

Graduate Student Advisory Committee  
Meeting Minutes  
Connable Board Room, The Bernhard Center  
02.11.2005

**Representatives Present:** Todd Ide (chair), Sankar Shanmugam (vice chair), Julene Berger (Biological Sciences), Sylvie Coulibaly (Biological Sciences), Paul Chen (Economics), Jennifer Smith (Eng.), Marcel Browers (English), Kelly Daniels (English), Laura Smart (Geosciences), Jamie McCandless (History), Israil Ali (Public Affairs & Admin.), Dawn Rothe (Sociology), Nuria Ibanez (Spanish), Michael Eden (Management), Christina Stuiwe (CECP), Kinfu Adisu (Teaching, Learning & Leadership), Kara Kits (Mallinson Ins. for Sci. Ed.), Carla Siler (Computer Science), Felicia Rawls (Blind Rehabilitation), Toni Strutz (Social Work), John Risley (Evaluation Center), Doris Dirks (Teaching, Learning & Leadership)

**Guests:** Dr. William Wiener (Dean, Grad College), Dr. Kevin Vichcales (Graduate College), Melissa Bourke (WMU Legislative Affairs Office), Jan Miller (Social Work), Nofil Syed (Accountancy)

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

**2. Introductions**

**3. Minutes approved**

- a) Marcel moved, Paul Seconded. Motion passed.

**4. Report from Melissa Bourke (Legislative Affairs)**

- a) Governor Granholm has released the Executive Order for the fiscal year 2005 – 06
- b) E.O. includes \$30M cut to base funding for higher education; which means \$1.9M cut for WMU
- c) \$100M for the deferred maintenance projects for the universities through state bonds
- d) Given this situation, two hurdles for WMU; First one is to come over the budget crisis and the second one is \$30M less operating budget
- e) Budget for 2006 will start at a much lower level from now
- f) Tuition increase should not go beyond 5% or \$307, whichever is higher
- g) The legislature will vote on the E.O. and it can be either in favor or not.

**5. Report from Dr. Wiener**

- a) According to NPR news, Michigan has the highest unemployment rate
- b) Budget cut from the state could be from 5-10%; sometimes it may be 2%
- c) Both he and Dr. Vichcales have met with the Provost regarding the possible tuition fees and other related issues
- d) Question has been raised in the faculty senate about the increase in minimum graduate credit hours from 6 to 9
- e) Both he and Dr. Vichcales proposed that the current Graduate Assistants should not get a cut
- f) On Thursday 17<sup>th</sup> February, Dr. Wiener is proposing that the current graduate students funding should be intact
- g) Also proposing not increasing the minimum graduate credit hours from 6 to 9; it most unlikely be implemented this coming fall
- h) If the minimum credit hours is increased then the funding level should also be increased
- i) With this situation; funding won't be available to the new incoming graduate students
- j) The graduate college issue will expect to be resolved within next week and the committee will recommend GSC on March 1<sup>st</sup> week

- k) Marcel, who is on the committee, mentioned that the committee haven't really decided on anything or come to any kind of conclusion
- a) While replying to Kelly Daniels question regarding incase of elimination of graduate positions whether qualified students or personal available in their place, Dr. Wiener mentioned that there won't be a lot of people in the community who can replace our graduate assistants.

**6. Report from the Chair –Todd**

- a) January's meeting was postponed by the President because of emergency staff meetings.
- b) We still need a few people on a couple of committees, so if you haven't volunteered as of yet please do so.

**7. GSAC Sub-Committees and University Councils**

- a) Web Committee – Sankar
  - Doris has mentioned that the GSAC website shows the outdated department representatives list. Sankar assured that he will make it appear current and accurate.
- b) Public Relations – (No report)
- c) General Education subcommittee – Need a representative (No report)
- d) Legislative Affairs Committee – (No report)
- e) Graduate Research Symposium – Toni
  - It' going well. Toni is looking for reviewers. Information was prepared and tested to be posted on the GSAC's website. So far only a few people have submitted their work
- f) University Councils
  - i) Research Policies Council –
    - Joint Committee on Research Ethics has completed its work and will be presenting their recommendations to the RPC and GSC
  - ii) Technology and Operations Council – No report
  - iii) Graduate Studies Council – Todd/Marcel
    - Talked about the vision of the graduate studies. Also talked with the Provost and Dr. Bailey
  - iv) Campus Planning and Finance Council – Sankar
    - Primarily two things were discussed in the meeting. First one is about the state of classroom and the second one is regarding the security issues.
    - Talked about the maintenance/cleaning of the class room. A lot of professors talked about the littering inside the classroom and building and how to solve it
    - As a second part of the meeting, the committee discussed about the security of the equipment inside the classrooms. And most the members doesn't seem to have any problems or concerns with that issue
  - v) International Education Council – Paul
    - Report from the Associate Vice President R. Davis: he mentioned that the university received inquiries and suggestions on how it could provide assistance. He also commented on the possibilities of Western could collaborate with its educational partners in the south Asia on assisting in reconstruction
    - In R. Davis's report regarding the international graduate student enrollment, he mentioned that the foreign nationals graduate student enrollment have declined significantly. The university is undergoing in emphasizing different enrollment strategies which includes, merit

based assistantships to attract and retain international graduate students

- vi) SIS Governance and Portal Governance Committee – Carla Siler
  - New registration begins through GoWMU portal; try to register this week. If you've problem registering then please be in patience and try not to call the register office, because they're still trying to figure it out
- vii) GSC/RPC Ethics Committee – Kurt Hayden
  - See Research Policy Council Report
- viii) GSC/RPC Graduate Retention Committee – Todd Ide
  - This committee has also completed its work and will be presenting its recommendations as well to the RPC and GSC.
- ix) GSC/RPC Efficacy and Efficiency of the Graduate College - Marcel
  - Already talked about it

g) GFAC – Sankar

- i) International Programs Council (IPC) requested \$2500 from GSAC for International Festival event, which is on March 20<sup>th</sup>. GFAC recommended GSAC give \$2500 to IPC; Marcel moved, Paul seconded. Motion passed
- ii) Masters of Social Work Graduate Student Organization requested \$1000 towards the hooding and awards ceremony of their artwork project. GFAC felt that the event is going to attract only limited number of students, also it's not open to public overall it doesn't meet the GFAC funding guidelines. So it recommends not funding MSWSO

h) MLK Committee – Doris

- The provost showed up for the function and the people overall seems to be impressed by the event, which may lead into getting funding in the future

i) CAB representative – No report

j) WSA representative – No report

**8. Old and Continuing Business (Todd, chair)**

- a. We need a person to serve on the Future Faculty/STEM Areas committee
- b. Professional Development Day is going to be held March 12, 2005 in the Bernhard Center. Please pass the word and attend. In addition if you would like to participate in the mock interview, please contact me.

**9. New Business**

- a) Dinner w/ the President – Todd has made contact and is waiting to hear. Doris made the suggestion that we invite her to a potluck dinner at a graduate student's home. She would be willing to host.
- b) Full Time Status – there is a proposal being made by the Provost to increase the number of credit hours for full time status from 6 to 9 credits. This could have a negative impact on International students in terms of remaining in status. In addition, all graduates could be impacted if tuition remission does not increase as well.
- c) Assistantship Cuts – they are proposing a variety of cuts in assistantships ranging from 15 to 10 %. If 15% cut happens, then a couple of hundred drop in the existing number of GA's.

- d) Grad Group Meetings – Todd has meet with several graduate student groups and has several more meetings scheduled to discuss the various changes that are being proposed and get feedback on these proposals.
- e) Unionization – In response to the proposals, there seems to be a strong desire to begin the process of investigating unionization of graduate assistants. There was discussion on this and GSAC's involvement. At the suggestion of members a separate organization will be established.

**10. General Announcements**

- a) Next GSAC, GFAC meeting – March 11<sup>th</sup> 2005, April 8<sup>th</sup> 2005

Recessed to Roadhouse to discuss the state of Graduate Schools at 4:55 p.m.