

Graduate Council Report to Board of Trustees Academic and Student Affairs Committee April 15, 2019

This report includes the activities of Graduate Council (GC) since our last report on February 18, 2018. GC has been busy with several initiatives, and a lot of curriculum, in the second half of the spring semester.

At the February 19 GC meeting Dr. Frank Calzonetti, Vice President for Research, gave a presentation about the research areas of excellence. Dr. Calzonetti explained that UT recognizes four general categories of research excellence. These include recognized areas of research excellence, spotlight areas of unique distinction, areas of emerging research excellence and areas of future opportunity. The presentation highlighted the cutting-edge work of faculty and graduate students from across the university, particularly interdisciplinary research in a number of areas. The presentation led to a productive discussion about how to better promote new research opportunities and the obstacles that must be overcome to be a recognized area of research excellence.

At our March 19 GC meeting we introduced the Graduate Student Association (GSA) Research Award recipients and Jim Anderson, Vice President for Enrollment Management, spoke about making UT a more student-centered campus. (The GSA Research Award recipients are Sarah Carter, MS Ecology, College of Natural Sciences and Mathematics; Cara DeAngelis, PhD Biomedical Sciences, College of Medicine and Life Sciences; Austin Hulbert, MS Biology with Ecology Track, College of Natural Sciences and Medicine; Srimathi Kasturirangan, PhD Molecular Biology, College of Natural Sciences and Mathematics; and Prabaha Sikder, PhD Mechanical Engineering, College of Engineering.)

On April 2 Dr. Jonathan Bossenbroek, Director of the Office of Undergraduate Research discussed opportunities for graduate programs to work with undergraduate students who are interested in obtaining research experience. He also discussed his new role in helping faculty and students to apply for competitive scholarships, such as Fulbright scholarships and MacArthur Fellows.

Also on April 2, Heather Huntley, Director of University Accreditation and Program Review, presented the University Academic Program Review Committee 2017-18 final report to Graduate Council. The presentation highlighted areas of strength and weakness across graduate programs. Among graduate program strengths it was noted that external reviewers found current and relevant curricular offerings with innovation noted in some areas; numerous programs met or exceeded criteria for accreditation or approval; faculty were found to have national recognition for research and dedication to their fields; and students were noted to have good opportunities for job or graduate school placement. Weaknesses included infrastructure issues and lack of staff and facility resources; issues with workload such as faculty teaching in overload and committees and other activities not being considered part of their workload; and the need for marketing in several areas.

It should also be noted that since the March 12 deadline for submitting curricular changes, the GC Curriculum Committee has reviewed over 100 proposals for new or modified courses and programs. We are very appreciative of the time and effort our faculty representatives have given to carefully considering each proposal.

Finally, the Graduate Council Executive Committee is working on the following initiatives with Dean Gruden and Provost Bjorkman. We would like to bring to campus software that helps students and faculty identify plagiarism issues (such as Turnitin). We believe that UT students should be able to take on campus the GRE and other standardized tests required for applications to graduate programs. We need better support services for new and nontraditional graduate students.

Graduate Council looks forward to continuing our partnerships with the College of Graduate Studies, the Provost's office, the Research office, the Graduate Student Association, and UT faculty, staff and students in supporting our graduate and professional programs.

Respectfully,
Jerry Van Hoy, Ph.D.
University of Toledo Graduate Council Chair