

**The University of Akron
Minutes of Graduate Council
September 19, 2016**

The Graduate Council met on Monday, September 19, 2016, in the Student Union, Room 310. Dean Chand Midha presided. Present were Dr. Philip Allen, Associate Dean Charles Beneke, Dr. Amanda Booher, Dr. Marcus Braga-Alves, Dr. Gary Holliday, Dr. Qetler Jensrud, Dr. Ronald Otterstetter, Dr. Judit Puskas, Interim Senior Vice President and Provost Rex Ramsier, Dr. Martha Santos, Dr. Shivakumar Sastry, Dr. John Senko, Dr. James Steiger, Dr. Harvey Sterns, and Dr. Baffour Takyi.

GC Members Absent with Notice: Dr. Margaret Tung and Dr. Nicole Zacharia

GC Members Absent: Dr. Andrew Thomas

Call to Order

Dean Midha called the meeting to order at 9:06 a.m.

Roll Call

Heather Blake recorded the attendance of those present.

Remarks – Dean Midha

Dean Midha welcomed Graduate Council members to the first meeting of this academic year and asked that each member introduce him- or herself.

A copy of the Graduate School Strategic Plan was distributed to Council members.

Dean Midha indicated that the resolution approved in the spring term by the Graduate Council and approved by the Faculty Senate to move the Graduate School to a more centralized location on campus has now been approved by the Facilities Planning Committee as well as the University Council. The location identified to which the Graduate School would move is the fifth floor of Leigh Hall.

The committee inquired about the status of the second resolution. The second resolution approved April 25, 2016 by the Graduate Council and approved by the Faculty Senate that an individual holding the title of college dean should not also be the Vice Provost for Research. Interim Senior Vice President and Provost Rex Ramsier, who was in attendance, indicated that this is currently under review, and Interim President Wilson is aware of this resolution.

Dean Midha stated that over the summer months a subcommittee of Graduate Council has been meeting to discuss the strategic initiatives related to graduate assistantship funding. He asked Dr. Shivakumar Sastry to share the specifics with Graduate Council members.

Dr. Shivakumar Sastry said that the Graduate School did an analysis, and found that all money being allocated for tuition remission was not being spent. Thus, by revising the tuition remission policy there was an opportunity to pass on some of the savings to colleges to improve the current GA stipend rates or improve the hiring of high-quality students. The changes that have been recommended in the Graduate School strategic plan will be effective for Fall 2017. Students receiving full assistantship stipends (through University funded GA, Externally funded Research, or Externally funded Industrial Assistantships that are at least at the level of the minimum stipend that is established by the Office of Research Administration) for each program will be provided a tuition award of 12 credits for fall, 12 credits for spring, and 6 credits for summer. Support for master's students will be limited to two years, and support for doctoral students will be limited to five years. Support for those students who are master's/doctoral will be limited to six years. No harm will be done to any department as a result of the change in funding model. The subcommittee is proposing that Administrative Assistants be provided tuition remission that is no larger than the stipend they receive. For example, if an Administrative Assistant is offered a stipend of \$5000 per semester, the tuition remission will also be up to \$5000 per semester. This is to encourage the hiring and retention of high-quality students.

Interim Senior Vice President and Provost Ramsier spoke with Graduate Council members about Graduate Program Review. Program review is required by the Ohio Board of Regents and the Higher Learning Commission. The Chancellor's Council on Graduate Studies requires that all doctoral programs be reviewed every ten years. The University stopped the last cycle of reviews many years ago and has not started anything new. It is necessary to start a new cycle of reviews, following all rules and regulations. If the University does not do anything, or have a plan in place, the visitors from HLC will have to indicate that the University has not met the criteria. Interim Provost Ramsier recommended looking at what the University did last time for program review and trim it down.

Dr. Puskas questioned whether there was a format that was to be followed for program review.

Dean Midha responded that this will be discussed with Graduate Council and will be an item on the agenda for the next meeting. The graduate program review committee will be co-chaired by Associate Dean Charles Beneke and Dr. Phil Allen in addition to seven other members consisting of three members of the Graduate Council and four other graduate faculty members.

Interim Provost Ramsier also spoke to the issue of graduate recruitment by stating that colleges and departments should be recruiting their students. The Graduate School will not be recruiting students.

Dr. Phil Allen asked for an update on the resolution related to the Vice Provost for Research.

Interim Provost Ramsier shared that he is not certain what may happen; however, hopes to have a response sooner rather than later.

Dr. Ronald Otterstetter expressed concern regarding the delay in clearing a student's submission of the Graduate School exit survey in DARS as a student of his, who completed the exit survey prior to graduation, did not have this requirement cleared in DARS until three weeks after graduation.

Interim Provost Ramsier attributed the delay to loss of staff in offices across campus.

Dr. Phil Allen sought confirmation from Graduate Council members of his serving as co-chair of the graduate program review committee.

Dr. Sastry made a motion that Dr. Phil Allen serve as co-chair of the graduate program review committee. Dr. Amanda Booher seconded this motion. Motion carried with ten ayes and one abstention.

Dean Midha asked Graduate Council members to hold 9:00 AM next Monday, September 26, on their calendars for another meeting to elect a Vice Chair and Secretary and constitute the standing committees, since there was no time left to do so.

Meeting adjourned at 10:25 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Dr. Shivakumar Sastry
Secretary