

Graduate Council Report to Board of Trustees Academic and Student Affairs Committee June 22, 2020

This report includes the activities of Graduate Council (GC) since our last report on April 13, 2020.

The GC and Graduate Council Executive Committee (GCEC) worked with university administrators and COGS to facilitate communication about the unique needs of our graduate students and graduate faculty in the face of COVID-19. Graduate students, approximately 20% of the UToledo enrollment, represent a diverse group of learners, both domestic and international, across two campuses and within varied graduate and professional programs. Through our interactions with the Graduate Student Association, we learned of students' needs, especially our international students, and worked to ensure they received financial support through the CARES act and were aware of medical resources and addressed their food and housing insecurities.

At our April 21st GC meeting, we recognized the winners of the 3MT (my thesis in three minutes) competition. The winners were 1st place, Rachel Golonka, PhD Physiology and Pharmacology, 2nd place Anna Glanz, MSBA in Medical Microbiology and Immunology, People's Choice (3rd place) Parul Baranwal, PhD in Civil and Environmental Engineering, and a tie for Honorable Mention, Sudipta Baroi, PhD in Physiology & Pharmacology and Vaishnavi, Aradhyula, MSBS in Medical Sciences. There is a wonderful PowerPoint on the GC website with more details on their thesis titles and advisor. Dr. Linda Lewandowski (CON) spoke to GC about faculty mental health amid COVID-19 and the challenges of trying to work from home during a crisis.

At our May 5th GC meeting, we welcomed our newly elected GC members and held our GCEC elections. Our outgoing GC Chair, Dr. Song-Tao Liu summarized the important work over the 2019-2020 academic year of our three most active committees. The Curriculum Committee reviewed a total of 278 curriculum proposals and program modifications as well as a new degree program, the Graduate Entry Masters of Science in Nursing, a new degree track in the PhD in Bioinformatics program, and graduate certificates in areas such as music, political science, geography and planning, economics, and cybersecurity. All changes were submitted through the new CIM system. Under the new system, both campuses use the same online curriculum system. Faculty members who submit proposals can track their progress, and CIM links changes to the catalog. The Membership committee reviewed 285 applications for graduate faculty status, and they ensured our faculty maintained their status critical for HLC. Finally, the Academic Programs and Regulations committee reviewed four policies and approved and moved forward two, the Transfer of credit to graduate degree policy and Graduate student academic grievance policy.

Also at our May meeting, our COGS dean and the VP of the Office of Research shared the new policy, effective July 1, to require the inclusion of graduate student tuition on grants and contracts. The council members shared their concerns in terms of graduate research and

enrollment and faculty prospects to obtain external grants. When it was finalized, council was pleased to learn the policy exempted smaller grants (less than \$100K annual direct cost) and junior faculty colleagues who are in their first three years at UToledo.

In collaboration with the COGS, members of GCEC reviewed 75 graduate student applications for a zero credit summer course. The creation of this course allowed graduate students who were caught in the stay and shelter of COVID-19 and thus temporarily removed from their field experiences in schools and clinical settings and from their labs where they were conducting thesis and dissertation research work to continue into the summer without financial penalty and delay to graduation. GC is ready to assist in the fall should this accommodation be needed for our graduate students. We listened to the COGS dean as she shared the budget challenges and its impact on available graduate assistantship support. The true impact of declining funding in COGS has yet to be realized in terms of how it will affect our continuing and incoming students who are or seek to study at UToledo. Finally, GC worked with the COGS to identify and implement a centralized application process that will ease the efforts of our students and the workload of our already overburdened COGS staff.

The Graduate Council looks forward to developing a strong partnership with our new President and continuing our relationships with the College of Graduate Studies and our new interim dean, the Provost's office, the Research office, the Graduate Student Association, and UToledo faculty, staff and students in supporting and advancing our graduate and professional programs.

Respectfully,
Wendy S Cochrane, Ph.D.
University of Toledo Graduate Council Chair, 2020-2021