The University of Akron
Minutes of Graduate Council
January 25, 2016

The Graduate Council met on Monday, January 25, 2016, in the Student Union, Room 314. Dean Chand Midha presided. Present were Philip Allen, Eric Amis, Charles Beneke, John Goodell, Qetler Jensrud, Martha Santos, Shivakumar Sastry, Julia Spiker, Harvey Sterns, Lauri Thorpe, Margaret Tung, Anne Wiley, Nicole Zacharia, and Baomei Zhao.

GC Members Absent with Notice: Amanda Booher, Nidaa Makki, and Ronald Otterstetter

GC Members Absent: Monique Mullett, Judit Puskas, and Andrew Thomas

Call to Order

Dean Midha called the meeting to order at 9:50 a.m.

Dean Midha introduced Professor Charles Beneke. Professor Beneke has joined the Graduate School as Associate Dean-Academics.

Roll Call

Heather Blake recorded the attendance of those present.

Approval of Minutes

Philip Allen made a motion to approve the minutes of the December 7, 2015 meeting.
John Goodell seconded the motion.
Minutes of the December 7 meeting were approved without dissent.

Committee Reports and Referrals

Curriculum Committee – Philip Allen presented a log of 21 proposals reviewed and approved by the committee: A&S-PHYS-15-13130, A&S-PHYS-15-13136, A&S-SOCIO-15-16191, A&S-SOCIO-15-16192, A&S-SOCIO-15-16193, A&S-SOCIO-15-16200, A&S-SOCIO-16203, BUS-FINAN-15-15211, EDUC-CURR-15-16067, EDUC-CURR-15-16070, EDUC-CURR-15-16071, EDUC-CURR-15-16072, EDUC-CURR-15-16073, EDUC-CURR-15-16074, EDUC-CURR-15-16075, EDUC-CURR-15-16076, EDUC-CURR-15-16077, EDUC-CURR-15-16078, EDUC-CURR-15-16079, EDUC-CURR-15-16080, and EDUC-CURR-15-16081. Approved by Council.

Ruffalo Noel Levitz Financial Aid Study Team – Galen Graber and Megan Weisenstine

Dean Midha stated that the Graduate School is currently reviewing its financial aid model and exploring possibilities of a new model.

Lauri Thorpe indicated that she has been working with Diane Maffei to gather data on the amount of tuition remission and stipends awarded to graduate students.

Galen Graber and Megan Weisenstine, consultants from Ruffalo Noel Levitz, have been brought in to meet with Graduate Council. They stated that their objective in this meeting was to gather information from members and field questions.

Mr. Graber shared background about their company and the work they do in the areas of fundraising and financial aid. Most of their experience is working at the undergraduate level, and they have had some/limited experience with graduate and law programs. One of the things he mentioned was how FAFSA is not an appropriate mechanism to use for graduate students. Given that many of our graduate students are international it was not clear how any mechanism like FAFSA could potentially be used to assess the financial status of the students and their ability to pay.

Mr. Graber shared statistics on how many self-paying students joined the University in the preceding year. These data were: Arts and Sciences 35/170, Business Administration 39/97, Education 10/24, Engineering 19/68, Health Professions 65/157, and Polymer Science and Polymer Engineering 55/106.

Mr. Graber said that in his experience the three attributes that require tradeoff are enrollment, institutional profile and net revenue. He said that two of these attributes can be maximized at the expense of the other, but not all three. He noted that our yield rate was about 57%. It was not clear what was meant by this comment. He talked about how the considerations for rationalizing the financial models must involve professional programs versus basic research programs, tuition driven models versus state subvention driven models, and what we need versus what we are doing. While he said that his comments were targeting both undergraduate and graduate levels, nothing specific was offered to the members of Graduate Council for review or discussion.

It was clear from the discussion that the issues are complex and warrants further discussion by Graduate Council.

Meeting adjourned at 11:05 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Shivakumar Sastry
Secretary