The University of Akron
Minutes of Graduate Council
September 25, 2006

The Graduate Council met on Monday, September 25, 2006, in the Student Union, Room 314. G. Newkome presided. Present were M. Tausig, H. Blake, K. Caldwell, B. Bagatto, T. Boisseau, M. D'Amico, T. Hallett, L. Ju, H. Nunn, D. Reneker, K. Schwarz, T. Srivatsan, and M. Triece.

Absent with notice: H. Li

Absent: F. Broadway, C. Bramlett, and C. Tessier

Call to Order

G. Newkome called the meeting to order at 10:01 a.m.

Roll Call

H. Blake recorded the attendance of all Graduate Council members present.

Approval of Minutes

M. D'Amico made a motion to approve the minutes of the September 11, 2006 meeting.
Minutes of the September 11, 2006 meeting of the Graduate Council were approved with one abstention.

Comments

M. Tausig said the Graduate School is working on many different things. Currently, a new brochure is being developed that can be utilized at graduate fairs around the area. This will be a nice recruitment tool. He indicated that graduate assistants will be attending local graduate fairs on behalf of the Graduate School.

Additionally, information is being compiled about professional master's degrees offered at The University of Akron to see what the program enrollments are and if they can be enhanced. M. Tausig stated that he is meeting regularly with Bill Kraus, Associate Vice President for Enrollment Management, to discuss graduate enrollment, emphasizing that graduate enrollment cannot be looked at the same way as undergraduate enrollment.

The Graduate School is working to grow the industrial assistantship program to get more local companies and organizations involved to support graduate assistants. M. Tausig explained that the goal here is to get outside money in to the University. This money supports graduate assistant stipends, and the graduate assistants work their required twenty hours per week at the company. Additionally, the Graduate School is encouraging departments to apply for GAANN grants that support graduate students in areas of national need.

M. Tausig mentioned that the Graduate School is sending out postcards to undergraduates who graduated in the spring and summer to introduce them to graduate education. The Graduate School website also has a power point presentation posted entitled, "So You Want to Go to Graduate School" that provides students with useful information about applying to Graduate School.

G. Newkome said that graduate enrollment this semester is down by 48 students overall. There is an increase in full-time enrollment; however, a decrease in part-time enrollment. He expressed to Graduate Council members the need to be aggressive in attracting students in order to increase graduate enrollment at The University of Akron. Increase in enrollment will prevent the slow erosion of graduate programs.

L. Ju stated that graduate enrollment is tied into research productivity; since there has been no increase in graduate assistant stipends departments must increase their research productivity in order to get grants that will help fund graduate students. Despite this need to increase research productivity a decrease is being experienced due to faculty having no incentive to be here over the summer.

G. Newkome said that when faculty members are evaluated they will be evaluated on three things: research, teaching, and public service. Perhaps, faculty members should not get graduate students if they are not going to work with them.

T. Srivatsan questioned what efforts are being made to recruit the local students.

G. Newkome responded that the efforts made are very small.

M. Triece said that she understands the need to increase enrollment but finds there are limitations that exist. Currently, classes are filled to capacity, and there is no hiring of new faculty to add other sections to a course. She further stated that it appears the University is sacrificing quality for quantity. There must be some incentive for faculty to work over the summer.

G. Newkome replied that there are faculty members out there who do work with students over the summer. If there is growth in certain areas then new faculty will have to be hired as a result.

L. Ju noted that faculty have the option to work as consultants over the summer months as opposed to staying on campus and working without pay.

T. Boisseau said there is a limit to what faculty can and will do without being compensated.

T. Hallett indicated that her department has its own recruitment committee. They normally get 100 applicants for 30 slots. Many of their faculty members have gone out and found grants to support graduate students. She added that Kent State University sends out materials such as DVDs and other mailings as a way of recruiting students. This might be something the University would want to consider.

M. Tausig responded that most departments don't have a recruitment budget. He added that his sense is that there is no increase in enrollment due to the fact that there has been no increase in graduate assistant stipends. Many students can only come when there is stipend money available.

G. Newkome said that the more students that we have the better we will be fiscally. He noted further that he heard of faculty members telling students not to register for courses over the summer. This is not the best route to follow.

K. Schwarz mentioned that they have three open positions in the College of Nursing but cannot fill them, because nurses are able to make higher salaries outside of education. Additionally, it is becoming more difficult to hire graduate assistants because of the low compensation.

G. Newkome stated that his main concern is the students and that they may be hurt in the process.

T. Srivatsan reiterated that the University should aggressively recruit students, providing them information on the benefits of graduate education.

T. Hallett said that, due to their recruitment efforts, they were able to bring in five or six more students last year; however, had to hire additional clinical instructors to support these additional gradate students.

M. Triece suggested revised entrance requirements to improve the quality of graduate students. We may be getting more applicants, but the issue is how many of them are qualified.

G. Newkome stated that it will be necessary to examine the financial situation this coming year and determine what is important and what is not. It may be determined that money should be shifted from one area to another. He emphasized that this issue is not going to go away, so it will be necessary to continue seeking input from the faculty.

M. Triece questioned how the decisions would be made about moving money.

G. Newkome replied that all programs are being reviewed and, as a result, priorities will be established.

M. Tausig added that he is on the program review committee, and one of the outcomes of the program review process will be decisions made about allocating and reallocating money to program. These decisions will be made by the Office of the Provost.

M. Triece stated that to be fair everyone should know what criteria is being used to evaluate departments.

M. Tausig replied that review committee has received self-studies from the departments. One of the purposes of program review is to stimulate conversation among the deans and departments not just moving money from one area to another.

T. Boisseau questioned whether or not Graduate Council would be part of the decision-making process to determine what priorities will be established after the program reviews are completed.

G. Newkome concluded that Graduate Council members should, at least, have some input.

Committee Reports

Curriculum Committee – No report.

Graduate Faculty Membership Committee – H. Nunn stated that the committee is in the process of scheduling a meeting.

Student Policy Committee – No report.

Old Business

Embargo on Theses and Dissertations

M. Tausig stated that when a student submits his or her thesis or dissertation to OhioLink it is published; however, there is an option for an embargo on the publication. Many other institutions have policies regarding an embargo on thesis and dissertation publication. Currently, The University of Akron has no such policy. He asked that the Student Policy Committee look at what other universities are doing and propose a policy that could be put in to place at the University.

New Business

English Language Proficiency Requirements

M. Tausig said that there are those international students who come from foreign countries where their formal instruction was in English. These students, however, are still required to take the TOEFL. The English Language Institute has developed an additional way for these applicants to meet the admission requirements without having to take the TOEFL.

M. Tausig asked that the Student Policy Committee review what has been developed by ELI and make a recommendation to Graduate Council at the next meeting.

Responsible Conduct of Research

M. Tausig mentioned that student plagiarism appears to have become a problem nation-wide. With that said, the Council of Graduate Schools has an initiative for institutions to develop some kind of response to this issue in the form of training students. This might be a credit course that all students would have to register for and have completed in order to graduate.

T. Srivatsan said that all graduate students should be sent a short, succinct memo to address the issue of plagiarism.
K. Schwarz added that this is something that should be done at the beginning of students' graduate enrollment. She stated that in the College of Nursing both undergraduate and graduate students take tests addressing competency and/or ethical issues without registering for a separate credit course. The college keeps track of students successfully completing these tests.

M. Tausig asked that the Student Policy Committee review the information compiled thus far on Responsible Conduct of Research and see what might work at the University of Akron. He concluded that this is something that is going to take some time, and it might not be possible to fully complete by the end of this year.

Meeting adjourned at 11:08 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Karen Schwarz
Secretary