

The University of Akron
Minutes of Graduate Council
November 20, 2017

The Graduate Council met on Monday, November 20, 2017, in the Student Union, Room 310. Dean Chand Midha presided. Present were Dr. Wondimu Ahmed, Dr. Philip Allen, Mr. Charles Beneke, Ms. Heather Blake, Dr. Amanda Booher, Dr. Marcus Braga Alves, Dr. George Chase, Dr. Gary Holliday, Dr. Carolyn Murrock, Dr. Francesco Renna, Dr. Jina Sang, Dr. Martha Santos, Dr. Shivakumar Sastry, Associate Dean Marnie Saunders, Dr. John Senko, Dr. Mark Soucek, Dr. Baffour Takyi, Dr. Margaret Tung, and Dr. Nicole Zacharia.

GC Members Absent: Mr. Taylor Swift

Call to Order

Dean Midha called the meeting to order at 9:08 a.m.

Roll Call

Heather Blake recorded the attendance of those present.

Approval of Minutes

Dr. Chase made a motion to approve the minutes of October 16, 2017. Dr. Takyi seconded the motion. Minutes of the October 16, 2017 meeting were approved without dissent.

Remarks – Dean Midha

Dean Midha stated that following last month's Graduate Council meeting there has been discussion about graduate faculty status. Currently, there are two categories for full-time graduate faculty membership, Category I and Category II. Category I permits tenured and tenure-track faculty members to teach master's and doctoral courses and direct master's theses. Category II permits tenured and tenure-track faculty members to teach master's and doctoral courses and direct master's theses and doctoral dissertations. At the October meeting Graduate Council members approved establishing a third category for full-time graduate faculty membership. As a result, Category I will be for faculty members who hold the terminal degree at the time of appointment and are teaching graduate-level courses and serving as a member of thesis and dissertation committees (cannot direct thesis or dissertation committees). Faculty members appointed to Category I will continue to hold the appointment for the duration of their employment at the University. Category II will be for faculty members teaching graduate-level courses and directing master's theses (old Category I). Category III will be for faculty members teaching graduate-level courses and directing master's theses and doctoral dissertations (old Category II). Dean Midha said that the revised categories for full-time graduate faculty membership will require approval of a change to the Bylaws of the Graduate Faculty, and this must go through the graduate faculty at the annual meeting. Upon approval by the graduate faculty the rule change will move forward to the Faculty Senate.

Dr. Sastry asked if faculty members who currently hold Category I and Category II will need to reapply, or will their category of membership simply change?

Dean Midha responded that their category will change for the duration of the term.

Dr. Allen inquired if this could be expedited via an email vote.

Dr. Soucek asked if there would be an opportunity for those who may be unable to make the graduate faculty meeting to vote via email.

Dr. Sastry stated that he was opposed to an email vote on this change to the Bylaws, because anyone with any interest in this change to graduate faculty membership should attend.

Committee Reports

Curriculum Committee – Dr. Allen presented a log of 11 proposals as reviewed and approved by the committee: A&S-POLSC-17-20344, A&S-POLSC-17-20913, CHP-NURIN-17-19938, CHP-NURIN-21392, CHP-NURIN-17-21606, CHP-NURIN-17-21612, CHP-NURIN-17-21656, CHP-NURIN-17-21657, CHP-NURIN-17-21659, CHP-NURIN-17-21660, and CHP-NURIN-17-21775. Approved by Council.

Dr. Allen stated that last year the Department of Management requested their master's program in Supply Chain Management receive a federal STEM designation. The rationale provided by the department was that its program seemed to fit with other such programs. By having a federal STEM designation international students can have a three-year visa instead of a one-year visa for optional practical training. Dr. Allen said that one of the issues that was missed previously was whether the Department of Management could show that their program in Supply Chain Management is comparable to other federal STEM designated programs as programs have different CIP codes. The department was asked to confirm that the curriculum at the course level had the same CIP code as other federal STEM designated programs. The department cited the master's program in Supply Chain Management at the University of Texas-Dallas. The curriculum committee reviewed UA's program alongside that of the UT-Dallas and felt by unanimous vote that the curriculum of the program at UA was at least as rigorous as that of UT-Dallas and merited a federal STEM designation.

Dr. Chase inquired if there was any downside to having a federal STEM designation for the program.

Dr. Allen responded that the committee could not identify a downside.

Dr. Sastry advised that quality should be ensured when approving a federal STEM designation as we are certifying that the program content is training in a STEM discipline. Also, federal visa regulations are involved.

Dr. Braga Alves stated that the College of Business Administration takes this issue very seriously and would never have asked this request for the Supply Chain Management program to be analyzed if it was not a quality program offering. There is much concern that this request has taken a year and a half to be reviewed.

Dr. Sastry replied that process issues should be separated from content issues. The delay in review is due to the request made to the department for comparable courses from OSU and CWRU. The program at CWRU is different, and federal visa issues must be taken seriously.

Dean Midha said that the department made this request last year. This is a successful program and currently has good enrollment numbers. This may allow them to attract more students. This type of request has been a learning process for all involved. At the beginning when the request was first received it was thought that it was for state STEM designation; however, it was for federal STEM designation. The University of Akron's program is different from OSU and CWRU. The University of Texas-Dallas program is comparable to UA.

Dr. Allen recommended that Graduate Council approve this request from the Department of Management. Unanimously approved by Council.

Membership Committee – Dr. Zacharia stated that the committee has begun discussion on NTT faculty and graduate faculty membership. Communication was received from the Union that they oppose NTT faculty applying for full-time graduate faculty status. Dr. Zacharia mentioned that there are currently 220 NTT faculty on UA's main campus. Ms. Blake was able to get this information from Human Resources. The committee has no recommendation at this time.

Dr. Allen stated that there was a press release that AAUP did not support NTT having graduate faculty status.

Dr. Midha said there are NTT faculty who currently hold Ad Hoc Temporary graduate faculty status. He is not certain of the exact number. If NTT faculty meet the requirements for full-time graduate faculty membership why not allow them to apply?

Dr. Sastry mentioned that approximately 10% of NTT faculty have terminal degrees. If graduate faculty status is awarded to NTT faculty, then it would cut into full-time graduate faculty membership.

Dean Midha responded that discussion needs to continue.

New Business

Dean Midha stated that colleges have been given their stipend and tuition allocations for AY 18-19. Fall tuition amounts were based on actual data, and Spring and Summer amounts were estimated by contracts. This was presented to the Provost. Monies are allocated to the deans, and the deans must make the allocations to the departments.

Dean Midha said that he received a call from the Budget Office with regard to undergraduate students taking graduate courses. While he was not aware of it, University Council made a recommendation that undergraduate students taking graduate courses should only pay undergraduate tuition. Currently, undergraduate students taking graduate courses pay graduate tuition.

Associate Dean Saunders shared that at CSU and YSU undergraduate students taking graduate courses are charged undergraduate tuition, and graduate students taking undergraduate courses, for example for remediation purposes, are charged undergraduate tuition.

Dr. Sastry stated that this issue came to the Budget and Finance Committee from Faculty Senate. The Office of the Registrar provided the number of undergraduate students taking graduate courses, and the committee felt the budget impact was minimal. In light of the fact we have revisited the graduate assistantship allocation model the number of graduate credits an undergraduate can take should be restricted to nine.

Dean Midha explained that the recommendation went through APC, was approved by Faculty Senate, and has now gone to the President. The President is asking what the financial impact may be. Since this is a rule change it should be considered by Graduate Council.

Dr. Allen mentioned that Faculty Senate thought that if an undergraduate student was applying the course to a graduate degree, then the graduate tuition rate would be charged, but if the student was applying the course to the baccalaureate degree the undergraduate tuition rate would be charged.

Dr. Midha indicated it has already been approved for undergraduate students to take graduate courses at the undergraduate tuition rate. He asked Associate Dean Saunders to get from Dr. Sastry the information that was provided to him by the Office of the Registrar and discussed in University Council. Dean Midha asked what Graduate Council thought about the number of graduate credits an undergraduate student should be allowed to take. Keep the number at 12? Lower the number? The consensus was to keep the number of credits at 12.

Dr. Senko made a motion to establish an ad hoc committee to review the cuts made to graduate assistantship dollars this year compared to last year. Dr. Sastry seconded the motion. Unanimously approved. Motion carries.

Dean Midha said that committee should consist of no more than five members. He asked those who would like to serve on the committee to email Ms. Blake.

Dr. Soucek stated that he had a discussion with Provost Ramsier about CIGA as a result of being told that it is illegal for international students to be funded by CIGA. He said this is not true. As long as a student is working on his or her thesis he or she can be funded by CIGA. He said that the Provost is open to the thought process.

Dr. Chase added that there was an email sent out indicating that it is legal as long as the student is on CPT.

Dean Midha said that the CIGA issue was handled through the Office of Research Administration, and last year outside counsel was sought to make the process as clear as possible. The questions asked were who is eligible, and who is not eligible? Organizations in good faith were providing stipend amount, and UA was providing the tuition; however, these stipend amounts were low and Graduate School was still providing tuition, resulting in a significant number of CIGAs on campus. Because of this, a minimum stipend amount for assistantships was established, and outside organizations funding the stipend must provide the minimum amount. When the Graduate School was receiving contracts from the Office of Research Administration they were marked as research assistants, and there was no indication of grant funded or outside funded. The international office, then, became involved. Last Wednesday Associate Dean Saunders got in touch with Robyn Brown in the International Center to clarify conflicting information. Associate Dean Saunders will be meeting with Robyn Brown this week to make sure everyone is on the same page. Katie Watkins from the Office of Research Administration will also be attending the meeting.

Dr. Allen asked if the University's general counsel was involved.

Dean Midha said that they were involved last year when outside counsel was brought in. He said it is important that everyone is on the same page. There should be a one page rule of how CIGAs are to be handled. We do not want students to get hurt in the process.

Dr. Tung asked about the dean's scholarship that was available in Arts and Sciences last year as it is not available this year.

Mr. Beneke responded that the Graduate School allocated money for tuition awards, but in Arts and Sciences the dean, with this money, established a dean's scholarship. This is an internal college policy.

Meeting adjourned at 10:22 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Dr. Shivakumar Sastry
Secretary