



**The University of Akron
Minutes of Graduate Council
January 28, 2019
Student Union, Room 310**

Dean Chand Midha presided.

Present: Dr. Wondimu Ahmed, Ms. Heather Blake, Dr. Amanda Booher, Ms. Hailey Cargill, Dr. George Chase, Dr. Todd Gaffke, Dr. R. Ray Gehani, Dr. Gary Holliday, Dr. Alex Povitsky, Dr. Coleen Pugh, Dr. Francesco Renna, Dr. Jina Sang, Associate Dean Marnie Saunders, Dr. John Senko, Dr. Mark Soucek, and Dr. Claire Tessier.

GC Members Absent with Notice: Dr. Carolyn Murrock, Dr. Martha Santos, and Dr. Baffour Takyi

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.

Approval of Minutes

Dr. Pugh noted a correction to the minutes of December 10, 2018. Dr. Gehani made a motion to approve the minutes with correction. Dr. Gaffke seconded the motion. Minutes of the December 10, 2018 meeting were approved without dissent.

1. Remarks – Dean Midha

Dean Midha shared enrollment numbers with Graduate Council members. From 2015 onward there has been approximately one-third drop in master's students. This can be attributed to the change in funding policy and a decrease in the number of international students. Many institutions are experiencing a decrease in international student enrollment. There has been a drop in doctoral student enrollment in the STEM programs, and there is a concern as to why this is occurring, since there has been no decrease in doctoral funding. Dean Midha stated that the overall picture of enrollment is not good.

Dr. Chase stated that changes in research policies and faculty members leaving the University may be a reason for this decrease. There are fewer faculty to write research grants.

Dr. Senko suggested that perhaps this decrease may be a due to doctoral programs being suspended from academic program review.

Dr. Gehani suggested if Dean Midha could prepare a state of the Graduate School report.

Dean Midha responded that during the annual graduate faculty meeting he provides application and enrollment numbers. The report now being shared is the most current. The report indicates there has been a significant decline in applications and admissions between 2015 and 2018. Dean Midha will provide these application and enrollment numbers to the Provost, so that they can be shared with the deans. It is necessary to determine why we are not getting more applications.

Dr. Chase stated that more funding brings in more students. Students are unlikely to come if they are not receiving any funding. He added that the Provost is aware of the financial challenges, and some changes have to be made. An effort is being made to find a right size for the University to make everything fit, and research is part of the priorities.

Dr. Gehani said some people have the impression that the administration prefers undergraduate programs over graduate programs. Graduate programs could use more promotion. We may consider formulating a vision for graduate programs.

Dr. Povitsky said that courses are not being offered, so students are not enrolling.

Dr. Chase indicated that this pertains to workload policies across the University. Workload policies go through the deans. Classes fit in with workload policies.

Dr. Tessier said there is often left over money, but the department is not permitted to accept students late. All students have to be admitted by May 15. In the past some departments have admitted students after the deadline, and they were not poor students.

Dean Midha said a recommendation could be made to the Provost to allow departments to accept students late.

Dr. Gehani was requested to make a motion for compiling a state of the Graduate School report that would include the current realities and a clear vision for moving forward. The report could reflect past trends as well as projections for growth. Dr. Soucek seconded the motion. As Vice Chair of Graduate Council Dr. Soucek volunteered to lead authoring the report. The motion for a state of the Graduate School report was approved without dissent.

Dr. Gehani stated that Graduate Council could discuss the report at the March meeting.

Dean Midha said that he can provide information on faculty and students; however, he does not have information on the budget. He advised that budget information should come from the Budget Office, and research information should come from Dr. Chase. Associate Dean Saunders and Ms. Blake should be copied on requests made for this information.

2. Committee Reports

Curriculum Committee – Dr. Ahmed presented a list of 11 proposals that were reviewed and approved by the committee: A&S-CHLDFAMDEV-18-24801, A&S-CHLDFAMDEV-18-24889, A&S-COMPSCI-18-24111, A&S-COMPSCI-18-24112, A&S-COMPSCI-18-24123, A&S-COMPSCI-18-23647, A&S-COMPSCI-18-23860, A&S-STATS-18-23116, A&S-STATS-18-23118, CHP-NURIN-18-24774, and CHP-SPALNG-18-24604. All proposals approved by Graduate Council.

3. New Business

Dr. Povitsky shared his concern regarding the length of time permitted for funding a teaching assistant. He indicated that some teaching assistants are offered internship opportunities over the summer, which are beneficial to their careers; however, even though they are not paid over the summer that term is counted toward their year of funding.

Associate Dean Saunders stated that students are funded for five years. They may be funded for fall and spring or for fall, spring, and summer. Either way that is counted as one year. The academic units determine how their students are funded. Some units award assistantships for nine months and some award assistantships for 12 months. They are counted the same way. This is the current policy.

Dr. Povitsky asked if it's possible to provide students an extension in funding if they did not use the money provided for summer, because they were on an internship.

Dean Midha asked Dr. Povitsky to send his concern to Associate Dean Saunders for her to look into and follow up on.

Meeting adjourned at 10:33 a.m.

Dr. R. Ray Gehani
Secretary

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