

**Graduate Student Advisory Committee**  
Meeting Minutes  
Connable Board Room, The Bernhard Center  
05.14.04

**Representatives Present:** Marcel Brouwers (chair), Jessica Bäby (CECP), Paul Chen (Econ), Jay Cawthorne (PPSE), Peter Voice (Geo), Kurt Hayden (IME), Raluca Gera (Math), Betsy Merbitz (Psych), Philip Ngali (BLS), Todd Ide (English),

**Guests:** Dean Bill Wiener (Graduate College), Paula Boodt (Grad College), Janice Quakenbush (Student Affairs)

**The meeting was called to order at 3:02 p.m.**

**Introductions**

**Minutes approved**

**1. Report from the Dean - Dr. Wiener**

- a. HSIRB issue - It's come to the attention of the Graduate College that a number of nearly completed dissertations did not pass approval by the HSIRB ahead of time. Consequences of this are severe: the Graduate College and the University cannot allow these dissertations to be completed and/or published. In nearly all cases, the students will have to start over with their research, using entirely different subjects. These students were penalized because of what, in some cases, was the advice of the students' graduate advisor, namely that HSIRB did not need to be consulted per their research. The GSAC hopes that requisite funding makes its way to these students so that they can satisfactorily complete their program. *All human subject research MUST go through HSIRB. When in doubt, go through HSIRB and receive notice in writing.*
- b. Dr. Wiener informed the group that Paula Boodt's position, Recruitment and Retention, was being dissolved as part of the budget cuts. That this position has not had money in its coffers for years to promote recruitment and retention does not make this announcement surprising. Dr. Wiener also announced that Abigail Lechter, Thesis and Dissertation Coordination, will be leaving her position at the end of May. As such, Paula will become the new Thesis and Dissertation Coordinator. Who will be the Grad College/ GSAC liaison remains an open question.
- c. Dr. Wiener announced that WMU has applied for a grant from the Alliance for Graduate Education and the Professorate (AGEP) along with MSU, UofM, and Wayne State. He hopes to receive between one and two million dollars to help fund retention, recruitment, and the PFF program.

**2. Report from the Chair-elect, Todd Ide**

- a. Todd and Marcel met with President Bailey on 5.13.04. The meeting was largely introductory and pleasant. The trio discussed the proposed anti-loan consolidation bill in Congress, and Dr. Bailey informed us that the bill is largely dead. She was heading to DC on the 14<sup>th</sup> to discuss \$ with Senator Levin et al.
- b. Todd presented plans for the handbook, including the possibility that an insert be used to supply updated information, as opposed to creating a whole new book.
- c. CommUniverCity plans are underway. Discussion arose about the catering and how food is consistently lacking at the tent. Todd will investigate alternative caterers to Damon's, whom we've used for the past two years. Irene Bracken, Athletics, may have some other catering tips.
- d. Grad Student Picnic – the date is set for Aug. 28<sup>th</sup> and will follow the general new grad student orientation. Thought was given to combine announcements for all these beginning-of-the-year functions, including the Grad/Non-Trad Fair, in one mailing.

**3. Report from the Chair, Marcel**

- a. Marcel discussed plans for the new SIS (Student Information System) and how it will benefit grad students and GSAC. Primarily, a comprehensive database of all grad student emails will allow for greater correspondence between GSAC and its constituency and boost recruitment efforts.

- b. Marcel presented a draft of the GSAC Annual End-of-the-year Report. He will present a final draft to the GSAC and to the Graduate Studies Council at their next meetings.

#### 4. GSAC Subcommittees and University Councils

- a. Web – Marcel announced that transition will be beginning between Lou Ann Morgan, our hired web person, and the new GSAC administration.
- b. Public Relations – Jessica asked for suggestions for the new general graduate student orientation to be held on August 28, 2004. The list she presented to the GSAC already contained many of the items that new students would need to know. In addition, she is hoping to garner some funds from the Kalamazoo Community Foundation to offset the expense of the orientation. GSAC will probably be asked to help fund a meal or two during the orientation
- c. Legislative Affairs/ NAGPS – Todd mentioned the upcoming Lobby Day in Washington, DC on June 24<sup>th</sup> and 25<sup>th</sup>. He is gauging interest to determine whether a contingent will head out east.
- d. RPC
- i. Kurt Hayden reiterated the need to have one more person serve on this council. Its charges are many and the opportunities to have a grad student voice on these decisions are plentiful and necessary. Kurt listed a number of the council's charges that are ongoing.
  - ii. The RPC digested a report from HSIRB, which announced intentions of registering class projects (students collecting data outside class). These projects will use a shortened form, rather than the longer more extensive form for original research. Rationale for this change includes the need to keep research safe and legal and the institutionalization of paperwork. Hopefully, this will reduce the issues raised by Dr. Wiener in Section 1.a. of these minutes.
- e. Technology and Operations
- i. Peter Voice announced that he will need a replacement on May 25, 2004.
  - ii. A new email policy passed the council and is pending before the BOT.
  - iii. Wireless and OIT
    - OIT is having to deal with 20 – 30 new viruses per day.
    - Security is the highest priority.
    - Virus protection is a key issue and some university system users do not update their virus settings often enough. OIT may close email accounts that spray viruses hither and thither.
    - Wireless problems persist at Parkview – it is difficult to extend the wirelessness beyond the actual buildings.
  - iv. Telecommunications will undergo a major overhaul.
    - Departments are over budget and so they will start using phone cards on an individual basis. This change does not address the fact that departments will still be over budget with regards to the phones.
    - Grants and Contracts may be exempt from this policy.
    - Potential problems may be faxes and how to use a phone card with them.
  - v. SIS
    - Pilot for email, the portal, and the listserv should be ready over the summer and ready to go for the Fall '04.
- f. Grad Studies Council
- Did not meet.
- g. Campus Planning and Finance
- No report.
- h. International Education
- i. Paul Chen reported on the council's achievements over its first year of existence.
    - to serve as the COE's liaison for similar University-wide initiatives;
    - to make policy recommendations and advise the dean as appropriate;
    - to support and develop programs and initiatives in comparative and international education;
    - to encourage and support the infusion of international perspectives across COE programs, including the internationalization of University curricula and instruction;

- to initiate, monitor, and evaluate international studies programs and study abroad programs for the COE;
  - to encourage and support faculty and student research in comparative and international education; and
  - to support faculty development in comparative and international education in all COE programs.
- ii. The Haenicke Institute for International and Area Studies presented a study which advocated on behalf of the International Congress of Medieval Studies, the largest global gathering of medieval scholars, and the International Symposia, both of which have long been part of WMU's internationalization program. Ron Davis presented copies of two recent collaborative enterprise agreements established between WMU and the Universitat de Lleida (Spain) and Riga Stradins University (Latvia). He concluded his report with reference to budget cuts and enumerated several initiatives (which he identified as "foster children") that the Haenicke Institute would endeavor to offer a measure of support.
  - iii. The Office of International Affairs reported that the CELCIS program will undergo a 20% reduction, which will have a detrimental effect on international students needing assistance with English.
  - iv. WMU boasted two more Fulbright scholars, bringing the total to 17 over the years.
- i. GFAC
    - i. The Indian Student Association asked for operational funds and funds for a cricket tournament. The GSAC approved \$500 for operational funds and \$1000 for the tournament.
    - ii. GFAC presented rules changes regarding the sweeping of RSO accounts after the event's happened or the fiscal year has expired. Janice Quakenbush will monitor these dates and sweep accordingly. The changes passed unanimously.

## **5. New Business**

- a. GSAC computer – Todd mentioned that the purchase of a GSAC laptop will be in the best interests of the organization. The office computer operates on Windows 95 and will be unable to accomplish the needs of our incoming Web tech (Vice Chair of GSAC).
  - Jessica motioned to approve a spending limit of \$2000 - \$2500 for the Web committee to use for a new computer
  - Kurt Seconded. The motion passed.
- b. Grad Student Research Journal &/or Symposium
  - Todd raised the question and asked for suggestions from the committee.
  - Consensus seemed to indicate that an online publication may be most effective.
  - Students preferred publication by refereed journals, so the idea was to make this one refereed by faculty internal to WMU.
  - Further investigation needs to be done.

## **6. Old Business**

- a. Unionization
  - Marcel reported that the evenly split mood on campus, based on his and other GSAC members' investigations, does not suggest inevitable success for a union drive. He suggested that the Chair and the committee keep their fingers on the pulse of this issue.
- b. Tuition hike
  - Jay Cawthorne reiterated his concern that the tuition hikes for in-state grad students disproportionately supports the minority of students with assistantships of some sort. One way to combat the notion that assistants 'take advantage' of non-assistants is to encourage greater participation of non-assistants in GSAC.

## **7. GFAC and GSAC meeting – June 11, 2004**

## **8. General Discussion: "The State of Graduate Schools"/ Food**

## **9. Adjourn**