Reinold Cornelius, James Goeman, Andrew Lofters, Jodie Lopez, Jennifer Nailos, Rex Peebles, and Stacey Silverman.

Agenda Item 1: Welcome, introductions, and call to order
Dr. Meharvan "Sonny" Singh, chair, called the meeting to order at 10:04 am.

Dr. Singh welcomed the committee and invited everyone to introduce themselves.

Agenda Item 2: Consideration and approval of minutes from the September 25, 2017 meeting
Dr. Nailos made a correction to the minutes adding Cynthia Rutledge as present on September 25, 2017. A motion was made and approved to accept the amended minutes.

Agenda Item 8: Update on Coordinating Board Initiatives
Agenda Item 8 was moved to the beginning of the meeting to accommodate scheduling availability for Coordinating Board staff.

Dr. Lofters presented an overview of the Learning Technology Advisory Committee (LTAC) and shared updates from the committee's recent meeting. The LTAC committee

gives advice on learning technologies and distance education in the state of Texas. LTAC looks at institutional delivery of distance education, definitions of distance education, and other related topics.

One activity of LTAC is to make doctoral program recommendations of approval to the Board. In 2017, there was only one from Texas Tech University Health Sciences Center (TTUHSC) online Doctor of Nursing Practice (DNP) program. In 2018, there were three including: (1) The University of Texas at Arlington's off-campus, face-to-face delivery of a PhD in Physics program where it will be delivered at The University of Texas Rio Grande Valley; (2) The University of Texas at Arlington's online Doctor of Nursing Practice (DNP) program; and (3) The University of Texas at San Antonio's online Doctor of Nursing Practice (DNP) program.

The *Principles of Good Practice for Academic Degree and Certificate Programs and Credit Courses Offered Electronically (Principles of Good Practice)* were revised and should be ready for distribution later this week. LTAC is also looking at courses and programs electronically and those delivered off-campus, either face-to-face, or electronic to group in the *Principles of Good Practice*.

LTAC has also taken on a survey of distance education and technologies that collects information and characteristics of the programs. LTAC plans to administer the survey next month. The survey was well received by the Texas Distance Learning Association and will be administered again in 2018.

LTAC discussed that there is confusion in the state regarding the definitions of online delivery of programs. If the program is less than 50 percent online, it is considered face-to-face with a strong online component. Over 50 percent online has different categories. If the program is 51 to 85 percent online, it is considered "hybrid/blended". If the program is 86 to 100 percent online, it is considered "fully online". There was a concern that students were looking at a program labelled "fully online" and might think they never need to come to campus. LTAC felt this is confusing to the public because there still may be up to 15 percent face-to-face components. The committee is in the process of revisiting the definitions and will bring the recommendations to the Board once the review and activity is completed.

A recommendation from the RAND report was that the Coordinating Board might look into increasing the monitoring of the quality of online master's degree programs. There is now a distance education portal at the Coordinating Board where institutions can input their programs. The Coordinating Board is using the portal and in the future plans to use this for approval processes. The delivery mode, location, CIP code, and programs offered will be included in the portal. Dr. Lofters clarified that the portal is still being updated and completed.

LTAC is looking at trends for master's programs offered online.

Amended and approved 5-16-18

Dr. Lofters presented information on online program characteristics and trends. Dr. Neikirk asked if there was a large growth in the last few years, or is completion rate low. Dr. Lofters responded that around Fiscal Year 2015 the data shifted. There was a steady rate before FY 15, and then a jump. The reasoning for this jump in the numbers is not clear, but Dr. Lofters plans to look into why the numbers changed so much in FY 15.

LTAC is hoping to work with GEAC in the future to have a collaborative meeting and discussion about online graduate programs.

Dr. Butler-Purry asked if there is a report on the technology survey. Dr. Lofters shared that the LTAC page includes a link to the study report. http://www.thecb.state.tx.us/index.cfm?objectid=7D5BA7AC-FB8A-EEE3-760E5B013FA1569B

Agenda Item 3: Information on the *Characteristics of Doctoral Programs*
Dr. Goeman shared the *Characteristics of Doctoral Programs* page. http://www.thecb.state.tx.us/index.cfm?objectid=E0014CFE-F86C-6F22-A794036BF682835E

The *Characteristics of Doctoral Programs (Characteristics)* were revised from the *18 Characteristics* to simply the *Characteristics*. This reflects the fact that the number and components may change over time. Dr. Goeman showed the committee the webpage and resources available to institutions. Please check that your institution's link is working correctly and that the department and programs are updating the data as they should. In addition, institutions will want to think about the changes to the characteristics. This fall, 2018, data for research and professional practice programs will be included. The *Characteristics* have been reorganized into those required for all programs, just for research, and just for professional practice programs.

Professional practice programs should be reported by the program level. Dr. Silverman clarified that it is up to the institution to define a "professional program". Define your programs consistently.

The Coordinating Board is now requesting a link to the institution host page for all the programs, not separate links per program. The institution should create a landing page for their programs.

Dr. Berry asked for clarification on graduation rates for the three most recent years. What this means is we go back 10 years from the three most recent years to calculate this graduation rate.

Agenda Item 4: Update on and discussion of Marketable Skills initiatives
Dr. Cornelius presented on the Undergraduate Education Advisory Committee's (UEAC) discussion on the marketable skills initiative. Marketable Skills is part of *60x30TX.* In 2020, all institutions will need to identify the marketable skills of their programs. The Coordinating Board has a document that provides information and guidelines for the implementation of the Marketable Skills goal.

UEAC has formed a sub-committee to brainstorm what could be done or recommended to institutions working on the Marketable Skills goal. The results of the sub-committee meeting are included in this meeting's materials packet. One recommendation would be to update the marketable skills with the catalogue updates. Another idea is to add the marketable skills to a student's transcript. Training students or teaching students how to use their skills and put them on their resume was also discussed by the sub-committee.

Dr. Nailos shared that the second Marketable Skills conference is being held April 9-10, 2018, in Houston TX. Further information is located at the Coordinating Board's website for the conference: http://www.thecb.state.tx.us/index.cfm?objectid=08A9793F-E4B2-1AE9-BD6951999EC90DB1&flushcache=1&showdraft=1

Dr. Melhart asked whom should institutions bring to the conference? Dr. Peebles shared that it is recommended that a team of four that are strategic, including a Chief Academic officer, student services, and others. This conference will be focused on training how to identify marketable skills. There will be a panel at the event that includes students. There was an attempt at alumni networking through a survey for those who had loans in the past. Ideas for how to reach alumni would be appreciated because this is a component that would be useful.

Dr. Golato mentioned that on campus discussions of marketable skills have been met with resistance because faculty feels students need to be able to talk about their skills. If the students just put something down, it might not be fulfilling the point of this goal. What are good suggestions for this work and how can it be useful? Dr. Singh shared that on his campus, they converted the curriculum from a course-based to competency-based curriculum. Students could take one of several courses because the curriculum has been mapped into knowledge, skill, and behavior based skills. Students then receive scores for milestones toward degree. Once this was done, they were able to transcript these skills – the student doesn't have to write something down, but it has become a way to assess the skills; this is a way to carry some legitimacy on their CV for the skills they possess.

Dr. Cornelius commented that the danger of taking a skill and plopping it down is that these skills are by program and by individual. The student has to navigate what is written and what is applicable. One idea for identifying marketable skills is that they also come from outside the curriculum, in the major, through core or electives.

Dr. Singh commented that maybe starting with program level generic buckets (categories) might be helpful. Then the student can add the level of granularity that is appropriate. This is worthy of continued discussion because institutions are at different levels of how to best teach students to identify their skills.

Ms. Nagasunder commented that as a student, she focuses on the knowledge. As an industry, they might look at professionalism because they can always teach knowledge. As a student, she might never consider putting professionalism on her resume, but it is important to put on her resume. At her campus, a recommendation letter is used to illustrate these skills.

Dr. Golato suggested that activities that help students learn to articulate on their own their marketable skills is a far more useful activity than providing them a list. This is what our career services and professional development services and workshops do. Students need to learn how to translate, interpret, and articulate their skills. This is a transferrable skill for them in their careers. A list of skills is less useful to students than learning how to articulate what they have learned. One is factual knowledge, the other is procedural; we want to give students procedural knowledge.

Dr. Agbenyiga shared that her campus is looking at the curriculum and right sizing the curriculum. They are thinking about the curriculum and courses, what needs to be there, what will help students. In addition, with professional development, they have tracks for students – students can earn certificates and gain different skills along the way. Faculty can look at marketable skills from these three perspectives. It was welcomed on campus by doing it this way.

Dr. Singh commented that marketable skills and this conversation could be woven into the strategic plan for graduate education. GEAC can consider how to create a meaningful strategy to integrate the marketable skills goal into our institutions in a useful way. This discussion will continue during the afternoon breakouts of the strategic plan.

Agenda Item 5: Update on National Research University Fund (NRUF) Report
Dr. Cornelius is providing an update because there is new eligibility report out this month for NRUF. Texas Tech University and University of Houston are already eligible to receive these funds. This year, The University of Texas at Dallas (UT Dallas) has fulfilled benchmarks to become eligible. Based on this finding, the state auditor is looking into the legislatively required audit of the process for eligibility; this audit will happen in April.

Included in the meeting packet are slides with the benchmark criteria for NRUF. Most of the requirements have sub-parts that must be fulfilled for eligibility.

The high quality faculty criteria may be based on a review of the faculty from an external reviewer. Working on defining and outlining the criteria for reviewing high quality faculty.

Also included in the packet is the NRUF report. There is more information on the criteria and distribution of funding on the website for NRUF:
http://www.thecb.state.tx.us/index.cfm?objectid=0BFA90B1-E0AF-4768-F7F2C724B47B209D

If a more defined charge for the review of high quality faculty is developed, Dr. Cornelius will come back to GEAC with more information.

Agenda Item 6: Lunch
Dr. Singh proposed moving Agenda Item 7: Update on and discussion of Strategic Plan for Graduate Education forward and working until and through lunch.

Agenda Item 7: Update on and discussion of Strategic Plan for Graduate Education
Dr. Nailos provided instruction for the breakout groups on each goal area. Each group will work on the bullets and draft further expansion and refinement of aspiration and attainable goals using the logic models. Each group will share their discussion in the afternoon and email a copy of their notes to Dr. Nailos. A copy of each group's notes will be compiled and distributed back to GEAC. The strategic plan sub-committee will move today's discussion and notes forward this spring.

A breakout group for each of the following goals was formed:
1. Scholarly Research and Creative Activity Excellence
2. Quality of Education
3. Efficiency and Innovation
4. Develop Marketable Skills and Create Economic Development

Breakout group discussions were held until 1:06 pm.

Each group presented a summary of their discussions to GEAC.

Goal 1: Scholarly Research and Creative Activity Excellence
The group wanted the goal to be relevant to all the different types of institutions. The group recommends including a preamble to the strategic plan. The preamble would recognize a couple of principles. First, that this strategic plan is data-informed. Second, that there are participants from each respective institution type. Third, that there is flexibility within the plan so that it is not overly prescriptive.

For Goal 1, the group made revisions and recommendations for changing the language and elements under this goal.
- Change the goal to "Scholarly activity and creative activity excellence" anywhere you see research.
- Other recommendations included in the notes.

Dr. Golato inquired how to work with departments that are already highly productive.

Dr. Singh recommended that institutions determine how to apply the strategic plan appropriately. The strategic plan is presented as aggregate, statewide. The institution will look at their programs to determine which, when, where, and how. The strategic plan should come across as an incentive or aspirational.

Dr. Neikirk recommended making the linkage explicit that the increase should be normalized to the institution's resources. If the institution is asked to do more, they need more resources. Dr. Sheridan commented that it is important not to discourage seeking extramural support.

Dr. Canales added that the application of the strategic plan should be aligned with the institution mission. The measure should emphasize interdisciplinary nature of scholarly and creative activity, the impact on the public good, the extent to which it supports *Closing the Gaps*, and the institutionalization of initiatives. Those are all important considerations for what should be factored in here.

Dr. Golato would like to add some sort of statement and explanation of how graduate education is different from undergraduate education in the strategic plan. The reader would have a context for what they are about to read.

Goal 2: Quality of Education
For Goal 2, the group made revisions and recommendations for changing the language and elements under this goal.
- Change the goal to "High quality and access of education".
- Discussion on including faculty diversity as a benchmark. A suggestion was to include cultural competency of faculty as a measure.
- Include advising as an indicator of excellence in teaching.
- Other recommendations included in the notes.

The recommended duration of the strategic plan is 10-15 years with updates at least every 5 years. This would align with the *60x30TX* plan's timing.

Goal 3: Efficiency and Innovation
For Goal 3, the group made revisions and recommendations for changing the language and elements under this goal.

- The group considered stand along master's degrees and certificates as important elements to graduate education.
- Other recommendations included in the notes.

Dr. Butler-Purry commented that adding something about pathways from undergraduate to graduate programs could be included under efficiency of time for students.

Dr. Singh commented that something to consider under efficiency is students that fall short of the PhD and receive a certificate or master's degree instead of the initial intended degree. These numbers would help the *60x30TX* plan goals, but might negatively affect academic program quality if they are not completing the PhD.

Goal 4: Develop Marketable Skills and Create Economic Development
For Goal 4, the group made revisions and recommendations for changing the language and elements under this goal.
- Change goal to "Knowledge that leads to new markets and economic development".
- It will be important to differentiate between type of program and institutional mission.
- Important to consider Texas, national, and international workforce needs because the nature of the industry or program may encourage or necessitate students to leave the state.
- Other recommendations included in the notes.

Dr. Oppong commented that part of the challenge for this goal is that it includes focus on current workforce, while graduate programs also are preparing students for jobs that do not exist yet. This should be included as an important qualifier for the plan and goal. Dr. Singh discussed how employer surveys include hard, soft, and other skills that are sought. Maybe a measure for this goal is the procedure to gather information and feedback. Dr. Canales suggested that the measure that "having identified and marketable skills" could lead to a checkbox. Maybe a measure is "to what extent are there conversations that led to this". Dr. Butler-Purry suggested an indicator of providing professional development beyond curriculum to the students. Dr. Neikirk commented that this section needs to be oriented as leading and not following the market; innovating and creating what should be or is next.

Would like the subcommittee to meet and review the feedback before a draft of the strategic plan is sent out to the group.

Agenda Item 9: Discussion of other Committee Member business
Dr. Goeman and Dr. Nailos will coordinate scheduling a sub-committee meeting and a GEAC meeting before the summer. These meetings will focus on developing a draft of the strategic plan by July.

At the next GEAC meeting, elections will take place for chair and vice chair.

Nominations for new committee members will be sent to institutions this spring. Anyone with term ending in 2018 while phase off the committee in August.

Agenda Item 10: Discussion of future agenda items and meeting dates
Dr. Nailos shared that committee members will receive an email form to enter their expenditures and vote on upcoming meeting dates.

The meeting adjourned at 2:21 pm.