

Graduate Council Report to Board of Trustees Academic and Student Affairs Committee December 17, 2018

This report includes the activities of Graduate Council (GC) since our last report on September 17, 2018. The provision of health insurance to graduate students was perhaps the single most important issue we discussed this Fall. Interim Dean Gruden discussed graduate student health insurance at our October 30 GC meeting. Interim Dean Gruden reported that the cost and quality of graduate student insurance through the University was a major ongoing problem for graduate students and that COGS would work with the Graduate Student Association (GSA) to help find solutions.

At our November 13 GC meeting the GSA reported on student experiences with health insurance. The GSA Special Interest Committee on Health presented personal stories about problems with health insurance and reported that the costs of the University plans are not affordable for many graduate students. The minimum graduate assistant stipend at UT is \$9000 a year and a family health insurance plan can cost as much as \$6000 per year. The students also talked about the difficulties of working with Student Affairs to obtain accurate information about insurance options. (For example, do students have to buy a university health plan; what are the rules for international graduate students; is it preferable to purchase health insurance from the Affordable Care Act marketplaces?) Graduate Council representatives have expressed concern that we need to find a reasonable solution to this problem. Some potential solutions offered by faculty at GC meetings include adding Graduate Assistants (GA) to employee healthcare plans, rebidding health insurance to achieve lower costs and subsidizing health insurance as part of GA funding offers (by including healthcare costs in faculty grant proposals or by funding from COGS).

In addition to graduate student healthcare, GC discussed implementation of several areas of the College of Graduate Studies and University strategic plans. These areas include, advancing excellence in research, scholarship and creative activities (discussion led by Interim Vice Provost and Dean of COGS Cyndee Gruden on September 18); data available about the role of graduate programs in the University budget (Terry Romer, Director of Strategic Initiatives and Brenda Grant, Associate Vice President for Academic Finance and Planning invited speakers on October 2); access to US News and World Report data (Senior Vice Provost William Ayers invited speaker on October 16); increasing enrollment and improving/maintaining quality of graduate students (discussion led by Interim Vice Provost and Dean of COGS Cyndee Gruden on November 13); and graduate student success measures available in ARGOS (Brigette Norton-Odenthal, Interim Director of Institutional Research invited speaker on November 27).

GC also heard and gave comments on two presentations of new graduate program proposals. On October 16 the Masters in Business Analytics proposal was presented by Dr. Hao-Wei Chen, Dr. Jerzy Kamburowski and Dr. P. Sundararaghavan from the College of Business and Innovation. On November 27 the Master of Science in Cyber Security proposal was presented by Dr. Weiqing Sun from the College of Engineering. Both programs were endorsed by Graduate

Council.

On October 30 Graduate Council heard a presentation from Dr. Megan Stewart about the Center for Student Advocacy and Wellness (CSAW). CSAW provides advocacy and counseling services for students, staff and faculty who have experienced sexual harassment or sexual assault. CSAW is fully grant funded and provides excellent service to the UT community (visit the website here: <http://www.utoledo.edu/hhs/clinics/student-advocacy-and-wellness/>).

Last, but not least, I am pleased to report that Dr. Song-Tao Liu from the College of Natural Sciences and Mathematics has been elected Vice Chair of Graduate Council. Dr. Liu was elected at the October 30 GC meeting to replace Dr. Beth Schlemper (now the Interim Associate Dean of COGS). Dr. Liu was on sabbatical in the Fall semester and will begin his term as Vice Chair in Spring 2019. We look forward to working with Dr. Liu.

Graduate Council looks forward to continuing 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