

**The University of Akron
Minutes of Graduate Council
September 23, 2019**

The Graduate Council met on Monday, September 23, 2019, in Leigh Hall, Room 414. Dean Chand Midha presided. Present were Dr. Wondimu Ahmed, Ms. Heather Blake, Dr. Amanda Booher, Dr. George Chase, Dr. Todd Gaffke, Dr. John Goodell, Dr. Christine Graor, Dr. Gary Holliday, Dr. Scott Palasik, Dr. Alex Povitsky, Dr. Francesco Renna, Dr. Jina Sang, Dr. Martha Santos, Associate Dean Marnie Saunders, Dr. Andrea Snell, and Ms. Amanda Stefin.

GC Members Absent with Notice: Dr. Adam Smith and Dr. Sadhan Jana

GC Members Absent: Dr. Travis Hreno

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. Holliday made a motion to approve the minutes of April 15, 2019. Dr. Chase seconded the motion. Minutes of the April 15, 2019 meeting were approved without dissent.

Remarks – Dean Midha

Dean Midha stated that since the April 15 Graduate Council meeting the annual graduate faculty meeting was held summarizing the events of last academic year. Budget meetings occurred, and the budget for FY20 was approved. Though budget cuts were not made across the board there were cuts made in various units. The new president will officially begin on October 1. Dean Midha shared that there is continued enrollment decline. Overall student headcount and credit hours are down 6.4%. Graduate enrollment is down 10%. There has been a decline in international students. This, however, is not uncommon across the nation. Dean Midha stated that the challenge is to develop a plan to attract new graduate students.

Dean Midha said that 41 faculty members have taken the voluntary early retirement. There have been 17 positions authorized for next year based on critical needs submitted by the deans. President Green has authorized these positions. Many more positions are needed.

Dean Midha stated that the Office of Research Administration has moved to Leigh Hall. Dr. Phil Allen is the Interim Director of Research Administration, and Dr. George Chase is the Interim Director of Research Initiatives. New research initiatives have come into existence, such as when faculty are writing new grants, they are including \$5,000 tuition remission. Dean Midha asked Dr. Chase to provide an update from the Office of Research Administration.

Dr. Chase shared that there is decline in the total number of grant proposals. Perhaps, this may be attributed to faculty leaving the University. More faculty are trying to support graduate students in their proposals. The University has joined other universities in supporting the Ohio IP Promise, which supports research and entrepreneurial endeavors. Dr. Chase said that the University is in a good position with its patent portfolio compared to other institutions.

Election of Vice Chair

Dr. Chase was elected as Vice Chair of Graduate Council.

Election of Secretary

Dr. Santos was elected as Secretary of Graduate Council

Selection of Standing Committees

Dr. Snell was elected as Chair of the Curriculum Committee. Dr. Palasik was elected as Vice Chair.

Dr. Holliday was elected as Chair of the Graduate Faculty Membership Committee. Dr. Renna was elected as Vice Chair.

Dr. Booher was elected as Chair of the Student Policy Committee. Dr. Ahmed was elected as Vice Chair. Dr. Graor was elected as the third Graduate Council representative to the committee.

Remaining members of the standing committees will come from the membership of the graduate faculty.

New Business

Program Review

Associate Dean Saunders distributed a copy of last year's program review timeline. This is a seven-year cycle of formative program review. Ten programs were reviewed last year. The entire process lasts one year with much of the work being done between May and August. All materials are placed on a SharePoint site. Associate Dean Saunders stated that after the committee has completed its work a final report is forwarded to the Curriculum Review Committee of Faculty Senate for formal comment. Last year's committee was comprised of ten members. This year it is necessary to replace three members on the committee, and those members are to come from the College of Applied Science and Technology, College of Health Professions, and College of Polymer Science and Polymer Engineering.

Associate Dean Saunders stated that there were three Graduate Council representatives on the program review committee last year. Dr. Holliday is serving on the committee again this year. Nominations for Graduate Council representatives to the program review committee will be sought.

Accelerated Undergraduate/Graduate Degrees with Double-Counting

Associate Dean Saunders distributed a handout outlining accelerated undergraduate/graduate degrees with double-counting of up to nine graduate credits toward the baccalaureate degree. The Chancellor's Council on Graduate Studies proposed that ODHE allow double counting of up to nine graduate credits for accelerated undergraduate/graduate degree programs that are of 150 unique credit hours. This allows for exceptionally well-prepared students to have a less expensive education pathway that includes the bachelor's and master's degrees. After review ODHE developed a process for exception to the expectation of a minimum of 150 unique credit hours for accelerated undergraduate/graduate degree programs. Associate Dean Saunders stated that in order for an institution to allow double-counting of nine graduate credits between the undergraduate and graduate programs the combining of the two programs must be approved at all levels of the institution; only exceptionally well-prepared students are admitted to the program; the total number of credit hours counted toward the master's degree is equal to or greater than 30; all credit hours counted toward the master's degree are at the graduate-level; the total number of unique credit hours required for the completed bachelor's and master's degree is equal to or greater than 141; and the student is charged undergraduate tuition and fees for no less than 120 credit hours. Associate Dean Saunders said that support has been obtained from the CFO and Bursar pertaining to tuition and fees. What must be defined is exceptionally well-prepared student. Should there be an overall requirement? Should the requirement be discipline-specific?

Dr. Snell stated that the language appears very general, and an undergraduate student could seek to take a graduate course without being part of an accelerated program.

Associate Dean Saunders explained that department will need to initiate this for their programs as appropriate paperwork will need to be completed. Approval by Faculty Senate and the Board of Trustees will be necessary.

Dean Midha mentioned that ODHE does not expect many students to participate, so those that do must be exceptionally well-prepared. He added that he would like to see a University-level minimum requirement.

Dr. Santos questioned if this bypasses curriculum proposals.

Associate Dean Saunders responded that it is anticipated this will not have to go through the curriculum proposal system. ODHE must be notified which programs want to participate.

Dr. Snell stated while it good to encourage students to participate in graduate-level curriculum there are less graduate faculty.

Dean Midha indicated that that faculty are not required to allow students to take their graduate courses. A minimum requirement is necessary.

Dr. Graor suggested that criteria might include letters of recommendation. Additionally, faculty who are teaching graduate-level courses should have a say in whether undergraduate students can take their courses.

Ms. Stefin said that undergraduate students should know their options and guidelines should be very specific. She asked what type of interest has been expressed in these accelerated programs.

Associate Dean Saunders replied that most interest is from engineering and polymers.

Dr. Booher mentioned that faculty could see this to get more students in their class.

Meeting adjourned at 10:15 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Heather A. Blake
Graduate School