

The University of Akron  
Minutes of the Graduate Faculty  
April 20, 2005

Dr. George Newkome called the meeting to order at 3:05 p.m.

Present were: Phillip Allen, David Baker, Heather Blake, Francis Broadway, N.J. Brown, Stacey Buckshaw, Karen Caldwell, Teresa Cutright, Mike Giannone, Terry Hallett, Martin Murphy, George Newkome, James Rogers, Julia Spiker, T.S. Srivatsan, Harvey Sterns, John Szabo, Mark Tausig, Claire Tessier, Dudley Turner, Susan Witt, and Sajit Zachariah.

1. Dr. James Rogers moved to approve the minutes of the 2004 Graduate Faculty meeting. Dr. N.J. Brown seconded the motion; the minutes were approved.

2. Reports

Dr. Maryhelen Kreidler, Vice Chair of Graduate Council, was unable to attend. Heather Blake presented the report on her behalf. A copy of her report is attached.

Dr. Teresa Cutright questioned whether or not the TSE is a requirement for faculty members whose native language is not English. She finds a number of students expressing how difficult it is to understand some of their instructors. These instructors have knowledge of the content area but cannot effectively convey the message to their students.

Dr. George Newkome responded that he is unable to answer that particular question.

Ms. Stacey Buckshaw, President of Graduate Student Government, provided a report to the Graduate Faculty. A copy of her report is attached.

Ms. Buckshaw encouraged faculty members to nominate graduate student senators from their departments to serve on Graduate Student Government. Additionally, she suggested a graduate student orientation for all graduate students not just graduate assistants, for the Graduate School has an orientation specifically for teaching and research assistants. This would be a general orientation for students, especially those new to the University and to the Akron area.

Dr. Susan Witt asked how she could receive a Senator Nomination Form. Ms. Buckshaw replied that this form sent to all department chairs; however, she would have a form sent directly to Dr. Witt.

Dr. George Newkome applauded Ms. Buckshaw's efforts and those of the graduate students involved with Graduate Student Government as they have reactivated and reorganized this group a great deal over the past year.

Dr. David Baker, Interim Dean of University Libraries, provided a report to the Graduate Faculty. An outline of his report is attached.

Dr. Baker stated that the library has undergone reorganization, and a copy of the current organizational chart is available on the Library's website.

Currently, there are 12,000 full text online journals available through the University Library. Additionally, the Library has developed a Learning Commons Concept whereby there would be an open space of the library with conference tables, meeting rooms, white boards, instruction for WebCT, and reference librarians available to assist students and faculty.

Dr. Terry Hallett stated that she thinks this is a wonderful idea that should prove very beneficial.

Dr. Baker added that there has been a task force on plagiarism assembled. He said that there are software packages that can assist in detecting plagiarism. The purpose of the task force is not to police plagiarism but to educate students about plagiarism and how to avoid plagiarizing, working under the assumption that no one wants to commit plagiarism.

Dr. Teresa Cutright questioned what the penalty is for plagiarism.

Dr. Baker responded that the penalty is quite vague. It is up to the discretion of the individual professor.

Dr. Newkome said that there are many facets to the penalty for plagiarism. He stated that recently the College of Engineering dismissed two students who were caught plagiarizing. Dr. Newkome stated that it is important to start somewhere in the effort to prevent student plagiarism.

Dr. Baker added that one of the places they are starting is to educate students who don't know how to reference material and make appropriate citations. He said that this is often difficult for foreign students to understand.

Lastly, Dr. Baker said there are two finalists for the position of Dean of University Libraries. One of the finalists has withdrawn, and the remaining finalist will be visiting campus on May 12 and 13.

Mike Giannone provided a report on Information Technology Services, highlighting the accomplishments of IT over the past year. PeopleSoft was upgraded, and this transition seemed to be a relatively smooth one. He mentioned that Oracle purchased PeopleSoft, and we have until 2010 before it will be necessary to upgrade systems once again. Mr. Giannone stated that IT is continuing to support the faculty laptop program. Also, there are currently 32 computer kiosks across campus. Over the past year, the "footprints" system has been implemented which allows faculty and staff to track work orders they have

placed through the Help Desk. Related to the Help Desk, Mr. Giannone said that a customer service survey had been distributed so as to acquire feedback from the campus community on the level of service being provided by the Help Desk. Lastly, he stated that the search is underway for a new Vice President for Information Technology Services with the goal to have someone in place by the beginning of the fall semester.

Dr. Newkome asked Dr. Mark Tausig, Associate Dean of the Graduate School, to provide a report of what has been taking place in the Graduate School.

Dr. Tausig stated that he started as Associate Dean in August 2004. Since then, many things have taken place. The Apply Yourself online application system has been implemented. The system allows for students to apply online, check the status of their applications, and keep track of letters of recommendation. It also allows for the Graduate School to notify students of their admission electronically. Eventually, Apply Yourself will be linked with PeopleSoft so that information received through Apply Yourself can be dumped into the PeopleSoft system.

Dr. Tausig said that the Electronic Thesis and Dissertation mechanism is now in place. Theses and dissertations are online in PDF files. These documents may be accessed through OhioLink. The instructions for electronic submission of a thesis or dissertation are available on the Graduate School website.

The first Conference on Undergraduate and Graduate Student Research was held in the fall of 2004, and planning for the fall 2005 conference is already underway.

Dr. Tausig mentioned that the Graduate School has developed the Industrial/Community Assistantship Program where external agencies can fund a graduate student, particularly a doctoral student. The agency would pay the stipend, and we would pay the tuition. This is an excellent source of practical training for students, and any department can become involved in this.

Currently, the Graduate School is working with the Registrar to change the deadline dates for the application for graduation, moving the application deadlines closer to the dates of the commencements, so students do not have to apply so far in advance. Dr. Tausig added that the goal is to have the application deadline dates fall within the semester of graduation. Right now the proposed dates are better, but they still fall outside of the given academic term. The deadline date for the Advancement to Candidacy will remain the same. There will be no change to that.

Over the last year, the Graduate School has worked with the Office of Student Financials in order to prevent graduate students from getting dropped should they have an outstanding balance. Now, the Graduate School receives a list of students who are eligible to be dropped for non-payment. The Graduate School contacts these students to let them know that it is necessary to make arrangements for some type of payment. Those students who still have an outstanding balance are

not dropped but are prevented from any subsequent registration until payment is made.

Lastly, Dr. Tausig mentioned that he is working to have a “G-mail Digest” distributed periodically to graduate students and graduate faculty. This would be a newsletter of sorts that would provide information on what’s new in the Graduate School, funding opportunities for graduate students, and notification of any policy changes.

3. Action Items Referred from Graduate Council

There were no action items referred from Graduate Council.

4. Old Business

There was no old business for discussion.

5. New Business

There was no new business for discussion.

The meeting adjourned at 4:05 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Heather A. Blake  
Graduate School