

The University of Akron
Minutes of Graduate Council
April 17, 2017

The Graduate Council met on Monday, April 17, 2017, in the Student Union, Room 310. Dean Chand Midha presided. Present were Dr. Philip Allen, Associate Dean Charles Beneke, Heather Blake, Dr. Amanda Booher, Dr. Marcus Braga-Alves, Dr. Gary Holliday, Provost Rex Ramsier, Dr. Martha Santos, Dr. Shivakumar Sastry, Dr. John Senko, Dr. James Steiger, Dr. Harvey Sterns, Dr. Baffour Takyi, Dr. Margaret Tung, and Dr. Nicole Zacharia.

GC Members Absent with Notice: Dr. Qetler Jensrud and Dr. Ronald Otterstetter

GC Members Absent: Marina Pelemis, Dr. Judit Puskas, and Dr. Andrew Thomas

Call to Order

Dean Midha called the meeting to order at 9:05 a.m.

Roll Call

Heather Blake recorded the attendance of those present.

Approval of Minutes

Dr. Allen made a motion to approve the minutes of April 3, 2017. Dr. Takyi seconded the motion. Minutes of the April 3, 2017 meeting were approved without dissent.

Remarks – Dean Midha

Dean Midha said that on Wednesday, April 19, he and members of the Executive Committee of Graduate Council along with Diane Maffei will be traveling to Columbus to meet with Vice Chancellor Jim Bennett to learn more about state subsidy.

Dean Midha stated that Provost Ramsier assisted the Graduate School in getting the Business Reporting Analyst position filled. Diane Maffei has accepted this position and will begin on Wednesday, April 19.

Dean Midha said that the new graduate assistantship contracts have been sent to the academic departments. The motion related to the teaching assistantships that was approved at the April 3 meeting did not get to Faculty Senate in time for their meeting on April 6.

Dr. Zacharia asked for clarification on page two of the graduate assistantship contract where it states, "Appointee agrees that if they have accumulated sufficient credit hours to graduate from their degree program, appointment will terminate" given that doctoral students can be funded for a maximum of five years.

Dean Midha responded that this is a clerical error that needs fixed.

Dr. Santos asked if the 60 credit hour rule is still in place for the Department of History. Doctoral students in History are unable to be funded over 60 credits as no subsidy is received beyond 60 credits. Dr. Santos stated that no other institutions have this 60 credit hour rule. Dean Midha advised Dr. Santos to gather information from other institutions, including the number of credit hours required for the degree.

Remarks – Provost Ramsier

Provost Ramsier thanked the members of Graduate Council for everything they have done this semester, particularly the work on the new graduate assistantship contracts.

Provost Ramsier said that in looking ahead there are some things that Graduate Council should think about. He stated that while acting as Dean of the College of Health Professions he has been asked about extensions for graduate students to complete their programs. Currently, there is a doctoral student who has already been granted two extensions and is now requesting another after 13 years, and the student has not even collected her data. This is something that should be looked at. At what point should students be told there will be no additional time granted?

Dean Midha stated that on occasion a student will return after having been out for a number of years and want to complete his or her program. When this has occurred he has required the student take another course or two.

Provost Ramsier discussed the HLC requirement that instructors possess an academic degree relevant to what they are teaching and at least one level about the level at which they teach. Instructors teaching in graduate programs should hold the terminal degree defined by the discipline.

Dean Midha stated that there are master's trained instructors teaching master's-level courses. There are non-tenure track faculty being hired who only hold the master's degree. He said that other institutions have a teaching classification for graduate faculty membership.

Provost Ramsier stated that there should be a mechanism for teaching, but master's-prepared instructors should not be teaching master's-level courses. Ad Hoc graduate faculty status can get out of control. It's necessary to take a look at Ad Hoc graduate faculty membership and why it is granted.

Dean Midha said that if we are going now require set criteria for Ad Hoc graduate faculty status what should that criteria be?

Provost Ramsier said that he did not know about the 60 credit hour rule for History; however, if we do not receive subsidy due to program redundancy that may be why students cannot receive funding beyond 60 credits. Six months ago the Chancellor distributed a list of duplicate programs. This list consisted of only undergraduate programs. The deans were asked if each program should be left as is with reason, changed with reason, or eliminated with reason. The University must report what is being done to address this issue. This was given to the Academic Policies Committee of Faculty Senate and was approved. Provost Ramsier stated that graduate programs were not included in this assessment, but these data sets may be forthcoming and will be shared with Graduate Council. Redundancy at the graduate-level will be a high-level discussion.

Dr. Sterns asked how it would be handled in the instance one institution created a program and others duplicated it.

Provost Ramsier responded that the goal is for all the institutions to work together. It is not so much about how we are going to eliminate programs but how we are going to collaborate.

Dr. Takyi asked how redundancy is defined.

Provost Ramsier stated that CIP codes were used to identify undergraduate program redundancy.

Finally, Provost Ramsier stated that he has been informed of the discussions that have been taking place related to English proficiency requirement for teaching assistants. He said that when students are going to be funded they must be able to speak English before being assigned to teach. There are a number of students who do not meet this requirement. He asked how this requirement should be implemented.

Dean Midha said that at the last meeting of Graduate Council was spent discussing this issue. A student who does not pass the English proficiency requirement cannot be funded as a teaching assistant, but the department may fund the student as a research assistant. If the student passes the speaking component of the TOEFL or the U-ADEPT he or she can be reverted back to a teaching assistant if funds are available.

Provost Ramsier asked how much the U-ADEPT costs and who pays for it. Associate Dean Beneke responded that cost of the test is \$125 and paid for by the student.

Dr. Zacharia stated that students have a combined TOEFL score that is required for admission. Could this be considered if the student seems capable to teach? Provost Ramsier said that instructional support has never been part of the rule and has gotten out of control. Students should be encouraged to get some training in English. This should not be punitive to the student; however, students need to learn English, and it's our duty to make sure they can be and write in English. Dean Midha stated that the Graduate School found one department has 60 students on instructional support. Dr. Zacharia said that some sort of transition period is necessary.

Provost Ramsier stated that students need to be given a letter outlining the expectations when they arrive here and that they will need to meet the English proficiency requirement. A procedure to follow to achieve English

proficiency by the U-ADEPT or other ways should be established. Dr. Allen said that we are now getting to crunch time on the budget, and if research assistants are funded by the University additional savings will be necessary.

Dr. Sastry questioned where the savings is coming from if research assistants are being labeled as teaching assistants. Provost Ramsier stated that the objective was to cause no damage to the research side of the University. Some teaching assistants may teach in departments other than their own. On every contract the duties of teaching assistants must be indicated. If students are working for more than one department both department chairs must sign. It may be necessary for departments to look at their endowments to fund teaching assistants. Some programs fund their doctoral students until they graduate. When these students graduate the money will be returned to college dean for redistribution. Provost Ramsier said that there must be a set deadline for allocated monies to be spent and signed contracts to be submitted.

Dr. Sastry made a motion that the Graduate School will take back all allocated assistantship monies that are not spent by June 1. Dr. Takyi seconded the motion. Eleven aye votes and one nay vote. Motion carries.

Dr. Allen made a motion that currently funded students be given a year to pass the speaking component of the TOEFL or the U-ADEPT, and if a student cannot pass English proficiency he or she may appeal to the Graduate School. Dr. Sastry seconded the motion with a friendly amendment that current students must pass English proficiency by the beginning of Fall 2018. Eleven aye votes and one nay vote. Motion carries.

Committee Reports

Curriculum Committee – Dr. Allen presented a log of 11 proposals as reviewed and approved by the committee: A&S-COMMUN-16-18922, A&S-COMMUN-16-19124, A&S-COMMUN-16-19134, A&S-CLASS-16-19317, A&S-CLASS-16-19320, A&S-CLASS-16-19323, A&S-ENGL-15-14085, EDUC-CURR-17-20027, ENGR-ELECTE-14-9277, ENGR-ELECTE-16-18875, and ENGR-ELECT-16-18879.

New Business

3359-24-01 Bylaws of the Graduate Faculty Amendments

Associate Dean Beneke presented revisions to the Bylaws of the Graduate Faculty in which reference to Vice President of Research and Dean of the Graduate School was removed and replaced with Dean of the Graduate School.

Dr. Sastry made a motion to approve these revisions to the Bylaws of the Graduate Faculty. Dr. Sterns seconded this motion. Unanimously approved. Motion carries.

3359-60-06.6 Graduate Student Assistantships Amendments

Associate Dean Beneke presented revisions to Graduate Student Assistantships that reflects the new process for award of graduate assistantships.

Dr. Takyi made a motion to approve these revisions to Graduate Student Assistantships. Dr. Sastry seconded the motion. Unanimously approved. Motion carries.

Meeting adjourned at 10:57 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Dr. Shivakumar Sastry
Secretary