

Graduate Student Advisory Committee
Meeting Minutes
Connable Board Room, The Bernhard Center
2-20-04

Representatives Present: Marcel Brouwers (chair), Jessica Bäby (CECP), Craig Tollini (Sociology), Paul Chen (Econ), Sankar Shanmugam (Construction E), Nalaka Kodituwakku (Physics), Angela Prater (Com), Jennifer Smith (English), Nate Michon (Comp Rel), Jay Cawthorne (PPSE), Raluca Gera (Math), Marie Fleming (Social Work), Peter Voice (Geo),

Guests: Dr. Kevin Vichcales (Graduate College), Paula Boodt (Grad College), Todd Ide (English)

The meeting was called to order at 3:04 p.m

Introductions

Minutes were approved

Guest: Toby Daspit – Academic Integrity and Grade and Program Dismissal Appeals policies

1. Toby talked to GSAC about proposed changes to the academic integrity policy.
2. The revisions will ensure fairness for students and faculty.
 - a. The editions to the policy will place the integrity process in the hands of the faculty. As of right now, more of the power lies with the academic integrity student conduct committee.
 - b. The new process will also streamline procedures and provide concrete time frames.
 - c. A new late withdrawal Policy and a new structure of the grade appeals committee (GAPDAC) will also be added to the new academic integrity policy.

Report from the Dean – in lieu of Dr. Wiener – Dr. Kevin Vichcales

1. Instructor Evaluation System (ICES)
 - a. This year ICES was field tested in the College of Arts and Science as a new way to evaluate instructors.
 - b. 6 questions are University wide, 5 questions are decided by the college, 5 by the department and 5 by the individual instructor
 - c. Teaching Assistants within GSAC feel that the system is the same as before. Some students were able to choose their own questions, but were not very satisfied with the selections they were given. Other students were not allowed to choose their questions at all and were forced to use those selected by their supervising professor.
 - Students who lead discussion or lab sections felt that the questions chosen by the instructor did not properly evaluate the part they, as the TA, took in the class, therefore they were unfairly evaluated.
 - d. GSAC raised several questions:
 - Do graduate students have the right to choose their own questions?
 - What rights do the departments have to look at a TA's evaluations?
 - Who pays for these evaluations?
 - e. Kevin noted that the evaluations are paid for by the University and not the departments or Colleges. To answer the aforementioned questions Marcel will be meeting with Dr. Wiener and Dr. Linda Delene.
 - f. <http://www.wmich.edu/poapa/ICES/>
2. Appointee Salary Start Date
 - a. In the past TA, RA, and GAs were paid two weeks before the Fall semester started. This was due to the fact that 10 years ago there was no tuition remission and students' stipends were used entirely to pay for tuition. Since there was no money left over to pay for living expenses, WMU decided to pay students early.
 - b. After looking at 30 institutions comparable to WMU, the Graduate College found that these institutions only paid their graduate students for the work they completed.
 - c. The Graduate College will therefore be moving the first pay date to the first week of school.
 - d. This new pay date will not effect stipend payments, which should arrive at the start of the semester.
 - e. However, those students who are under-enrolled must have permission from the Graduate College to be so. Otherwise, the under-enrolled student's stipend will not be placed into their account.
 - f. On a final note, Kevin suggested that all graduate assistants get direct deposit.
 - g. Kevin asked for GSAC's support on this proposal – the membership gave the Graduate College the support to move forward with the proposal as long as stipend payments are not effected.

3. Travel and Research Grants are due on 3-15-04

Report from the GSAC advisor

1. Paula reported on behalf of the GSAC search committee for Chair and Vice Chair
 - a. On February 6, 2004 the committee met to determine interview candidates from those students who applied.
 - The Chair and Vice Chair positions were publicized throughout campus and as a result nine students submitted applications.
 - Only one current GSAC member applied for one of the positions.
 - b. February 9-10, 2004 the committee interviewed six candidates for the positions with a standardized question and scoring sheet.
 - c. The Committee reached a clear cut decision:
 - Todd Ide was nominated as Chair (MFA in Creative writing, extensive legislative work as a campaign manager, founder of the Michigan Young Democrats, and has extensive fundraising experience).
 - Betsy Merbitz was nominated as Vice Chair (Vast experience chairing committees, strong student advocacy work, proven skills in managing budgets, passionate, and dynamic)
2. Motions were made and GSAC voted unanimously to approve the appointment of these candidates to the positions beginning Summer II.

Report from the Chair

1. Dinner with the President
 - a. GSAC members who attended the dinner reported that the President was very receptive to their concerns and questions
 - b. They felt that it was a very productive meeting
2. RSO Tour
 - a. Marcel, Doris, Kevin Vichcales, Dr. Wiener and Jessica have been traveling around to various GSOs to discuss policies and up-coming events as well as to hear from the students of those departments.
 - b. Thus far the representatives have visited Philosophy, AGES, HGSO, Music Therapists, Sociology, Political Science.
 - c. More meetings will be scheduled throughout the semester with remaining organizations.
 - d. Refreshments were also provided. Marcel asked that Jessica be reimbursed for the purchase of refreshments. The motion was unanimously approved.
3. Mandatory Health Insurance
 - a. The University is moving toward a mandatory requirement for all students to have health insurance either through their own private carrier or through the University.
 - b. Marcel sees a red flag here. As stipends decrease and health care increases, graduate students may not be able to afford to pay higher costs for health insurance.
 - c. He believes that students should only have to pay the current rate for health insurance, \$150.00.
4. Student Information System
 - a. Right now the University is beginning to overhaul the student information system.
 - b. This is a huge project and the implementation of the system will take up to two years.
 - c. A committee has been struck to help with the implementation for the system. GSAC has been asked to submit at least two names of students interested in working with the implementation process.

GSAC Sub-committees and University Councils

1. Web Committee - Marcel
 - a. No report
2. Public Relations – Jessica
 - a. Jessica reported on Graduate Student Professional Development week
 - The sessions were great, but there was low turn out
 - Jessica asked the advice of the membership as to why students did not make it to the sessions. GSAC members felt that the very bad weather was the reason why people did not attend.
 - For next year Jessica suggests a one-day professional development day, a day conference, where students can attend sessions and be fed lunch. Saturday would be the best day for this event. The date of the event should continue to be at the end of January, just before the Career Fair, since many graduate students are attending the professional development sessions to prepare for the Fair.
 - b. Graduate and Professional Student Appreciation Week

- Jessica announced that the date for the GSAC reception will be on Wednesday, April 7, 2004 from 4:00 – 6:00 p.m. in the South Ballroom of the Bernhard Center.
 - The membership decided to keep the same T-shirt from last year.
 - Jessica also asked if there were any events the membership would like to plan for that week. They said no.
3. General Education Sub-Committee – Craig
 - a. Seniors are beginning to be assessed with the general education test.
 - b. The test will determine what students have learned throughout their time here at WMU.
 - c. The test does not put too much work on the professors administering the test.
 4. Legislative Affairs - Jessica
 - a. Jessica and Sankar went to Lansing last Thursday for the Michigan College Compact Higher Education Lobby Day.
 - b. Students from all over the state attended. WMU had student interns present, but Jessica and Sankar were the only two WMU students who attended voluntarily.
 - c. They meet with Representative Lipsey, Representative Wenke's staff, Representative Hoogendyk's staff, Senator George and Senator Shauer to discuss the affects of budgets cuts on graduate and undergraduate students and what they wanted to see happen at the legislative level.
 - d. NAGPS lobby day
 - Nancy, Angela and Doris attended the lobby day on February 10-12, 2004 in D.C.
 - They said they received a luke-warm response from Michigan legislators. They told the lobbying team that this issue would be put on the back burner since it was an election year and other legislation needed to get pushed through before this.
 - Nancy also reported on the state of NAGPS. She said they have great potential; everything is just very disorganized right now and there is no goal for the Board to work toward.
- 5. University Councils**
- a. Research Policies Committee – Kurt
 - b. Technology and Operations Committee – Peter
 - Report from Vice President for Information Technology and CIO Viji Murali
 - Revised email system: More disk space—both faculty and students will have 100 MB of space with 50 MB allotted for email, and the rest for file storage and web site. More disk space can be requested. After Students, faculty or staff leave WMU, their account is good for 240 days.
 - Behind schedule: Pilot program Summer semester. Fully operational Fall 2004. [All students will be required to have bronco mail web accounts]
 - Student Information System (Isis): Signed contract with STC. Implementation plan started—setting up committee to oversee it. 2 year implementation schedule
 - ^ Services provided: Portal—integrated with email system. Allow students to access account information. I Webfolio—port folio program with 150 MB space. Available to all students during their tenure at Western. Available after graduation for an annual fee (not sure on cost yet). Linda Delene is in charge of this project. Two plans for implementation of this portion—Incoming freshman class for the fall will have it available or College by college. Touch Gateway—allows students to pay bills, etc. online.
 - Site license for Oracle (campus wide). Students will be able to download oracle for their own use. Faculty can use it in the classroom for free.
 - Looking into upgrading WebCT to Vista system now that Oracle is available. Vista costs roughly 4X the cost of WebCT (WebCT--\$40,000). It may now be cheaper considering the Oracle site license.
 - Other Reports were cancelled on account of weather.
 - c. Graduate Studies Council – Marcel and Jen
 - The Council voted on a new program – Master of Arts Education passed.
 - The Council also voted to pass a third concentration for the Education Leadership program.
 - d. Campus Planning and Finance Council – Greg
 - Construction will be taking place on W. Michigan this up-coming month.
 - The Health and Human Services Building is on track.
 - There is a movement to put peace poles on campus.
 - Miller Auditorium will be upgraded over the Summer.

- e. International Education Council - Paul
 - Dr. William McCarty, Professor of Finance and Commercial Law, provided a presentation on the history of International Business Education Council (IBEC), its composition as well as its functions and activities.
 - Dr. Davis from the Haenicke Institute for International and Area Studies, presented the state of international and inter-disciplinary programs with the current budget cuts and stated that the budget cuts may provide an opportunity for the various programs to reorganize and restructure.
 - Dr. Howard Dooley, from the Office of International Affairs talked about the deadlines for the Fulbright Program (October 10, 2004) and the Rotary Ambassadorial Scholarships (April 15, 2004).
 - Dr. Cutrim, Geography Department, and Phi Kappa Phi presented on "The Art of Traveling Abroad."
 - Barbara Shouse, Office of International Student Services, talked about International Student Orientation.
 - The Council's Internalization Plan will include such issues as:
 - Development of a comprehensive Internalization plan
 - Tracking development of competencies and benchmarks
 - Development of the council's most egregious resource shortages and needs
6. GFAC
- a. Sociology
 - Asked for Operational Budget money
 - Event budget – speaker, Dr. Mona Danner who will present on "How to Market Yourself"
 - The speaker will take place on March 15, 2004 from 9:30 – noon in 210 Bernhard Center
 - GFAC recommends \$1477.20
 - Ralucca motions to allocate the GFAC recommended amount, Nancy seconds
 - Motion passes, one abstention
 - b. International Festival
 - The Festival Committee asked for \$3500.00 to fund the event
 - This is the 15th year for the event and GSAC has traditionally funded the event
 - GFAC recommends \$2500.00
 - The event will be on March 21, 2004 from 4:00 – 8:00 in the East Ballroom
 - Nancy motions to allocate the GFAC recommended amount, Jay seconds
 - Vote is unanimous
 - c. Masters of Social Work
 - Students are asking for money to complete a documentary on the homelessness in Kalamazoo.
 - The documentary would then become University property, which would allow any student to view it.
 - GFAC recommends \$240.00
 - Jay motions to allocate the GFAC recommended amount, Nate seconds
 - The vote is unanimous
 - d. Phi Mu Epsilon (Math Honor Society)
 - Requested \$3500.00 for speakers and events and \$800.00 for operations
 - GFAC proposes the maximum allotted of \$500.00 for operations and \$2000.00 for events
 - Nancy motions to allocate the GFAC recommended amount, Jen seconds
 - The vote is unanimous

Old and Continuing Business

- 1. PFF/Interfolio
 - a. Low turn out at the Interfolio presentations. Will be reevaluating the service this month.

New Business

- 1. Graduate Student Appreciation Week – April 5-9, 2005

General Announcements

- 1. GFAC meeting – March 19, 2004
- 2. GSAC meeting – March 19, 2004

General Discussion- "The State of Graduate Schools"/Food

Adjourn