

THE GRADUATE STUDENT ADVISORY COMMITTEE
Friday, November 10, 2000
Bernhard Center, Connable Board Room

MINUTES

Representatives Present: Daryl Arkwright (Biology), Marcel Brouwers (English), Jay Cawthorne (Paper and Printing Sciences and Engineering), Ron Coleman (Sociology), Doris Dirks (History), Sabbir Hossain (Physics), Tim Kuehnlein (Political Science), Peter Lawson (Anthropology), Heidi Solberg Viar (History), Gerald Unterreiner (Geosciences), Tim Williams (Music), Deborah Wilson (Sociology), Rodger Zanny (Computer Science)

Guests: Paula Boodt (The Graduate College), Dr. Linda Delene (NCA Re-Accreditation Chair), Amy Nelson (Student Affairs), Dr. Donald Thompson (OVPR/The Graduate College), Dr. William Wiener (The Graduate College)

I. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 3:00 p.m.

II. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES

The minutes of the October 2000 GSAC meeting were stated as forthcoming.

III. PRESENTATION

Dr. Donald Thompson, Vice President for Research and Dean of the Graduate College, provided GSAC members with an explanation of The Graduate College relocation from Siebert Administration Building to the second floor of Walwood Hall on East Campus. The move should be completed by the start of the Winter semester 2001. Dr. Thompson emphasized that two additional locations in Sangren and Friedmann Halls would also provide various

services to graduate students as a matter of convenience. Dr. Thompson stressed that the location of the GSAC cube was subject to GSAC preferences.

Dr. Linda Delene, Chair of the North Central Association Re-Accreditation Self-Study Advisory Board at Western Michigan University provided a synopsis of the university's self-study for re-accreditation currently underway. Dr. Delene provided insight about the content of a report she has prepared. The report approaches such issues as academic programs, student life, and the university's mission from an organizational development perspective, focusing on areas where the university might exhibit weak performance and emphasizing the potential overextended nature of the university. Dr. Delene encouraged GSAC members to review the report and give feedback. Announcements of the re-accreditation process will be published in area newspapers. The community is also encouraged to use this opportunity to make comments about the state of the university. The re-accreditation process occurs every ten years.

Dr. William Wiener, Senior Associate Dean of The Graduate College announced that applications for the Graduate Student Research and Travel Fund would be considered on November 15, 2000, or shortly thereafter. Travel expenses already incurred from academic conferences and/or research initiatives since the start of the academic year 2000-2001 would be considered retroactively due to the delayed nature of the review process this academic year.

Regarding previous inquiries about graduate assistant/associate benefits at the WMU Bookstore, Dr. Wiener updated GSAC members based on a meeting with Terry Hudson of the WMU Bookstore. Dr. Wiener stressed that inquiry into the logistics of utilizing the Bronco Card as the means of identification for benefits was currently under way. Technical coding issues need to be researched for feasibility purposes. Concern about the use of student identification numbers, specifically social security numbers at the cash registers, had been expressed previously by a number GSAC members. Additionally, concerning the guidelines for receiving benefits from the bookstore, specifically discounts, The Graduate College has made it clear that the WMU Bookstore must post the guidelines at the bookstore. GSAC will also post the guidelines on its web-page. Dr. Wiener

also stated that he is currently researching how regional centers of the university may be better accommodated by the WMU Bookstore. Complaints have suggested that used books are not available at regional centers. Additionally, books often arrive late, and there are no book resale opportunities for regional centers. Dr. Wiener suggested that a new system may correct such issues by the end of winter semester 2001.

Finally, Dr. Wiener reported on developments with the Graduate Studies Council. He sought advice from GSAC members regarding potential new policies for good academic standing, repeat courses, and re-admission presently being devised by the council. The consensus of GSAC was to support a 3.0 minimum for good standing. Concerning repeat courses, GSAC agreed that there should be a limit on the number of times a course may be retaken (a one time retake was suggested), and that pre-approval for retaking a course is necessary for the new grade to be substituted in the grade point average. It was also agreed by GSAC the grades from a course retake would be factored within the overall grade point average. The retake grade would substitute the initial grade in the program grade point average only. All transactions, of course, would be included on the academic transcripts. Finally, regarding re-admission, the university will honor grades for up to six years for a Master's degree and seven years for a Ph.D.. GSAC members concurred.

IV. REPORT OF THE CHAIR

The Chair reported briefly on a number of issues. Regarding the search for a university ombudsman, the Chair announced that she attended a search committee meeting. No applications had yet been received by the search committee.

The Chair announced that she would be meeting with Drs. Floyd and Thompson in the near future. If members had issues to be raised, they should direct them to the Chair.

Regarding the NCA Re-Accreditation Advisory Board, the Chair announced that she would be attending meetings on behalf of GSAC.

While at the National Association of Graduate-Professional Students Meeting in October, Dirks was elected Chair of the International Student Concerns

Committee and, therefore, a member of the Board of Directors of NAGPS.

It was also announced that the Graduate Program Open House was successful. There were some 278 people in attendance. Paula Boodt thanked those who helped organize the program.

Finally, the Chair reported briefly on the NAGPS annual meeting, commenting that it was an insightful experience. A informational binder was circulated among GSAC members, and the Chair stated that a further overview of the meeting would occur at the next GSAC meeting.

V. GSAC SUB-COMMITTEES

Graduate Financial Allocation Committee (Jay Cawthorne):

An operational budget of \$550.00 for the History Graduate Student Organization (HGSO) was approved unanimously at the recommendation of GFAC.

An operational budget of \$200.00 for the Communications Graduate Student Association (Communiqué) was approved unanimously at the recommendation of GFAC. Additionally, an event budget (travel) of \$800.00 for Communiqué was approved unanimously at the recommendation of GFAC.

An operational budget of \$315.00 for the Association of Graduate English Students (AGES) was approved unanimously at the recommendation of GSAC. Additionally, a provisional commitment by GSAC for an event budget of \$2000.00 was unanimously approved at the recommendation of GFAC. AGES must first secure a speaker and date before the funds will be transferred for this event.

VII. OLD BUSINESS

The Chair circulated copies of newly revised GSAC rules. Members were asked to compare the newly consolidated and streamlined rules with the existing rules. Approval of the new rules would be considered at the December GSAC meeting.

The Chair proposed that Gradients be published on the web-page henceforth in order to eliminate printing and postage costs. Members were asked to reflect upon this change for purposes of debate at the December GSAC meeting.

Regarding student allocation fees, the Chair stated that she is in the process of attempting to have the 20% of graduate student assessment fees currently channeled to Campus Activities Board redirected to GSAC and WSA. The objective is intended to have 10% of the available funds distributed directly to GSAC and the other 10% to WSA, thus funneling a greater amount of available funds directly to graduate student endeavors.

VIII. GENERAL ANNOUNCEMENTS AND BRIEFS

The next GFAC meeting will meet at 2:00 p.m. on December 8, 2000 in the Connable Board of Trustees Room.

The next GSAC meeting is scheduled for December 8, 2000 at 3:00 p.m. in the Connable Board of Trustees Room. A holiday dinner for all GSAC members and their guests will follow the meeting. A location has yet to be determined.

January 11, 2001 is the date scheduled for the annual GSAC dinner with President Floyd at the Gilmore House. All GSAC members are invited to attend. The dinner is limited to GSAC members only however.

X. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 5:00 p.m..