

The University of Akron
Minutes of Graduate Council
October 16, 2017

The Graduate Council met on Monday, October 16, 2017, in the Student Union, Room 310. Dean Chand Midha presided. Present were Dr. Philip Allen, Mr. Charles Beneke, Ms. Heather Blake, Dr. Amanda Booher, Dr. Marcus Braga Alves, Dr. George Chase, Dr. Gary Holliday, Ms. Diane Maffei, Dr. Carolyn Murrock, Provost Rex Ramsier, Dr. Francesco Renna, Dr. Jina Sang, Dr. Martha Santos, Dr. Shivakumar Sastry, Associate Dean Marnie Saunders, Dr. John Senko, Dr. Mark Soucek, Dr. Harvey Sterns, Dr. Baffour Takyi, Dr. Margaret Tung, and Dr. Nicole Zacharia.

GC Members Absent with Notice: Dr. Wondimu Ahmed

GC Members Absent: Mr. Taylor Swift

Call to Order

Dean Midha called the meeting to order at 9:12 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 September 18, 2017. Dr. Takyi seconded the motion. Minutes of the September 18, 2017 meeting were approved without dissent.

Remarks – Provost Ramsier

Provost Ramsier thanked Graduate Council for their work in developing a new funding model for graduate assistantships. This was the biggest difference in this year's budget. Graduate Assistantship Money has already been allocated to the deans for next academic year starting in July 2018. Provost Ramsier stated that program review is underway. He urged members of Graduate Council to assist colleagues on their self-studies as it is important to know what people think. Allotting two months for departments to prepare their self-studies allows sufficient time for faculty to have a voice to discuss academic issues and prepare their documents. The long-term goal is to invest in viable programs. Provost Ramsier provided Graduate Council members the opportunity to ask any questions they may have about these topics or any others of concern.

Dr. Soucek expressed concern that with each cut more students are being declined, thus decreasing the number of students enrolling. Provost Ramsier responded that bringing in weak students won't do any good. He stated that the College of Polymer Science and Polymer Engineering can get the same number of students. All doctoral programs have been fully supported except for History. Students in the College of Polymer Science and Polymer Engineering are currently being supported to teach in the colleges of Arts and Sciences and Engineering. Provost Ramsier stated that zero allocations were made to the colleges of Business Administration, Education, and Health Professions. These colleges have professional programs and should be recruiting self-paying students. The College of Business Administration now has a new recruiting plan to get more self-paying students. This sets the stage for a strategy to make our graduate programs more attractive. This may mean we have fewer students, and departments may need to have strong undergraduate programs instead of weak graduate programs.

Dr. Allen said that in the process of academic program review the question has been raised as to whether or not doctoral students can be funded for a sixth year by a grant with the Graduate School providing a tuition waiver. Provost Ramsier replied that the five years is the limit for Graduate School funding for doctoral students. Doctoral students should be funded on grants or as instructors since some students take longer than five years. Tuition is granted based on funding coming from a grant. Provost Ramsier added that down the road the plan is to put tuition on a grant. The idea is there are certain areas in which students should be on grants. If an adviser is not productive in order to get a grant, then the student should be a part-time instructor and teach a course.

Dr. Sastry asked if it was possible to get information on what those research assistants who are teaching assistants are doing to fulfill their 20 hour per week. Provost Ramsier said this is an administrative function, and departmental supervisors should be keeping track that they are working 20 hours per week.

Dr. Chase stated that he has been hearing concerns that there are not enough faculty for courses to be taught and asked about the possibility of startup packages to attract new faculty. Provost Ramsier stated that areas with donor investments may allow for money that deans could possibly use for startup packages. A strategy is necessary as we have never budgeted for startup packages. Startup funds were always just provided without factoring them into the budget. Provost Ramsier said he was approached with the idea that startup packages be cost-shared among the deans, departments, and Provost. This is something he will need to think about.

Dr. Soucek questioned if a dean finds startup money can he or she keep it, or is it a three-for-one? Provost Ramsier clarified that three-for-one means if a person leaves the University one-third of the net comes back for reallocation. He is encouraging people to go out and get money for specific startup packages or named positions. Currently, name professorships come with no money.

Dr. Sterns mentioned that some people have been discouraged, because development wasn't cooperative. Provost Ramsier emphasized that academics should come first, establishing scholarships and professorships.

Provost Ramsier informed Graduate Council that the College of Business came forward with a request to have a STEM designation for their master's program in Supply Chain Management, and there should be a process to review such a request. He does not want to arbitrarily approve such requests. Provost Ramsier said that while this is not a curriculum issue it should be reviewed someone. This request is being reviewed by the Curriculum Committee of Graduate Council.

Dr. Zacharia stated that she is chairing the graduate faculty membership committee this year and during their meeting a faculty member brought up that his department was unable to hire an instructor to teach a course, because he did not have a degree at least one level above level at which he was teaching but did have experience. She asked how the institution defines minimum experience. Should each college have guidelines that document experience? Provost Ramsier said that the fact that someone has been teaching a particular course for several years is not tested experience. A good example is AACSB, the College of Business accrediting body. AACSB has standards. There are internal guidelines related to years of experience as an accountant, etc.

Provost Ramsier closed by stating he appreciates the work of Graduate Council and asked them to be thinking about issues it wants to tackle next.

Remarks – Dean Midha

Dean Midha stated that the target savings last year was \$15 million, and we came up with \$12.9 million and a two-year plan. The research assistants that were converted to teaching assistants are primarily from Polymer Science. There are 47 teaching assistants in the College of Polymer Science and Polymer Engineering. Nineteen are TAs in the Engineering, five are TAs in Arts and Sciences, and 23 are TAs in Polymer Science and Polymer Engineering. This is beneficial for these colleges, but we are not achieving the anticipated savings.

Dean Midha said that assistantship funding for new students for next year was allocated to the colleges on October 10. There will be no harm to continuing students. Colleges were provided numbers for doctoral set aside. He stated that all graduate assistantship contracts come through the Graduate School, including research assistantships funded by grants. Prior commitments exist in some colleges. These commitments are being brought to the attention of the Provost. They will be honored but not with Graduate School funds. F1 and J1 students no longer permitted to be funded by CIGA. Dean Midha stated that President Wilson asked for how much we have spent on stipends for this year. He also provided him information on last year as well. The process going forward follows a May 1 deadline for allocated monies to be spent. The Graduate School has been working with departments and providing their application numbers to them. Some areas are experiencing a decline in applications for the last two years. For example, the College of Business Administration is down 45%. This may not be just related to funding.

Dr. Allen stated that it is not just funding that has affected CBA. There is currently a shift toward specialized master's graduate degrees, and dealing with this shift will have an effect on graduate enrollment.

Committee Reports

Curriculum Committee – Dr. Allen presented a log of 16 proposals as reviewed and approved by the committee: A&S-COMMUN-16-18969, A&S-COMMUN-16-19157, A&S-COMMUN-16-19158, A&S-COMMUN-16-19163, A&S-POLSC-17-20343, BUS-ECON-17-20645, BUS-ECON-17-20650, BUS-MANGT-17-20556, BUS-MANGT-17-20599, BUS-MANGT-17-20600, BUS-MARKET-17-20496, BUS-MARKET-17-20563, BUS-MARKET-17-20564, ENGR-BIOMED-16-19601, CHP-NURIN-17-21655, and CHP-SPLANG-17-20477. Approved by Council.

Membership Committee – Dr. Zacharia presented a log of 21 graduate faculty applications as reviewed and approved by the committee. Approved by Council.

Li Jia	Nita Sahai	Steven Chuang	Henry Astley
David Simmons	Walter L. Hixson	Dimitria E. Gatzia	Sherry Simms
Charles Beneke	David Szalay	Edward Conrad	Thaddeus Neururer
Lei Gao	Andrea F. Snell	Minel J. Braun	Lingyun Liu
Ghazi Falah	Ann L. Usher	Bryan E. Nichols	Philip Thomson
Francisco Moore			

NTTs and Graduate Faculty Status

Dean Midha stated that last year the Graduate Council discussed non-tenure track faculty applying for graduate faculty status. Currently, NTT faculty apply for *Ad Hoc* Temporary graduate faculty status as they cannot apply for full-time appointment to Category I or Category II. Additionally, last year the various levels of graduate faculty status as other institutions were discussed. At some institutions if at the time of appointment the faculty member is qualified to teach graduate courses he or she retains his or her graduate faculty appointment for the duration of their employment. The faculty member is not required to apply for reappointment. The Ohio State University and Wright State University have such policies. Dean Midha suggested UA consider implementing such a policy. This would be only for those faculty members teaching graduate-level classes. Faculty members undertaking research and advising thesis and dissertation committees would be required to reapply for graduate faculty membership.

Mr. Beneke suggested establishing a third category of graduate faculty membership. Dr. Soucek made a motion to establish three categories of full-time graduate faculty membership. These levels of graduate faculty status would be as follows: Category I – teaching master’s and doctoral courses and serving as a member of thesis and dissertation committees; Category II – teaching master’s and doctoral courses and directing master’s theses; and Category III – teaching master’s and doctoral courses and directing master’s theses and doctoral dissertations. Appointment to Category I would be effective for the duration of the faculty member’s employment at the University if the faculty member is deemed qualified to teach graduate courses, and no application for reappointment would be necessary. Dr. Holliday seconded the motion. Unanimously approved. Motion carries. Dr. Chase asked if a faculty member would be permitted to continue serving as an adviser after retirement. Dean Midha responded that the Graduate School would allow the faculty member to continue but would ask that co-adviser be identified.

Dean Midha stated that many NTT faculty only hold a master’s degree and are hired to teach graduate-level courses. It is necessary to discuss the level of graduate faculty membership to which NTT faculty should apply. He asked that the Graduate Faculty Membership Committee initiate a conversation related to NTT faculty graduate faculty membership and bring issues back to Graduate Council for discussion. It might also be helpful to find out what other institutions are doing. Dean Midha mentioned that it would be good to know how many NTT are faculty are on campus. He asked Ms. Blake to see if she can get this information.

Dr. Booher mentioned that there are NTT faculty in her department that would like to undertake graduate-related activities beyond teaching. Dr. Zacharia said that she would like to get input from the union on this topic. Dr. Renna stated that he has inquired with the union and is awaiting further information from them.

Meeting adjourned at 10:40 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Dr. Shivakumar Sastry
Secretary