

WESTERN MICHIGAN UNIVERSITY  
FACULTY SENATE

GRADUATE STUDIES COUNCIL  
Minutes of 22 October 2009

**Members present:** Michele Behr, Amy Curtis, Suzanne Hedstrom, Brandi Pritchett, Lewis Pyenson, Bill Rantz, Joel Raveloharimisy, David Reinhold, John Spitsbergen, Mark Wheeler **Also present:** Said Abu-Bakr, Chair, Department of Paper Engineering, Chemical Engineering and Imaging; Janice Anderson, Faculty Senate Office; Julie Nemire, Graduate College; Magdalena Niewiadomska-Bugaj, Chair, Department of Statistics.

Council Chair Mark Wheeler called the meeting to order at 3:07 p.m. and announced that a quorum had been reached.

**Procedural Items**

*Acceptance of the Agenda*

Hedstrom moved to accept the agenda; Spitsbergen seconded. The agenda was accepted.

*Approval of the Minutes of 24 September 2009*

Pritchett moved to approve the minutes; Rantz seconded. The minutes of 24 September were approved.

**Discussion/Action Items**

*Curriculum Proposal: Department of Paper Engineering, Chemical Engineering, and Imaging – Accelerated Degree Program (ADP): Master of Science in Paper and Imaging Science and Engineering [CEAS-09-37-PCI] – Said AbuBakr, Chair*

Dr. Abu Bakr presented the proposal on behalf of the department. The accrediting body for the field, ABET, encourages accelerated programs. It is difficult to convince students to stay on for graduate school since they usually get good job offers with just the BS degree. Abu Bakr reported they anticipate a fairly small number of students will participate in this program, so capacity is not expected to be a problem. Students will apply for the program in their junior year, but will not start taking classes at the graduate level until they are seniors. The requirement to apply for the program is a minimum of 3.25 GPA, and 30 credit hours completed at WMU. The current MS program is 36 credits with no thesis, or 24 credit hours with a thesis. There was a question from council members about the 24 month requirement to complete the program, as a student may need to take longer either due to personal circumstances or to problems that occur with their research project. Abu Bakr said they could grant exceptions for extenuating circumstances.

Spitsbergen moved to accept the proposal; Rantz seconded. The proposal was approved.

*Curriculum Proposal: Department of Statistics – Create new interdisciplinary graduate certificate in Applied Statistics [CAS 610] –  
Magdalena Niewiadomska-Bugaj, Chair*

The certificate program is designed for either current graduate students, or others who need more statistical education to apply to their field. There have been many changes in the field of statistics over the years. Dr. Niewiadomska-Bugaj explained that applied statistics involves using statistical software and understanding what it is doing. The field looks at practical problems and real data. The classes in the proposed certificate program are not prerequisites and can be taken in any order. There was a question about whether or not a research methods course could count as a statistical methods course. Niewiadomska-Bugaj said they would have to look at the syllabus to decide whether or not it could be substituted. There was a question about whether or not classes would be offered at night or online to accommodate working people. The department is open to that but it will depend on what students want. Hedstrom moved to accept the proposal; Curtis seconded. The proposal was accepted.

*Discussion of the Academic Affairs Strategic Plan*

There was a wide ranging discussion of issues relating to graduate students in the draft plan.

- Members were concerned about an emphasis on undergraduate programs in the plan.
- There was a suggestion to change the goal regarding the graduate to undergraduate ratio to “maintain at least a ratio of 1 to 4 graduates to undergraduates.” Ideally there needs to be a mutually beneficial relationship between undergraduates and graduates.
- There was concern about the plan including issues of improving the quality of undergraduate education, but very little about improving the quality of graduate programs. The undergraduate section appears to be more concerned about student success, while the graduate student section appears to be more about university success. How do we have the best quality and make sure our graduate students have the best preparation?
- There is no mention of academic advising in the graduate section.
- Goal 3 talks about diversity but there are no individual strategies to address diversity.
- We would like to see something in the graduate section that talks about encouraging other modes of delivery, hybrid programs, etc.
- There needs to be a discussion about what we want graduate education at WMU to be: lots of students, really good students, just a few really good programs?
- What would it mean to have excellent graduate education: that people get jobs, that people are productive, that they become leaders? Each program needs to determine for itself what excellent means? What are the measures?

This discussion will be continued at the next meeting. Council officers will come up with a few questions and ask members to think about these in preparation for the continuation of the discussion.

## **Informational Items**

### *Report of the Graduate Dean – Lewis Pyenson*

No report.

### *Report of the Provost – Dave Reinhold*

No report.

### *Report of the Council Chair – Mark Wheeler*

Wheeler reported that investigations are continuing on the issue of residency requirements for graduate programs. Nemire is following up with individual departments. They will be reporting further at the November meeting.

### *Report of the Graduate Student Advisory Committee Chair – Brandi Pritchett*

GSAC has been focusing more on advocacy issues this semester. They are currently investigating issues with Bronco Cards. Graduate students have complained about the cost of the Bronco Card if it needs to be replaced. Sometimes the strip wears off and it no longer works and needs to be replaced. GSAC will be sponsoring a “Professional Mix and Mingle” event on November 13. This is being cosponsored with Career Services.

### *Report of GSC Committee Chairs*

There are no active committees at this time.

The meeting adjourned at 5:10 p.m.

Michele Behr  
Secretary