



**The University of Akron
Minutes of Graduate Council
December 10, 2018
Student Union, Room 310**

Dean Chand Midha presided.

Present: Dr. Wondimu Ahmed, Ms. Heather Blake, Dr. Amanda Booher, Dr. Edward Conrad, Dr. R. Ray Gehani, Mr. Alec Gerrerd, Dr. Gary Holliday, Dr. Carolyn Murrock, Dr. Coleen Pugh, Dr. Jina Sang, Associate Dean Marnie Saunders, Dr. Mark Soucek, and Dr. Baffour Takyi.

GC Members Absent with Notice: Dr. George Chase, Dr. Todd Gaffke, Dr. Alex Povtisky, Dr. Martha Santos, Dr. John Senko, and Dr. Claire Tessier

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. Holliday made a motion to approve the minutes of November 19, 2018. Dr. Gehani seconded the motion. Minutes of the November 19, 2018 meeting were approved without dissent.

1. Remarks – Dean Midha

Dean Midha informed members of Graduate Council that the University's three-year action plan was approved by the Board of Trustees. It was distributed via email after the Board of Trustees meeting. The Graduate School will work with various colleges to develop professional master's degrees.

Dean Midha shared with Graduate Council an issue that has arisen and has been occurring for some time now. The College of Polymer Science and Polymer Engineering as well as the College of Engineering have special arrangements with Chinese universities wherein students apply to the University after having completed the first three years of their baccalaureate degree in China and are admitted as graduate students. The practice has been that after their first year the students earn their undergraduate degree from the Chinese university. Their first year of master's coursework is counted toward their baccalaureate degree. No proof of baccalaureate degree conferral from the Chinese university is submitted. If domestic students apply during their senior years they are provisionally admitted pending proof of baccalaureate degree conferral. Associate Dean Saunders checked with all other Ohio institutions, and they require proof of a baccalaureate degree. ODHE provides the University state subsidy for international students at the graduate-level but not at the undergraduate-level. Further, the state requires graduate students to hold a baccalaureate degree.

Associate Dean Saunders stated that we have been admitting these international students under the incorrect classification, treating them as graduate students. Now, we have to report them as undergraduate students until proof of a baccalaureate degree has been received. Full admission requires that a student hold a baccalaureate degree. All students should be treated the same. Associate Dean Saunders shared that the International Center said that provisionally admitted international students may have difficulty getting an I-20 and asked if they could be admitted fully. These students cannot be admitted fully. Provisional admission allows them to take up to 15 graduate credit hours; however, the problem is that students take two semesters of coursework that exceeds the 15 graduate credit hours permitted under provisional admission.

Dr. Gehani inquired as to the number of students in this program and when it began.

Dr. Pugh responded that the program began in 2011. From 2011 through Summer 2018 the College of Polymer Science and Polymer Engineering has graduated 293 master's students. These students are self-supporting.

Dean Midha said that 50% of state subsidy is indexed to course completions, and the University sends the state information on course completions. These students have been identified as graduate students and should not be and are still undergraduates. Can they take graduate courses? This is an issue that needs to be corrected. Each year approximately 50 students come through this program. Out of state tuition is assessed to each.

Associate Dean Saunders stated that going forward this has to be done correctly. Another issue at the state-level pertains to accelerated degree programs. These programs must have 150 unique credit hours. These students, however, are double-counting one year of graduate coursework.

Dean Midha advised that students are admitted provisionally for a number of reasons, including lack of an earned baccalaureate degree or a cumulative grade point average falling slightly below 2.75. Associate Dean Saunders has been in touch with the Provost and General Counsel regarding this matter, and the purpose of informing members of Graduate Council is to make everyone aware of the situation. The intent is to make sure we are following the rules when admitting these students. Dean Midha indicated that Graduate Council will be informed of the decision made by the University on this matter.

Dean Midha informed Graduate Council members that the program review cycle is being initiated again. The college deans and those departments being reviewed have been notified. This is a formative review process required by ODHE and HLC and will be a seven-year cycle.

Dr. Gehani questioned who is going to grow the University with the amount of cuts that are occurring.

Dean Midha responded that he attended the Council of Graduate Schools annual meeting last week in Washington, D.C., and discussion there emphasized faculty credentials and program curriculum in attracting students. He also stated that at the CCGS meetings in Columbus other universities are proposing new graduate programs while The University of Akron has only proposed one, maybe two, since he has been attending the last three years. Many institutions are proposing new graduate degrees in data and business analytics and data science.

Dr. Holliday stated that the College of Education has put proposals in the system; however, they were unfortunately not permitted by OAA to move forward.

Dr. Pugh said that departments may be hesitant to put programs through if they won't be permitted to move forward or may get cut.

2. Committee Reports

At the time of committee reports there was no longer a quorum present. Dr. Ahmed, Chair, Curriculum Committee and Dr. Holliday, Chair, Graduate Faculty Membership Committee requested an electronic vote by Graduate Council on the 18 curriculum proposals and one graduate faculty application.

Heather Blake will reach out to all Graduate Council members and coordinate the electronic voting.

Meeting adjourned at 10:16 a.m.

Respectfully submitted for your consideration.

Dr. R. Ray Gehani
Secretary

Upcoming meetings: Mondays 9:00 – 10:30 AM, January 28, February 18, March 18, April 15, and May 6, 2019.