

The University of Akron
Minutes of Graduate Council
March 19, 2018

The Graduate Council met on Monday, March 19, 2018, in Student Union, Room 310. Dean Chand Midha presided. Present were Dr. Wondimu Ahmed, Dr. Philip Allen, Mr. Charles Beneke, Ms. Heather Blake, Ms. Robyn Brown, Dr. Gary Holliday, Dr. Carolyn Murrock, Dr. Francesco Renna, Associate Dean Marnie Saunders, Dr. Jina Sang, Dr. Mark Soucek, Dr. Baffour Takyi, and Dr. Margaret Tung.

Guest in Attendance: Dr. Harvey Sterns

GC Members Absent with Notice: Dr. Amanda Booher, Dr. Marcus Braga-Alves, Dr. Martha Santos, Dr. Shivakumar Sastry, Dr. John Senko, and Dr. Nicole Zacharia

GC Members Absent: Dr. George Chase and Mr. Taylor Swift

Call to Order

Dean Midha called the meeting to order at 9:10 a.m.

Roll Call

Heather Blake recorded the attendance of those present.

Remarks – Dean Midha

Dean Midha stated that in the absence of a quorum no motions or voting will occur. The meeting convened with discussion only.

Dean Midha mentioned that annual graduate faculty meeting was held on March 14. Changes to the Bylaws of the Graduate Faculty were approved and will move forward to the Faculty Senate.

Dean Midha shared that the Graduate School sponsored a dissertation boot camp on Friday evening through Sunday afternoon. Fifteen students attended the boot camp. Of the students attending 14 were domestic and one international. He thanked Associate Dean Saunders for her efforts in organizing this evening.

Congratulations were extended to Dr. Soucek on becoming an endowed chair.

Provisional Admission and I-20 Changes

Ms. Robyn Brown, Executive Director of Global Engagement, stated that earlier this year the International Center began looking at immigration policies. Through this process the matter of issuing I-20s to provisionally admitted students arose. Unless a student has met all requirements for admission he or she cannot be issued an I-20. Ms. Brown said that by issuing I-20s to provisionally admitted students the University was not complying with Homeland Security. She discussed this situation with the Office of General Counsel and met with Provost Ramsier to distribute this information to the colleges and departments. Since this information was communicated to the campus in January the University has gotten permission to issue non-degree I-20s. Ms. Brown stated that a non-degree I-20 allows a student to take the classes he or she needs in order to gain full admission to the program. She inquired with Graduate Council members if they feel this is beneficial to our students and whether or not we want to continue doing this knowing that students may not get admitted.

Dean Midha said that last fall 84 provisional admits were issued.

Ms. Brown stated that the expectation is that the non-degree I-20 will permit students to come for one or two semesters. If students on non-degree I-20s do not gain full admission they may be required to return home.

Dean Midha said this must be made clear to students as some faculty may be writing to students that they will be awarded funding once they get here.

Dr. Takyi questioned if provisionally admitted students receive funding.

Associate Dean Saunders confirmed that provisionally admitted students do not receive funding.

Dr. Soucek asked if students gain full admission before arriving are they eligible for funding.

Associate Dean Saunders affirmed that students who hold full admission are eligible for funding.

Dr. Allen stated that a key issue is how provisionally admitted students have fared.

Associate Dean Saunders shared that of the 84 provisionally admitted students 32 did not enroll, 31 are working toward full admission, 14 have been fully admitted, five are on probation, and two have failed out. She stated that many are doing quite well and making good progress.

Dr. Sterns asked what we are doing to support students once they arrive. Do departments track them to know if they are succeeding or not?

Ms. Brown responded that the International Center makes international students aware of what resources there are on campus. Departments provide as much help as they can.

Dr. Ahmed suggested it may be helpful to collect data on students' needs and challenges once they are admitted and arrive on campus.

Dean Midha requested that Ms. Brown communicate to the deans and department chairs that international students granted provisional admission can be issued a non-degree I-20.

There were no further items for discussion.

Meeting adjourned at 9:55 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Heather A. Blake
Graduate School