



**Graduate Student Advisory Committee
Meeting Agenda**

Friday, July 13, 2007, 3 PM.
MLK Room – Bernhard Center

Representatives Present: Rosana Alsaud (Chair), Alyssa Kalata (Vice-Chair), Kelly Daniels (Outgoing Vice-Chair), Jason Trowbridge (TAU), Jason Olsen (Creative Writing)

Guests Present: Dr. Lewis Pyenson (Dean of the Graduate College), Dr. Julie Scrivener (Graduate College), Kevin Dewan (Philosophy)

1. Call to order: 3:02
2. Introductions
3. *Approval of the Agenda 7/13/07: Kelly moves to approve, seconded by Jason O.
4. *Approval of Minutes from 6/8/07 (pgs. 2-3) : Kelly moves to approve, seconded by Jason O.
5. Report from the Dr. Lewis Pyenson, Dean of the Graduate College: Dr. Pyenson discussed the strength of doctoral education at Western Michigan University. He mentioned that the University has seen a large increase in the number of applications for Fall semester and as such, has also seen an increase in enrollment for Fall semester. He noted that data about the magnitude of the increase and the areas of study in which the increase is most dramatic will be available in the coming weeks. Dr. Pyenson also reported that there appears to be a large increase in retention on an undergraduate level, suggesting that the increased response to student needs over the past year has been of benefit to the University. Dr. Pyenson then discussed the graduate to undergraduate student ratio at the University. Last year, the ratio at Western Michigan University was one graduate student for every 4.5 undergraduate students. In comparison, the University of Michigan has one graduate student for every 3.5 undergraduate students. Dr. Pyenson reported that the University seems to be moving toward a one to four ratio, a change that emphasizes that Western Michigan University is a place where one can obtain a quality education. Looking toward next year, Dr. Pyenson mentioned that the University will have a speaker series involving high profile individuals from across campus. He also mentioned that he has called a meeting to reactivate Sigma Xi, which could open up the possibility of being able to bring a number of speakers across the Natural Sciences to campus, for the cost of travel expenses alone.
6. Report from the Chair
 - a. Welcome GSAC Vice Chair, Alyssa Kalata.
 - b. Good-bye GSAC Vice Chair, Kelly Daniels. GSAC wishes Kelly good luck!
 - c. Meeting with the Board of Trustees postponed: Rosana reported that the meeting had been scheduled for this morning. The purpose of the meeting was to vote on the tuition increase, however instead of a formal session, an informal session was held with President Dunn. Next week, there will be a formal session to vote on the tuition increase and the following week, there will be formal session to vote on the proposed budget.
 - d. Dinner with President Dunn, requested: The dinner with President Dunn is tentatively scheduled for October. All members of GSAC are invited to have dinner with the president and interact one-on-one. Jason O. emphasized the importance of the event occurring, since the last dinner with former President Haenicke was cancelled due to a poor RSVP rate. As such, GSAC should aim to have at least 15 people who are able to attend.
 - e. Meeting with WSA: WSA recently elected a new president (Chris Praedel) and vice president (Katie Rollert). Rosana plans to meet with Chris prior to each Board of Trustees meeting to coordinate speeches.
 - f. Teaching Assistants Union (TAU) – Jason Trowbridge: Jason T. plans on meeting with Julie on Monday to talk about the orientation for incoming students.
7. GSAC Sub-Committees and University Councils
 - a. Web Committee – Alyssa Kalata: No updates.
 - b. Public Relations – Folashade Ogunleye: Not in attendance.
 - c. Graduate Research Symposium and Journal (Hilltop Review) – Roy Henry, Ali Fhadel, Jason Olsen, Kelly Daniels (on hold): Rosana and Jason O. have had difficulty getting in contact

with Roy. Kelly noted that the Hilltop Review seems to have gotten off to a shaky start and proposed that as the journal is beginning, it might be okay to skip a few issues rather than trying to publish multiple issues in a semester. He proposed a two semester timeline, in which work would be collected in the Spring to be published in the Fall, with one to two issues a year being published. Rosana agreed that a longer call for papers would be helpful. Jason O. stated that this arrangement would make it easier for people working on the review not to feel pressured and would thus allow for appropriate editing recommendations to be made.

d. GFAC – Kelly Daniels

i. Proposals

1. Graduate Student Association of Philosophers (GSAP) – Proposal for First Annual Western Michigan Philosophy conference. GFAC recommends \$2,500 for event and \$500 for operational expenses. Jason O. moves to approve, Jason T. seconds. GSAC unanimously supports funding allocation.

e. Ad Hoc Committee (5) – Roy Henry, Chair (on hold): Not in attendance.

f. University Councils

i. Research Policies Council (2) – Amy Noack & Jason Olsen – Jason attended the meeting and reports that there were no items of interest to graduate students.

ii. Graduate Studies Council (2) – Rosana Alsaud & Erich Sommerfeldt – Rosana reviewed a document regarding frequently asked questions about graduate employment distributed by Dr. Schrivener. The document details the increase in stipends and tuition remission. It also details changes to health insurance, including the new comprehensive plan, which involves a lower deductible, more coverage, a higher prescription drug benefit, and other improvements. Jason then mentioned issues pertaining to in-state and out-of-state tuition. He stated that he would like to discuss ways to facilitate in-state status adjustment with the graduate college. Dr. Pyenson noted that this was a good idea, however state legislators are reluctant to spend tax dollars to support students from other states. Dr. Pyenson says that legislators need to be educated about this matter, since residents of Michigan need to understand why it is in their benefit to have talented out-of-state graduate students teaching undergraduate courses. He stated that it would be excellent if TAU and GSAC could develop a constructive way to make this point to state legislators, and stated that the Graduate College and faculty would likely support this opinion. Julie proposed that Jason T. do research on how other universities handle this matter and possible reciprocal agreements that may exist between states. Rosana then initiated a brief discussion of membership in TAU. Jason T. stated that if one is not a T.A., one has the option of being an associate member to support the union. These individuals cannot vote on contract decisions, but can participate in the internal life of TAU.

iii. Campus Planning and Finance Council (1) – Jennifer Messana: Not in attendance.

iv. International Education Council (1) – Kazuhiro Iwamoto: Not in attendance.

g. MLK Committee – Deondra Ramsey (on hold until Summer/Fall): Not in attendance.

h. CAB representative – Not in attendance.

i. WSA representative – Chris Praedel: Not in attendance.

8. Unfinished Business

a. GSAC's Strategic Plan – Rosana Alsaud, Laiza Ashraf: Rosana reported that work on the Strategic Plan is ongoing. She stated that the outline and mission and vision of GSAC are completed and that about half of the actual content of the document is done. Rosana anticipates bringing the first draft to the next GSAC meeting.

b. Fall events

i. WSA Barbeque – 8/10: We are invited and have been asked to RSVP.

ii. CommUniverCity - 9/8/07

iii. Welcome Back Banquet & Golf Outing – 9/15

iv. An Evening with Diane Rehm – 9/25

v. Dinner with the President – Date not set yet (October)

vi. Professional Development Day – Date not set yet – This is the non-academic career Professional Development Day.

vii. Social Event – Date not set yet – This event will occur during Spring semester.

9. New Business
 - a. Fall Events
 - b. Rosana presented a list of people serving on Councils and Committees for GSAC.
 - c. Vote on GSAC budget – Rosana explained that GSAC expects a slightly higher revenue and briefly explained the budget. Jason T. asked about transfers and Rosana explained that transfers are the rollover funds from the previous year. Rosana emphasized the desire to minimize rollover so that the students who paid the money that makes up the GSAC fund benefit from its use. Kelly moved to approve the budget, seconded by Jason O. The GSAC budget for the 2007/2008 school year is approved.
10. General Announcements & Briefs
 - a. Announcements for the Good of the Order
 - b. Next GFAC and GSAC meetings: July 13, August 10 – Rosana expects more people will be able to attend the meeting in August and also expects to have heard back from departments about new GSAC representatives at that point.
11. General Discussion “The State of Graduate Schools”
12. Adjourn: 4:05