

Graduate Student Advisory Committee
Meeting Minutes
Connable Board Room, The Bernhard Center
04.16.04

Representatives Present: Marcel Brouwers (chair), Jessica Băby (CECP), Craig Tollini (Sociology), Paul Chen (Econ), Nalaka Kodituwakku (Physics), Jennifer Smith (English), Jay Cawthorne (PPSE), Peter Voice (Geo), Kurt Hayden (IME), Greg Waltz (Bio), Ralucca Gera (Math), Betsy Merbitz (Psych), Coleen Harrington Barry (CECP), Jolene Berger (Bio), Barbara Heard (Bio), Joshua Koenig (Hist), Tom Owiti (FCL), Angela Prater (Com), Sankar Shanmugam (Construction Eng)

Guests: Cindy Clegg and Carol Eddy (Sindecuse Health Center), Dean Bill Wiener (Graduate College), Paula Boodt (Grad College), Janice Quakenbush (Student Affairs)

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

Introductions

Minutes approved

Report from Cindy Clegg, Sindecuse Health Center

1. WMU's Board of Trustees approved a change in health insurance status for students. As of the fall of 2005, all students will be required to have health insurance.
2. There are options for expanded policies [dental and vision] at the students' request
3. The pharmacy maximum is currently \$750.00
4. Ms. Clegg asked GSAC representatives for ideas on what should be covered in their health insurance policies.
 - a) Dental
 - b) Vision
 - c) Yearly physical
 - d) Birth Control
5. Any options will not be mandatory for all students. There will be two programs for students to choose from, a general program and an options program.
6. How will the Health Center be able to track students that have insurance and those who do not?
 - The new Student Information System will be able to track this information. Students will be asked to fill out a form at the beginning of the year to prove that they have insurance. Those who do not turn in a form will be charged, on their student account, for the university's health insurance program.
7. Is there an extension program for students who are graduating and wish to keep their University plan?
 - The University's insurance program runs from August to August, therefore a student can have their insurance until the August after they graduate. They do have the option of continuing with the insurance but at the general rate.
8. Financial aid is available to those who cannot afford the insurance.
9. Spouses/Partners and family members are not required to have insurance. The Health Center is negotiating with the Insurance Company in order to allow spouses/partners and immediate family members to join the insurance plan at any time. Right now it is every 6 months or with special permission.

Report from the Dean - Dr. Wiener

1. Board of Trustees meeting
 - a. The Budget
 - i. Higher education is now seen as a private benefit and not a public good. As a result, there has been loss of financial support from the State.
 - ii. There needs to be 15% cuts in each WMU department to cover the 13.7 million dollars needed to balance the budget.

- iii. AABAC proposed that there no longer needs to be 20 new faculty hired each year, but 8 faculty who should go to the general education classes. Library expenses should be cut by \$650,000, which will greatly affect doctorate and masters research. The Center for Teaching and Learning was cut, \$210,000, but the University hopes to get grant money to keep the department running. The AABAC proposed to cut the Ombuds (\$93,000) but the Provost felt that the Ombuds helped students and faculty so much that cutting the position would be a greater disservice to the University than keeping the position's salary and operational line. The Committee did request that \$563,000 be restored to the graduate Assistantship fund due to the Committee's concern in Graduate Assistant cuts. \$402,000 will be placed back into the Program improvement fund of which \$20,000 is put aside for GA training at Dr. Wiener's request.
- iv. The AABAC also wished to evaluate the role of the Graduate School and whether or not it should go back under the VP for Research. The Faculty Senate will probably establish a subcommittee to study the efficiency of the Graduate College.
- v. Dr. Wiener also discussed the new tuition hikes. Non-resident graduate students tuition went up 12.5%, resident 5.0% compared to the undergraduate tuition, non-residents 5.6% and resident 2.4%.
- vi. Fees that will be added are:
 - New Students - \$500.00 one time Student Information System fee
 - Repeat Course Fee - \$150.00
 - Remedial Course Fee - \$150.00
 - Graduate Course Adjustment Fee (for undergraduates only) - \$150.00
 - Course fees - \$40.00 or \$60.00 (depends upon class and requirements)
- vii. 138 staff and 19 faculty positions will not be filled, laid off, or retired.
- b. Research and Travel Grants
 - i. 150 students applied
 - ii. 14 Research awards and 121 Travel awards were given
 - iii. The awards were not funded fully, but with a donation from GSAC 97% of the award can be funded from 66.6%.
- c. GA Training will be August 23-25
- d. The Graduate and Nontraditional Student Fair will be on August 23.
- e. Graduate Studies Council
 - i. The Honors Code was passed unanimously by the Committee and will now move onto the Faculty Senate. Jennifer Smith worked very hard on this as well.
 - ii. Academic Planning and Assessment is looking at a new Faculty Senate committee to look at Institutional Effectiveness.
 - iii. Modifications to the Student Code concerning Academic dishonesty separate undergraduate and graduate student procedures. The former policy treated graduates and undergraduate students in the same manner. The new policy directs Student Conduct to consult the student's academic department and OISS if the student is an international students.
 - The debate revolves around whether or not the Academic Dishonesty policy for graduate students is already covered by OPVR.
- f. PTG Policy
 - i. With the new SIS program, departments will be able to write into a program when to notify students as to how many PTG credits they have taken and warn them that if they proceed with PTG status their credits may not make them eligible to graduate from the program without being admitted
- g. Dean of Arts and Sciences Search
 - i. Chairs were told to send at least two students to a luncheon with each candidate. Students did not find out in time, very few attended. There was not enough notice that these candidates were coming to campus. It has the clandestine smell of the President's search.

Report from the Chair - Marcel

1. Meeting with President Bailey
 - i. The motioned letter from last meeting regarding the inequality of graduate and undergraduate tuition increases was met with little response by the President.
 - ii. Marcel also advocated for the Ombuds position to remain.
2. Graduate and Professional Student Appreciation Week Reception
 - i. About 150 people attended
 - ii. President Bailey attended for a few moments. Students appreciated her stopping by, they felt appreciated.
3. Board of Trustees meeting
 - i. Marcel reiterated Dr. Wiener's comments
 - ii. Discussion on Privatization of the maintenance staff in the Residence Halls. This week students met (not GSAC however) and decided to bring a coffin to Dr. Bailey's office in response to the move to privatize the campus.
4. ICES update
 - i. AAUP and the Sociology department wrote a report on ICES. They feel that the report needs to be discarded. The ICES evaluation system is based upon University of Illinois norms and WMU's evaluations should not be compared to Illinois'.
 - ii. There is a serious problem when a faculty member or graduate student applies for an academic position and presents their ICES evaluations. "Here is my supporting critiques, but please ignore them, they are not valid."
5. Unionization sub-committee
 - i. Different views from different departments about unionization.
 - ii. This is a perennial issue that GSAC may want to keep its eye on.
 - iii. There are drawbacks to unionizing - our partners become our adversaries, but one GSAC member pointed out, we are already adversaries with the administration.
6. Computer system implementation (SIS)
 - i. Who is available to sit on the committee that oversees the two-year implementation of the SIS? GSAC needs to send committee members.
 - ii. The new computer system will be very helpful for GSAC.

GSAC Sub-Committees and University Councils

1. Web-Committee – Marcel
 - a. Betsy will take over the web information and updates as the Vice Chair.
2. Public Relations – Jessica
 - a. Thank you to all who came to the GPSAW
3. General Education – Craig
 - a. Could not attend the meeting, but the committee continues to work on the first year experience initiative.
4. Legislative – Jessica
 - a. No report
5. **University Councils**
 - a. RPC – Kurt
 - i. Dr. Wiener reported to the Committee that 1000 GA and DA positions were funded. Priority 1 and 2 were funded, but priority 3 was not.
 - ii. FRACASF Report
 - Faculty were awarded for their quantitative, qualitative and creative arts research.
 - 37 quantitative, 35 qualitative and 3 creative arts research projects were proposed and 11, 15, and 2 were awarded respectively.
 - iii. Graduate Retention Committee
 - This Committee will look at graduate retention and factors that affect retention rates (including the number of thesis/dissertation committees a faculty member can chair).

- iv. Kurt commented during the Committee's meeting that GSAC desires to see that doctorate attrition report from the Graduate College. There was good support from the council to allow GSAC to see the report, but nothing formal.
- b. Technology and Operation Council – Peter
 - i. Did not meet
- c. Graduate Studies Council - Jen and Marcel
 - i. Same report as Dr. Wiener
- d. Campus Planning and Finance Committee – Greg
 - i. The Council recommends the adoption of a University environmental mission statement, which can be found at: <http://www.wmich.edu/facultysenate/FSagendas2003/moa0314.pdf>
 - ii. However, the term *mission* will not be used to describe the statement since the University already has an environmental mission.
 - iii. President Bailey will have a town hall meeting on April 29, 2004 to discuss the budget.
 - iv. At the Committee meeting Dr. Bailey reported the same information Dr. Wiener presented about the budget. However, she did note that since tuition is only going up 2.4%, it is only 0.1% lower than inflation so parents will not be able to claim the tuition on their taxes.
 - v. The College of Health and Human Services should be completed and ready for occupancy in the Spring of 2005.
 - vi. The construction of the Round-a-bout and the underground construction for the admissions building is being done at this time.
 - vii. The Asylum Lake property will be voted on to be a passive site and not developed. In addition, WMU's 90 acre sheep farm (the future soccer complex) will not be sold.
- e. International Education Council – Paul
 - i. Did not meet
- f. GFAC
 - i. No student proposals
 - ii. Marcel motioned that GSAC donate \$8,000 to The Graduate College for the Research and Travel Grant fund.
 - Kurt seconded the motion
 - Discussion: GSAC can let the balance of their account roll-over or some of the money can be put to good use. With the \$8,000 donation GSAC will still have a roll-over of \$13,000.
 - Unanimous vote
- g. WSA announcements - Eric Z. is the new President

Old and Continuing Business

- 1. Interfolio/PFF
 - i. Paula attended an I-webfolio meeting. There will be several folios for each student. The student can give access to specific folios to their professors or employers. In June there will be training for the program starting with the College of Education.

New Business

- 1. Please recruit a new representative if you are leaving.

General Announcements

- 1. GSAC meeting - May 14, 2004
- 2. GFAC meeting - May 14, 2004

Adjourn for end of the year dinner at McGinnis Landing