

## Graduate Admissions Committee

### Annual Report 2013-2014

DATE: July 9, 2014  
TO: Executive Committee, Faculty Senate  
FROM: Wade Marcum, GAC Chair  
SUBJECT: 2013-2014 Annual Report for the Graduate Admissions Committee  
ATTACHMENT: Annual Activity Audit Report for the Graduate Admissions Committee

#### **Committee Members:**

Wade Marcum, Chair '15	Nuclear Engineering
Michael Vardaro '14	Earth, Ocean & Atmospheric Sciences
Minjeong Kim '14	Design and Human Environment
Chong Fang '15	Chemistry
Candy Pierson-Charlton '15	INTO OSU
Kevin Boston (v. Higgins) '15	Forest Engineering, Resources & Management
Jeri Bartholomew '16	Salmon Disease Laboratory
Taifo Mahmud '16	Pharmacy
Qinglai Meng '16	Economics

Ex-officio: Rosemary Garagnani – Director of Admissions  
Executive Committee Liaison: Andy Karplus

The Graduate Admissions Committee (GAC) operates under the Standing Rules of the Faculty Senate and under the policies and procedures formulated by the Graduate Council. The role of the GAC is to review files of Graduate School applicants who do not meet the minimum admission requirements. In the case of domestic applicants, the requirement is a grade point average (GPA) of 3.00 in the last 90 quarter hours or 60 semester hours of the first undergraduate degree. For international students, a similar GPA requirement applies, plus either a TOEFL score of 550 (213 on the computer version of the test) or a degree completed at an accredited institution offering all course work in English.

Cases not meeting these minimum requirements may be appealed to the GAC for review with one of the following outcomes: admit regular, admit conditionally, admit provisionally, or deny admittance. For a conditional admit, the standard condition is that students must earn a 3.00 (B grade) or better in each course of the first 18 hours of graded graduate credits. A provisional admit usually involves additional coursework or GPA stipulations imposed by the petitioning department. If students are denied admittance, they may still complete 24 hours of upper division courses or graduate work, earning a 3.00 or better, to be considered for admission if the department approves the acceptance. Students who use this avenue are not reconsidered by the GAC unless they petition based on fewer than 24 hours of completed work.

In 2006, the Faculty Senate voted to streamline the appeals process for those applications not meeting these minimum requirements. This policy change established that if a department petitions for *conditional admission* for an applicant

with a GPA of 2.75 or above, the Admissions Office will automatically grant the conditional admission as requested. If regular or provisional admission is requested, the file would be reviewed by the GAC. Similarly, if a department petitions for any form of admission for an applicant with a GPA below 2.75, the file would be reviewed by the GAC and a final admission decision would be made.

In reviewing cases, the GAC considers a range of predictors for success in graduate school, including standardized test scores (e.g., GRE), letters of recommendation, other academic performance, and work experience since the applicant earned their previous degree(s). Each file is carefully reviewed by at least two committee members who look for substantive and compelling evidence indicating that the applicant will succeed at the graduate level to justify waiving the admission requirements.

During the period of August 7, 2013 to June 19, 2014, 22 committee meetings had originally been scheduled. The meeting frequency was based on a biweekly schedule basis. Of the 22 originally scheduled meetings, 9 meetings were required due to files (i.e., cases) being provided by petitioning departments or programs. The result yielded a cancelation of 13 meetings due to a lack of files for review (see attached copy of the committee annual audit prepared by the Graduate School Admissions). During the 9 meetings held, the GAC reviewed a total of 17 files (refer to Table 1). Of these, 11 (74%) were domestic students and 6 (36 %) were international students. This represents a similar percentage of international applicants relative to the total number of petitioning files received by the Graduate Admissions Committee, as compared to 2012-2013 (38%).

Considering all 17 cases reviewed during the 2013-2014 review period, 2 decisions (12%) involved full admission with no conditions, 11 decisions (65%) involved conditional admission, 2 decisions (12 %) involved provisional admission, and 3 decisions (18 %) involved denying admission. One of these decisions involved the simultaneous granting of both conditional and provisional admission. The relative percent in each decision category trends with previous year's outcomes as seen in Table 1.

Table 1: Outcomes of GAC Reviews

GAC Decision	2009-2010 Number Percent	2010-2011 Number Percent	2011-2012 Number Percent	2012-2013 Number Percent	2013-2014 Number Percent
Admit Regular	6 9.4	8 13.1	7 15.9	7 16.3	2 11.8
Admit Conditional	50 78.1	39 63.9	28 63.6	27 62.8	11 64.7
Admit Provisional	6 9.4	10 16.4	3 6.8	4 9.3	2 11.8
Deny Admittance	4 6.3	8 13.1	9 20.5	5 11.6	3 17.6
Defer Case	2 3.1	2 3.3	0 0	0 0	0 0
<b>Total Files <sup>a</sup></b>	<b>64 -</b>	<b>61 -</b>	<b>44 -</b>	<b>39 -</b>	<b>17 -</b>

<sup>a</sup> Some applicants were granted simultaneous conditional and provisional admittance decisions, so percentages may sum to more than 100%, and the number of decisions may not match the total number of files.

In general, the total number of cases reviewed by the GAC has continued the declining trend highlighted in the past several years' annual reports (Figure 1). A number of conversations throughout the year centered on this topic among the GAC

members. The outcome of these conversations has led to the following hypothetical contributing factors:

- Graduate Student applications were observed by the Graduate School to be lower for winter term 2014;
- The applicant pool for graduate school applicants during fall term 2013 was relatively competitive, therefore potentially leading to a higher quality pool of students whose programs do not require their petition for admittance;
- A select set of Programs used a new process this academic year for admission of students and had not needed to review their early deadline applicants yet.

Similar hypotheses have been made in previous years for the reduction of cases reviewed by the GAC.

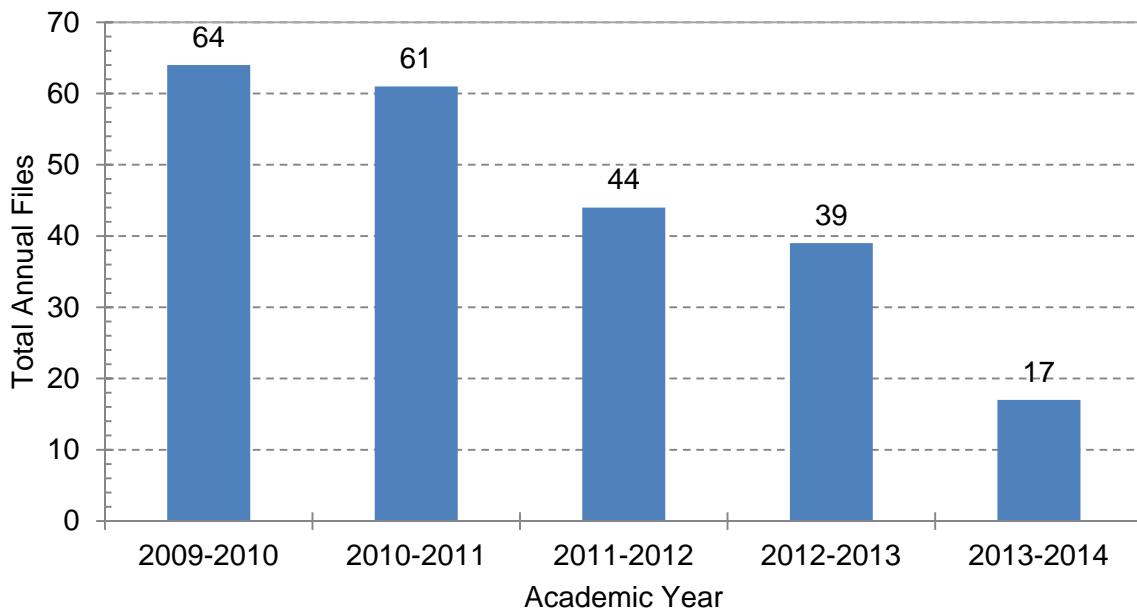


Figure 1: Number of cases reviewed by GAC per year

Among the cases reviewed by the GAC, the relative percentages of each admission decision have varied only slightly from year to year, and the percentages of decisions this year (2013-2014) are relatively consistent with the past several years (Table 1, Figure 2). Most applicants continue to be accepted conditionally, but there have been higher rejection rates over the past four years compared to previous years, although, the variation in percentage during the 2013-2014 may fall in with statistical noise as the total pool of cases was so low.

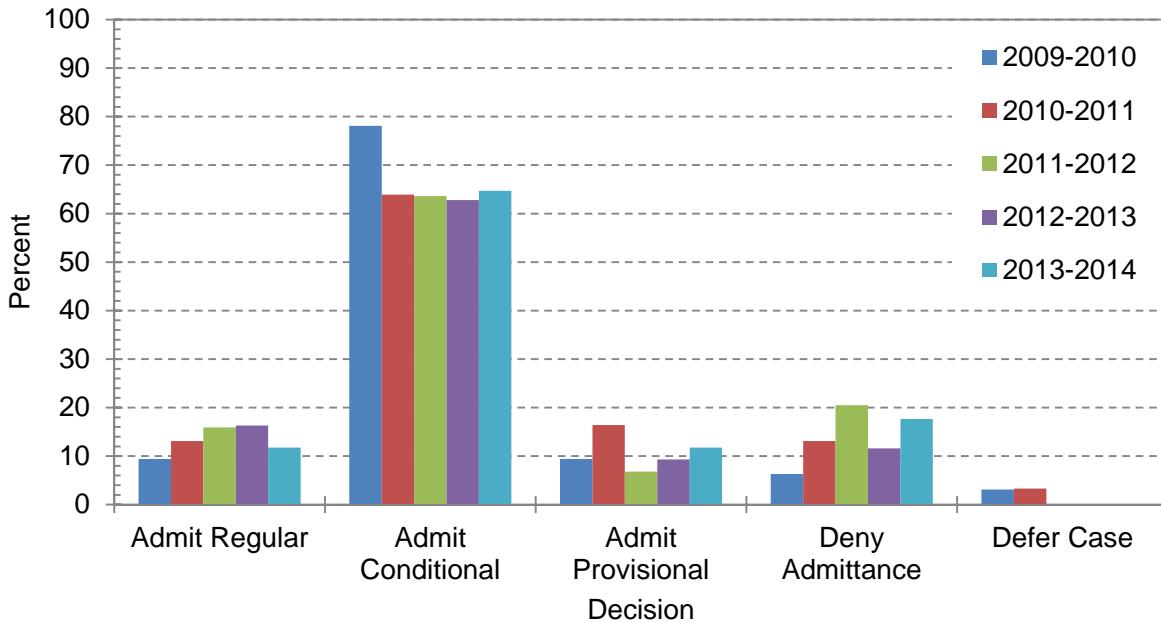


Figure 2: Percent of GAC decisions per year

In May, 2011, the Graduate Council approved a policy regarding students holding international professional degrees. Foreign students who followed a professional track in lieu of a four-year baccalaureate degree had been automatically disqualified by the Graduate School. The Graduate Council, therefore, put into place an appeals process for these students:

*"Graduate programs with an international applicant who does not have a four-year bachelor's or an appropriate alternative degree (e.g., a professional degree of at least four years duration), but who meets all other requirements for admission as a graduate student at OSU, may appeal the admissions denial to the Graduate Admissions Committee. The Graduate Admissions Committee, based on evidence presented by the graduate program, will determine if the student has sufficiently demonstrated preparedness to enter a graduate program and may provide an exception to allow admissions. The Graduate Council will review this policy in one year with input from the Graduate Admissions Committee."*

It had been anticipated that this policy would significantly expand the number and scope of cases reviewed by the GAC, with a concomitant increase in workload, but this has not been the case so far. Only a handful of students have been reviewed within the scope over the past three years since the change has taken place. Consistent with the last several years' reports, the GAC would like to continue encouraging departments to fully document these cases by providing the data necessary to substantiate "the student's ability to communicate proficiently in writing, their preparation to conduct research, and their development of critical thinking," as required by the Graduate Council.

Last year, two changes were made to the general conduct of meetings. These

included the digital distribution of cases to committee members via a secure SharePoint site rather than the traditional use of hardcopy files. These digital files were then made available to each committee member at their leisure so as to facilitate a thorough review by all parties. Additionally, meetings that consisted of only one or two files AND were relatively uncomplicated in review (determined by the GAC chair) were held virtually. Both of these changes have continued on during this year and were considered positive by all committee members.

A significant level of gratitude to Rosemary Garagnani is extended on behalf of the Graduate Admissions Committee. Her availability, expertise, and insights to the on goings of Graduate Admissions enabled a successful year for the GAC.

cc: Rosemary Garagnani, Assistant Dean, Graduate School  
Dr. Brenda McComb, Dean, Graduate School