



Administrative Review 2018 The Graduate School

I. Basic Facts and Description of the Unit

Mission

To work with colleges and departments to oversee implementation and enforcement of policies and procedures and provide support services that guarantee the academic integrity of graduate and post-baccalaureate education at The University of Akron

Goals

1. Maintain academic quality of graduate and post-baccalaureate education
2. Provide oversight of graduate education finances
3. Provide oversight and assist students, faculty and staff with graduate education policies and procedures

Moving forward

4. Provide professional development opportunities for graduate students such as workshops and boot camps
5. Promote our faculty, staff and student talents, research and accomplishments across the state of Ohio and beyond

Services:

Note: **We currently serve 2,857 FT and 1,733 PT graduate students on The University of Akron campus.**

Liaison for ODHE/HLC and The University of Akron

1. Serve as representative to Chancellor's Council of Graduate Schools (CCGS)
2. Relay ODHE and HLC information regarding policy changes that affect graduate education to our university constituents
 - Information is relayed to the President, Provost and Deans through Council of Deans meetings and to faculty via the Graduate Council, Graduate Faculty and Faculty Senate meetings.
3. Provide oversight to Graduate Council and Graduate Faculty and work with their representatives to suggest and approve modifications to graduate education
 - Issues addressed this year included: 1) adding a Graduate Faculty status that allows for teaching and committee service for the duration of the faculty's tenure at Akron, and 2) modifying the full time graduate student definition to accommodate full time Curricular Practical Training (CPT) and a reduced credit load for PhD students in their final semester.

- Critical partners: ODHE, HLC, members of CCGS, UA President, Provost, Deans, Chairs and faculty
- Customers or end-users: Efforts in this category are largely aimed at keeping faculty, staff and students apprised of practice and policy changes and making sure current practices are in line with the ODHE and HLC.

Oversight of Graduate Admissions, Graduate Education, and Degrees

4. Work with units on procedures to initiate curriculum proposals and complete curriculum changes
 - Efforts result in new and updated curriculum offered by faculty to our students.
5. Provide oversight to graduate faculty membership
 - Efforts are directed at verifying membership application materials and credentials to maintain program quality.
6. Implement and maintain application procedures and complete all application processing
 - Efforts are directed at getting students efficiently admitted to the Graduate School.
7. Work with International Center to address topics related to international applicants
 - Efforts are directed at verifying TOEFL scores, transcripts and TSC scores for admission and assistantship eligibility.
8. Provide oversight of and support for everyday processes such as transfers, cross-registrations, add/drop, grade changes, thesis/dissertation committee selection, extension requests, probations and dismissals
 - A wide array of daily student, faculty and staff needs and issues are addressed. The office is open all year round (barring Christmas week) for walk-ins from 8-5 Fall/Spring and 8-4:30 Summer.
9. Verify degree clearance for all students and conduct dissertation/thesis format check
10. Streamlining admissions and tracking processes

HIGHLIGHTS - *Admissions Process Streamlining*

With the hire of the Business Reporting Analyst, streamlining of Graduate School processes has been a focused effort. For example, a process to streamline the weekly admissions report was developed during the last 18 months. The Weekly Reports developed in Excel are distributed to the departments. They were enhanced to include macros to automatically extract the data by department and create individual files. Prior to this, the files were created manually. Ongoing efforts are directed at 1) automating GMAT/GRE/TOEFL test scores directly from the test centers and importing them into PeopleSoft, and 2) generating automatic admissions letters from PeopleSoft.

- Critical partners: Graduate faculty, International Center, Registrar, Bursar, IT
- Customers or end-users: Efforts in this category are largely aimed at assisting students with everything from pre-admission questions through graduate clearance and commencement. Efforts are also aimed at assisting faculty and staff with curriculum improvements to enhance student learning and university offerings.

Fiduciary Stewards

11. Work with Provost's Office to determine university yearly financial contribution to graduate education and provide oversight in maintaining the State's Share of Instruction (SSI)

HIGHLIGHTS - GA Allocation Process

Most noteworthy was the effort to overhaul the graduate assistantship program. The program overhaul was undertaken in AY 2016 and the first year of implementation was AY 2017. While the effort was arguably difficult and unpopular, it was a necessary part of the efforts to stabilize the finances of the university. The efforts conservatively resulted in a savings of more than \$8.4 million for AY 2017. Tuition remission was reduced by \$5.75 million; stipend support was reduced by \$2.64 million. An additional \$5 million in savings is expected for AY 2018. The effort resulted in the redirection of assistantship support into teaching assistant positions and the elimination of all research, administrative and instructional support assistantships. New support to professional programs in CHP, Education and Business were eliminated as of Fall 2018 and importantly, no MS or PhD students currently in the pipeline had their funding cut. The overhaul was largely to the MS programs as the funding for the PhD programs may be reinvested in new students, once exiting students graduate or leave the program. Under the new funding model, MS programs in the Colleges of Arts and Sciences and Engineering continued to garner support under the discretion of the college deans with the qualification that recruitment was time sensitive to focus on quality students and silos were implemented that targeted specific populations while preventing commingling.

12. Provide Graduate School oversight to CIGA
 - Efforts are directed at working with research office to enforce IDC policies for tuition remission.
13. Allocate, process and track graduate student contracts (stipends and tuition waivers)

HIGHLIGHTS - GA Tracking Interface

Once the new GA allocation process was in place, it was realized that tracking of the process from offers to signed contracts regardless of funding source (grad school, dept, CIGA, research) was inadequate. A new PeopleSoft interface for entering and tracking Graduate Assistant contracts was developed. GA Contracts may now be entered into PeopleSoft allowing the Graduate School and academic colleges the ability to track and monitor GA offers through accepted contracts. AY 2018 contracts were entered by the Graduate School. Beginning with the AY 2019 GA contracts, department staff will enter the contract detail into PeopleSoft but the validation and processing will remain in the Graduate School. The Graduate School will be working in the immediate future to train users working with the interface.

14. Develop, monitor and maintain Grad School operating budget
 - Critical partners: Provost, Deans, Graduate Council, Graduate Faculty (GA allocation process) and IT (interface)
 - Customers or end-users: The entire campus benefits in the long term from efforts to minimize expenses. These GA cuts put us more in line with neighboring universities.

Tracking efforts benefit everyone involved in the process and will enable better stewardship during the recruitment period.

Administration Support

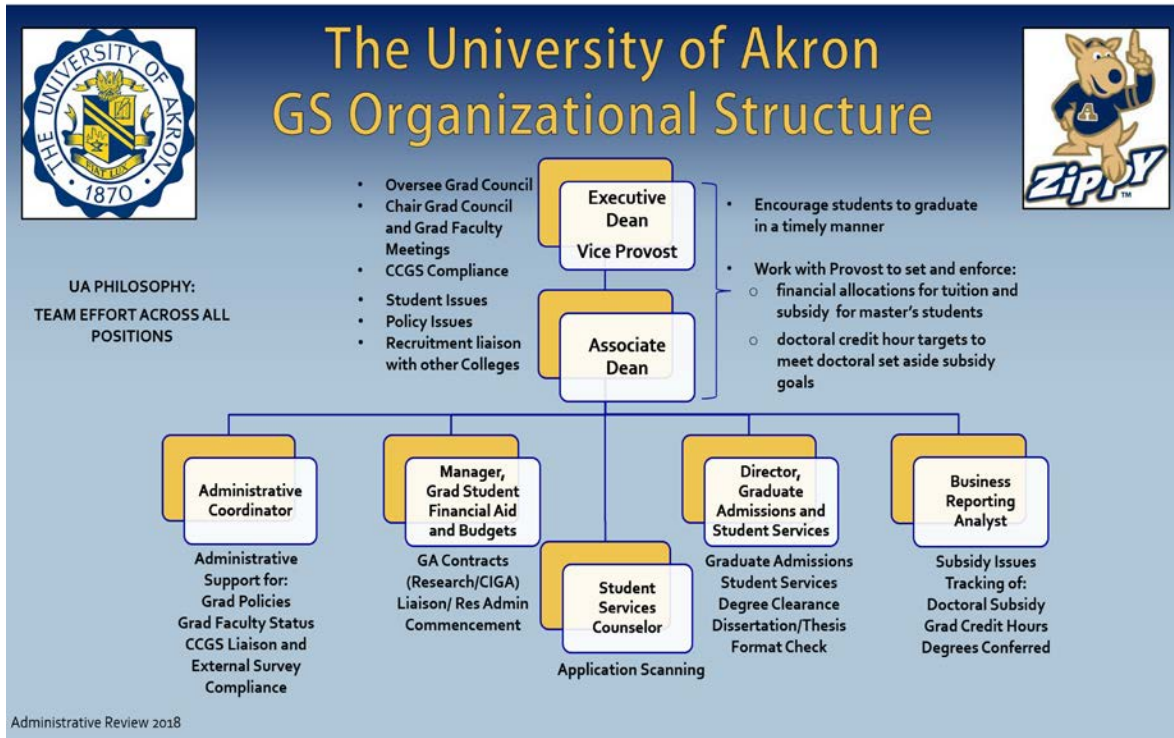
- 15. Provide advanced research reporting support for SSI, program review and strategic planning
- 16. Provide oversight and support to efforts such as Academic Program Review

HIGHLIGHTS - EY Dashboards – Graduate Assistants

Significant efforts this year were also committed to the Ernst & Young dashboard project. There is now a data source that profiles stipend and remission details of Graduate Assistant contracts, including the HR appointment, academic detail of the GA, and the financial portion of the contract. The data source is refreshed monthly and provides colleges and/or departments the ability to see historical trends by funding source and graduate assistant type. Staff in the Graduate School were involved in developing and training. The Graduate School is the owner of the GA dashboard and will continue to provide campus support in its use and data interpretation.

- Critical partners: President, Provost, Deans and Ernst & Young
 - Customers or end-users: The entire campus benefits in the long term from efforts to improve the university with APR and mechanisms to track this information in dashboards to aid future APR efforts.
- 17. Address grievances and complaints and work with college deans to address student and faculty issues in a timely and effective manner

Resources



Personnel/Organizational Structure

The Graduate School currently employs two full time faculty administrators and five staff members. A summary of the major responsibilities are provided in the table below.

2018 – Current Personnel

Personnel Table	Title	Duties
Chand Midha	Executive Dean and Vice Provost	oversee grad council and grad faculty meetings; responsible for CCGS compliance; surveys including NSF and NIH compliance surveys; provide all data requests for graduate programs including financial data requests to Provost and President
Marnie Saunders	Associate Dean and Associate Professor	assist dean in completion of all graduate school functions; address student and policy issues; address daily student issues
Heather Blake	Administrative Coordinator	extension requests; transfer of credit requests; add/drop forms; cross-registration forms; grade change forms; dissertation committee membership forms; dissertation defense reports; academic probations and dismissals; CCGS PDP and full proposal reviews; graduate curriculum; graduate faculty membership
Karen Caldwell	Manager Grad Student Financial Aid and Budgets	process graduate assistantships; approve student employment forms; PAFs; monitor Grad School operating budget; monitor graduate assistantship stipend and fee remission budgets; assistantship reports
Karen Greene	Director Grad Admissions and Student Services	application processing for all grad students (intl and domestic); admissions decisions; thesis/dissertation format check; degree clearance; maintain application software (Apply Yourself)
Tanya Kauffman	Student Services Counselor	application scanning and data entry; application processing; day-to-day phone/email/walk-in support (front desk location)
Diane Maffei	Business Reporting Analyst	information gathering, processing and tracking related to all aspects of graduate school function and upper administration; streamline expert; SSI and dashboard expert

As with the rest of the university, we have undergone staff reductions. Graduate assistant positions were eliminated with the changes to graduate assistantship policies in 2017-2018 and tasks completed by these students, such as thesis and dissertation format checks have been redirected to full time staff. Additionally, during this time, responsibilities have shifted with staff changes. For example, staff from the Graduate School (2) were moved to the International Center (IC) last year with the anticipation that IC would be responsible for all international student admissions. While we are not aware of reversing the positions, recently it has been decided that the Graduate School will retain the admissions oversight of all domestic and international graduate students.

Personnel	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
Faculty Administrators	2	2*	3	2	2	2
Staff	6	7	7	6	5*	5
Graduate Assistants	9	9	7	3	0	0
Student Assistants	2	2	2	2	0	0
Totals	19	20	19	13	7	7

* - indicates that an employee was replaced and the position was occupied by 2 individuals during the time period defined; in these instances, the position is counted once.

Source: Yearly Budget Reports

Comparisons with regional graduate programs:

Graduate Programs – Regional Size Comparisons				
	Graduate Students 2017	Staff Size	International Support	Handles Interntl Admissions
The University of Akron	4,590	Administrator – 2 Staff – 5	Interntl Center (IC)	Grad School
Kent State University	5,799	Administrator – 2 Staff – 9	Office of Global Education (OGE)	OGE
Cleveland State University	4,144 (2016)	Administrator – 2 Staff – 6(1 vacant posn)	Center for Interntl Services (CIS)	CIS
Youngstown State University	1,258	Administrator -1 Staff - 5	Interntl Programs Office (IPO)	IPO

Kent State University – Enrollment Data from Institutional Research Website
<https://www.kent.edu/sites/default/files/file/8%20Campus%20System%20Fall%202017.pdf>
 Cleveland State University – 2017 Book of Trends from Institutional Research and Analysis
https://www.csuohio.edu/offices/iraa/bot/BOT_2017.pdf
 Youngstown State University - Preliminary Enrollment Summaries from Institutional Research
https://ysu.edu/sites/default/files/ADA_Preliminary%20Fall%202017_o.pdf

The morale in the Graduate School is good. We have dedicated, hard-working and friendly staff that understand the fiscal challenges that the university faces, and have responded to additional responsibilities with a positive attitude and an eagerness to serve, as needed. We have worked this year to cross-train staff such that at least two people are able to perform unit duties in the event of staff vacation, extended illness, etc. As such, although we feel the confines of a diminished staff we have been able to adapt and we have plans to increase our engagement in the next year and beyond.

Financials

Source: Yearly Budget Reports

The operating budget information is provided below. A complete table of the financials is provided in the Appendix (*Financials*). The complete financials include the operating budget and personnel expenses.

GRADUATE SCHOOL - OPERATING BUDGET						
	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
Description	Budgeted / Expended Amt	Budgeted / Expended Amt	Budgeted / Expended Amt	Budgeted / Expended Amt	Budgeted / Expended Amt	Budgeted / Expended Amt
Graduate Assistants	1,000 / 1,000	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0
Student Assistants	12,316.39 / 10,086.94	10,352.12 / 7,561.81	7,776.09 / 3,318.23	8,113.94 / 647.32	7,893.26 / 309.89	7,000.00 / 0
Supplies & Services	22,540.19 / 10,930.45	113,359.74 / 23,009.90	479,828.00 / 201,386.26	16,500.00 / 8,960.90	15,500.00 / 6,772.29	15,500.00 / 0
Communications	13,823.95 / 6,426.77	16,397.18 / 7,142.76	9,000.00 / 6,410.51	9,000.00 / 6,410.52	952.00 / 152.25	454.00 / 0
Equipment-Lease/Purchase	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0
Travel & Hospitality	10,762.89 / 728.88	15,534.01 / 802.38	5,500.00 / 2,312.71	5,500.00 / 2,401.59	5,500.00 / 1,001.09	5,500.00 / 0
Cost Sharing	4,600 / 4,600	0	600 / 600	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0
Totals	65,043.42 / 33,773.04	155,643.05 / 38,516.85	502,704.09 / 214,027.71	39,113.94 / 18,420.33	29,845.26 / 8,235.52	28,454.00 / 0

We consider the 2016 budget to be an obvious outlier. The Graduate School operating budget has a wide range from \$30,000 to \$500,000. Whereas \$30,000 is realistic; \$500,000 seems to be inflated due to commingling of the International Office and the Graduate School. Likewise, during 2017-2018, we have been extremely frugal. The savings is due in large part to minimizing travel, exhausting office supply reserves and eliminating student recruitment efforts. Currently we are operating at about 33% of the average budget for years 2014-2015, 2017-2018 (ignoring outlier); as such, we believe we are fiscally responsible.

Equipment and Technology

The main technology required by the Graduate School staff is the software that supports admissions (ApplyYourself), student records and transcripts (NOLIJ, PeopleSoft, OhioLink), curriculum (Course Leaf) and university information including assistantships (Dashboards, Hyperion, Oracle Analytics).

Space

With overwhelming support of the Graduate Council, Faculty Senate and Provost, the Graduate School offices were relocated from Polsky to Leigh Hall. The suite in Leigh Hall houses 9 offices with 7 occupied by Graduate School staff and 2 offices loaned to Ted Mallo and IR personnel.

II. FUTURE PLANS

The last few years have been very challenging for the Graduate School. In light of our budget challenges, it has been specifically difficult revising the unsustainable discount offered at the graduate level through tuition waivers. While it was a necessary and beneficial initiative that ultimately reduced the expenses from \$31.5 million in 2014-2015 to \$14.5 million in 2018-2019, it was painful nonetheless. The initiative met with faculty opposition, but more importantly this reduction has affected graduate enrollment, particularly in the standalone MS programs.

Moving forward, we are hoping to seek direction from the higher campus leadership, in general and the Provost's Office, in particular, for strategic and reputational growth of graduate programs. We would then work closely with the UA Graduate Council to achieve that goal.

APPENDIX
FINANCIALS

Note: This table includes personnel and operating expenses. Full time faculty differences during this time period reflect different accounts to which the salaries were assigned. For example, the Graduate School Dean’s salary is not included in the 2014 and 2015 financials. Dr Newkome was in the position of Vice Provost and Dean, similar to Dean Midha’s current positions of Executive Dean and Vice Provost. The current numbers for 2018 and 2019 reflect all Graduate School employee salaries (2 Faculty Administrators; 5 Staff). In addition, 2019 numbers do not yet reflect fringe benefits.

GRADUATE SCHOOL FINANCIALS												
Description	2014		2015		2016		2017		2018		2019	
	Budgeted / Expended Amt	Remaining Balance	Budgeted / Expended Amt	Remaining Balance	Budgeted / Expended Amt	Remaining Balance	Budgeted / Expended Amt	Remaining Balance	Budgeted / Expended Amt	Remaining Balance	Budgeted / Expended Amt	Remaining Balance
Full Time Faculty	134,468.22 / 134,468.14	0.08	123,883.21 / 123,882.47	0.74	267,825.17 / 266,850.36	974.81	320,831.00 / 320,831.04	-0.04	403,451.00 / 409,689.24	-6,238.24	414,235.00 / 0	414,235.00
Full Time Faculty - Stipend	0 / 0	0	0 / 0	0	0 / 0	0	0 / 0	0	24,000.00 / 24,000.00	0	0 / 0	0
Administration	52,725.13 / 52,725.17	-0.04	54,421.13 / 54,421.17	-0.04	251,619.00 / 251,580.09	38.91	191,024.88 / 190,968.36	56.52	102,301.00 / 102,278.46	22.54	110,000.00 / 0	110,000.00
Full Time Staff	205,009.8 / 205,119.12	-109.32	186,531.13 / 186,561.90	-30.77	77,092.71 / 77,092.73	-0.02	110,331.12 / 110,330.21	0.91	135,132.66 / 135,132.02	0.64	142,103.00 / 0	142,103.00
Part Time Staff	0 / 0	0	15,903.63 / 15,903.20	0.43	-3384.13 / 16,626.33	-21,010.46	-427.5 / 0	-427.5	0 / 0	0	0 / 0	0
Staff Overtime	12.73 / 12.73	0	0 / 0	0	122.00 / 88.76	33.24	0 / 0	0	0 / 0	0	0 / 0	0
Fringe Benefits	154,993.98 / 154,993.98	0	158,063.39 / 158,063.39	0	203,182.00 / 203,182.00	0	255,720.86 / 255,720.86	0	235,815.68 / 256,409.78	-20,594.10	0 / 2,048.60	-2,048.60
Graduate Assistants	1,000 / 1,000	0	0 / 0	0	0 / 0	0	0 / 0	0	0 / 0	0	0 / 0	0
Student Assistants	12,316.39 / 10,086.94	2,229.45	10,352.12 / 7,561.81	2,790.31	7,776.09 / 3,318.23	4,457.86	8,113.94 / 647.32	7,466.62	7,893.26 / 309.89	7,583.37	7,000.00 / 0	7,000.00
Supplies & Services	22,540.19 / 10,930.45	11,609.74	113,359.74 / 23,009.90	90,349.84	479,828.00 / 201,386.26	278,441.74	16,500.00 / 8,960.90	7,539.10	15,500.00 / 6,772.29	8,727.71	15,500.00 / 0	15,500.00
Communications	13,823.95 / 6,426.77	7,397.18	16,397.18 / 7,142.76	9,254.42	9,000.00 / 6,410.51	6,410.51	9,000.00 / 6,410.52	2,589.48	952.00 / 152.25	799.75	454.00 / 0	454
Equipment- Lease/Purchase	0 / 0	0	0 / 0	0	0 / 0	0.00	0 / 0	0	0 / 0		0 / 0	0
Travel & Hospitality	10,762.89 / 728.88	10,034.01	15,534.01 / 802.38	14,731.63	5,500.00 / 2,312.71	3,187.29	5,500.00 / 2,401.59	3,098.41	5,500.00 / 1,001.09	4,498.91	5,500.00 / 0	5,500.00
Cost Sharing	4,600 / 4,600	0	0	0	600 / 600	0	0 / 0	0	0 / 0	0	0 / 0	0
Totals	612,253.28 / 581,092.18	31,161.10	694,445.54 / 577,348.98	117,096.56	1,326,503.27 / 1,029,447.98	297,055.29	916,594.30 / 896,270.80	20,323.50	930,545.60 / 935,745.02	-5,199.42	694,792.00 / 2,048.60	692,743.40