

Graduate Student Advisory Committee
Meeting Minutes
Connable Board Room, The Bernhard Center
9.12.03

Representatives Present: Marcel Brouwers (chair), Jay Cawthome (PPSE), Greg Waltz (BioSci), Raluca Gera (Math), Jessica Baby (CECP), Craig Tollini (Sociology), Craig Thomas (Ed Tech), Fodei Batty (Political Science), Debbie Glowacki (OT), Emily Eads (OT), James Tyler (Anthro), Angela Prater (Comm), Nate Michon (Comp Rel), Paul Chen (Econ), Erin Huskey (English), Jennifer Smith (English), Peter Voice (Geosciences), Melissa Ebbers (Phil), Quentin Gee (Phil), Coleen Harrington Barry (CECP), Alison Karwan (CECP), Nancy Greer-Williams (TLL), Doris Dirks (TLL), Jonathan Chesman (Music), Sean Butterfield (Music), Rodger Zanny (CS), Jay Cawthorne (PPSE), Aaron Hardy (Speech Path),

Guests: Dr. Bill Wiener (Dean, Graduate College), Janice Jaroniski (VPSA, Business Manager), Beth Berry (student coordinator for Homecoming), Alison Karwan (Habitat for Humanity)

The meeting was called to order

Approval of the minutes from August 8, 2003 – un animous

Report from the Chair

- a. University Wide GA Training Program – 8-20-03
Marcel reported that this was a success and lamented the fact that the Grad Student Handbooks were not ready to be distributed.
- b. Graduate and Nontraditional Student Fair – 8-20-03
This event went well with positive responses from the attendees.
- c. Orientation Picnic – 8-21-03
Fun was had by all at this first ever orientation picnic for grad students. A clear hot day near Goldsworth Pond.
- d. RSO Conference – 9-6-03
Marcel and Jessica presented information on funding guidelines and fundraising options. This first ever conference boasted over one hundred attendees.
- e. CommUniverCity
Marcel reported that the event was very successful. He thanked those who attended and helped during the event. Marcel also noted that GSAC was one of the few WMU departments/agencies that had a tent at CommUniverCity.
- f. Meeting with President Bailey
Marcel reported to the president that some graduate students received their stipends late this year. Dr. Bailey noted that this was due to the change in leadership and a budget shortfall. The administration had to wait to award assistantships until the Board of Directors decided on the tuition increase – they didn't know how much money they would need and how many assistantships they could grant. The Provost and President hand signed each appointment.

The AAUP (the faculty union) is in negotiations right now with the University over a new contract. Traditionally, if the faculty receives a raise so do the graduate students.

Marcel also discussed the new graduated pay scale with the president.

- g. Graduate Student Handbook

The completed handbook was distributed to representatives at the GSAC meeting. Marcel also mailed the handbook to new graduate students. He would appreciate any feedback the committee has for improving the handbook.

h. GSAC recognition

Marcel noted that GSAC was not recognized at the president's inauguration on September 7, 2003. Only the WSA was recognized as the University's student government. Marcel proposed the following resolution:

Whereas, the Graduate Student Advisory Committee (GSAC) represents all of Western Michigan University's graduate student population to the administration;

Whereas, nearly 20% of the University's population consists of graduate and professional students;

Whereas, the Western Student Association (WSA) is often viewed as representing the entire student population;

Be it hereby resolved that the GSAC be recognized as the Graduate Student Government agency and be included in all functions, alongside the WSA, where representation of all WMU students is desired.

Marcel hopes that this resolution will separate us from the control of WSA. Members discussed the ramifications of the resolution. It was suggested that the committee do further expletory work on the resolution before we present it to the Board of Directors. The discussion on the resolution was tabled until the next meeting.

Report from Nancy Greer Williams: Dental and Optical Insurance

- a. Megalife is WMU's current insurance provider. Nancy provided information to GSAC on dental and optical benefits for graduate students. Graduate students can request a packet from Carington Insurance (a subsidiary of Megalife) regarding prices for dental and optical insurance and a fees list. Right now dental insurance is \$6.00 a month and optical insurance is \$20.00 a month.

Marcel will put a blurb on the website regarding this information.

Sub-Committees and University Councils

a. Web-Committee

Marcel reported that GSAC's web designer is putting the finishing touches on the listserv. Also, the handbook is now on the website.

b. Public Relations

Jessica reported that the brochure is done and is ready to be distributed. Beth Berry, the homecoming coordinator, talked to GSAC members about the up-coming homecoming events and encouraged GSAC to nominate a King and Queen representative and to get excited to the homecoming parade. Beth also passed out information about events during the homecoming week. Homecoming is October 11, 2003.

Alison Karwan announced volunteer opportunities for the WMU Centennial Habitat for Humanity House. She needs help during the first week of Novemeber.

c. University Assessment Committee

Nancy Greer-Williams offered to be on the committee

- d. Legislative Affairs
The committee suggested that Jessica invite the candidates for City Commissioner to the next GSAC meeting.
- e. Research Policies Council
Jay reported the new RPC's charges for the year. The mechanism for awarding FRACIS, an internal grant, to faculty will be examined. Jay also reported that Kurt will be sitting on several RPC subcommittees. Graduate students have not sat on any RPC sub-committees before.
- f. Technology and Operations Council
Ralucca reported that the committee did not meet. She also asked that she be replaced on the committee. Peter said that he would take her place.
- g. Campus Planning
Greg reported that they did not meet yet.
- h. GFAC
Two proposals
 - 1. Microbiology Club
Operational funds - \$500.00 to hold meetings and have food at those meetings
Event funds - \$600.00 for three speakers for the Microbiology conference held at WMU on October 4, 2003. The Club already obtained \$6000.00 in funding for these speakers.

GFAC proposed GSAC give \$1,100.00 to the Microbiology Club
Jay made the motion and Jen seconded it. The allocation was unanimous.
 - 2. African Student Association
The Association presented a budget that was not sufficient in regards to the GFAC guidelines. The Association was asked to resubmit their budget at the next GFAC meeting with the appropriate corrections.
- i. MLK Committee
Angela did not have the opportunity to go to the meeting

Report from Dr. Wiener

- a. Dr. Wiener showed GSAC the new "wrapper" from recruiting future graduate students. The wrapper holds all information and admission information for the graduate college.
- b. Census info.
Numbers are slightly down in Permission to Take Graduate classes (PTG), however numbers are up in all other categories: 4% up in Masters, and 17% up in doctorates. Three years ago there were only 550 doctorate students now there are 729. There are 978 graduate assistants, but that number will exceed the 1,000 mark by the end of September.
- c. Faculty Senate
The Graduate Studies Council will be presenting two policies this year: the accelerated degree program and the annual review of graduate students. The accelerated degree program will look to include Bachelors work into a student's future Master's program here at WMU. The Annual review policy will allow graduate students to receive a review of their progress each year. In the past, graduate students were surprised when they were dismissed from their

department or not given assistantships due to their progress. This process will be a formal way that will eliminate these situations.

The Graduate Studies Council will also be working on:

1. Putting in stone when a permanent program of study needs to be turned in.
2. Defining the meaning of “research tools”
3. Looking at diversity admission policies
4. Graduate certificates
5. PTG policies
6. Graduate Faculty Status review
7. Development of an honor code with the Undergraduate Studies Committee

The Graduate College has also revised and completed a survey for graduate students. Last year’s survey was not a success and with suggestions the Graduate College revised the survey. Dr. Wiener distributed the survey to GSAC members and asked for their input.

Old and Continuing Business

- a. PFF/Interfolio
The Preparing Future Faculty program is moving along.
The co-branding with Interfolio is progressing very well. Jessica created a support website and brochure for the program. The program will officially launch in January.
- b. Gift to WMU
Marcel reported that GSAC’s bench and trees will be dedicated in October.
- c. NAGPS Conference
November 5-9, 2003 in D.C. – volunteers needed to go

New Business

- a. Nancy suggested to GSAC that the Committee should bring a slave memorabilia exhibit to campus. This exhibit was featured in Kalamazoo a few months ago and was featured on Oprah. Nancy feels that this exhibit will give students on campus the opportunity to talk about the racial climate on campus and beyond. It would cost GSAC \$1500.00 a day for the exhibit and the Perry’s would tailor the exhibit to the campus.