



Graduate Student Advisory Committee Meeting Agenda

July 11, 2008, 3p.m.

Connable Room (Room #201 - Bernhard Center)

Representatives Present: Brandi Pritchett (Chairperson), Alyssa Kalata (Vice-Chairperson), David Shoup (History), Mohammad Al-Amar (Physics), Joe Johnson (Counselor Education & Counseling Psychology), Stephany Coffman-Wolph (Computer Science), Dr. Lewis Pyenson (The Graduate College), Dr. Julie Scrivener (The Graduate College), Melissa Green (Division of Student Affairs), Chris Sligh (Division of Student Affairs), Danielle Harik (Western Student Association), Jordan Hochstetter (Campus Activities Board)

Guests Present: Cheyla Milo (Graduate Students of Color)

1. Call to order: 3:00
2. Introductions
3. *Approval of the Agenda 07/11/08: David moves to approve, seconded by Danielle.
4. *Approval of Minutes from 06/13/08 (pgs. 2-4): David moves to approve, seconded by Stephany.
5. Report from the Dr. Lewis Pyenson, Dean of the Graduate College: Dr. Pyenson encouraged everyone to check the Graduate College website for information regarding award deadlines and upcoming events, as some award deadlines are rapidly approaching. Dr. Scrivener noted that the updated Graduate Student Research and Travel grant applications have been posted on the website and that the first deadline for these grants is September 15th. She noted that a few minor changes have been made to the requirements.
6. Report from the Chair: Brandi reported that she, Alyssa, Danielle (the President of WSA), and Andrew (the Vice-President of WSA) all met today to discuss ways in which the GSAC and WSA can collaborate during the upcoming school year. She noted that some possible points of collaboration include future Forums with President Dunn, next year's WMU Day at the Capital, an event involving a prominent speaker, next year's Polar Plunge, and fundraising to provide financial support for the renovation of Sangren Hall.
 - a. Print Policy United: Brandi explained she and Alyssa have drafted a letter for relevant parties to sign, expressing their support of an increase in the number of pages graduate students are allowed to print and expressing their support of a unified printing policy across campus. Brandi stated that she will be bringing this letter to her next meeting with President Dunn. Danielle suggested that if the printing issue isn't resolved in the next few months, that the GSAC should bring a resolution regarding the matter to WSA.
 - b. Western Edge – Graduate Student Edition ☺: Brandi reported that discussions regarding a graduate student version of the Western Edge are ongoing, but may focus on incentives earned for meeting departmental milestones. She provided Dr. Hearit with a packet of information to stimulate future discussion and ideas regarding how a graduate student Western Edge program could be implemented. Brandi encouraged members of the GSAC to provide her with additional suggestions.
 - c. Meeting w/ President Dunn: Brandi stated that the primary topics of discussion during her meeting with President Dunn included the printing policy, Sangren Hall, and WMU Day at the Capitol. President Dunn also suggested that Brandi establish a relationship with the new Provost, Tim Green, so Brandi will be meeting with him next month.
 - d. Dinner with the President: Brandi reported that the Dinner with the President will occur on October 26th, 2008. She stated that this event will provide GSAC members with an opportunity to ask questions and have informal discussion with President Dunn in a more personal setting.
7. GFAC – *Alyssa Kalata (2 proposals)*:
 - a. Graduate Student Association of Philosophers: Requested \$500 for operational expenses and \$2,500 for the Second Annual WMU Graduate Philosophy Conference. Alyssa stated that the GFAC recommends that \$500 for operational expenses and \$2,500 for event expenses be approved. Motion to approve passed.
 - b. Graduate Students of Color: Requested \$433 for operational expenses for postage to request support from alumni. Alyssa stated that the GFAC recommends that \$433 for operational expenses be approved. Motion to approve passed.
8. GSAC Treasurer – Alyssa Kalata: Alyssa reported that she balanced the budget for GSAC for the 2007 – 2008 fiscal year and that a new fiscal year has begun as of this month.

9. GSAC Sub-Committees and University Councils:

- i. Web Committee – *Alyssa Kalata*: No update.
- ii. Public Relations Committee – *Needs 3 volunteers* (pg. 4): Brandi encouraged members of the GSAC to consider participating on the PRC, which has been inactive in recent history. She stated that people involved on the PRC would be responsible for planning up to two GSAC events each year, promoting GSAC events on campus, and contacting departments that do not have GSAC representation to find students in these departments who would be willing to serve on the GSAC.
- b. Graduate Research Symposium and Journal Committee – *Vacant*: Brandi stated that committee is currently vacant. Any individuals who are interested in serving on this committee should contact Brandi for further information.
- c. Graduate Student Research and Travel Awards Selection Committee – *Kamleshkumar Suthar*: Not present.
- d. University Councils
 - i. Research Policies Council (2) – *Alyssa Kalata, Greg Laing*: No report.
 - ii. Graduate Studies Council (2) – *Brandi Pritchett, Alyssa Kalata*: Brandi reported that there was continued discussion regarding accelerated degree programs. A motion was put forth and approved by the GSC in support of undergraduate students being allowed to take 6000 level classes and have these classes count toward undergraduate credit. Brandi stated that this motion must now pass through the Undergraduate Studies Council and if it passes through this Council, it will then need to be approved by the Faculty Senate before it can become active.
 - iii. Campus Planning and Finance Council (1) – **THANKS Katie Smith**: Brandi thanked Katie Smith for volunteering to sit on the Campus Planning and Finance Council.
 - iv. International Education Council (1) – *Kazuhiro Iwamoto*: No report.
- e. MLK Committee: No report.
- f. WSA representative – *Danielle Harik, President*: Danielle reported that WSA will be having its retreat on August 1st and August 2nd. She also stated that she had met with Brandi, Alyssa, and Andrew to plan for the upcoming year. Danielle also noted that she is on the United Way Campaigning Committee for WMU and stated that she would like the involvement of graduate students on this Committee. She asked interested individuals to contact her for further information and noted that the campaign will occur between October 1st and October 31st.
- g. CAB representative – *David VanDeusen, President*: Chris reported on behalf of David. He stated that the WMU football team will be playing the University of Illinois on Ford Field in Detroit on November 8th. He stated that President Dunn would like to make this a university event and utilize it as an opportunity to showcase WMU in the Detroit area. He reported that discussions are currently underway working toward providing students with a cheap way to get transportation to the game, access to a nonalcoholic tailgate prior to the game, and tickets to the game itself.
- h. Teaching Assistants Union (TAU): Not present.

10. Unfinished Business

- a. CommUniverCity: Brandi reported that the number of tickets purchased by for this event by the GSAC was increased by 100 this year, because of consistent interest in participating in this event from year to year. Brandi encouraged GSAC members to help stuff envelopes once the tickets are obtained. She stated that the GSAC will provide a free meal to those individuals who help stuff envelopes with tickets and information regarding the game.
- b. Fall/Winter Events: Brandi stated that she expects that the PRC will help plan the Fall and Winter social events.
- c. Professional Dev. GSAC: Brandi reported that she is looking in to a venue for a GSAC retreat, with the Seasons through the Fetzer Center as a possibility. She stated that the GSAC retreat will focus on team building, network skill building, and professional development.
- d. GSAC & Grad College Speaker Series: Dr. Pyenson reported that a number of speakers have been identified for this series, with the goal of promoting the humanities and the natural sciences and enriching the graduate school experience.
- e. Branch Campus Outreach: Brandi stated that this is an ongoing project that will increase in intensity during the Fall semester. She reported that she has been able to identify liaisons at a number of the branch campuses, which has been an important start to further work on this project.

f. U.S.S.A GET OUT THE VOTE campaign: Brandi reported that she is trying to find a way for the graduate student community to get involved in this initiative without it becoming too time consuming. She stated that while she doesn't foresee the GSAC having specific events oriented toward increasing graduate student voter registration, she will support the effort and encourage people to get out and get involved. Chris suggested that the GSAC include this initiative as part of existing GSAC events, which Brandi agreed was a good suggestion.

11. New Business

- a. * New GFAC Guidelines: Alyssa put forth a motion to approve the new GFAC Guidelines as mentioned. The motion carried.
- b. Departmental Orientation – “Talking Points” (pg. 5-6): Brandi stated that she anticipates that we will spend a great deal of the August meeting discussing these “talking points”, which are intended to be used as part of departmental orientations, as well as during discussions with colleagues and new students about the GSAC. She asked GSAC members to review these “talking points” prior to the August meeting and bring any feedback that they may have regarding this document to the August meeting for further discussion.
- c. New Faculty Orientation: Brandi stated that in addition to multiple departmental orientations and the general Graduate Student Orientation, the GSAC has also been offered an opportunity to speak on a student panel at the New Faculty Orientation. Brandi reported that this panel will include both undergraduate and graduate students. She stated that she would like to identify two to three students who are willing to participate on this panel discussion, which will occur on the morning of Monday, August 18th. Interested parties should contact Brandi for further information.

12. Student Concerns (open floor): Chris asked whether a general orientation for graduate students is occurring. Dr. Scrivener stated that the Graduate Student Orientation is occurring on August 28th.

13. General Announcements & Briefs

- a. Announcements for the Good of the Order: Brandi stated that the Taste of Kalamazoo Festival is occurring next week and that the 6th Annual Ethic Diversity Celebration is occurring on August 16th.
- b. Next GFAC and GSAC meetings: Aug. 8th, Sep. 12th, Oct. 10th

11. General Discussion “The State of Graduate Schools”

- a. Future Events

12. Adjourn: 4:13

*Items that require a vote from members.



GSAC PUBLIC RELATIONS COMMITTEE

Job Description

- Collaborate with fellow Public Relations committee members and the GSAC chairperson and vice chairperson to develop programming for fall and winter professional development events.
- To promote all programs and events established by the GSAC and/or the GFAC that enrich the academic, cultural, social, and professional experiences of the graduate student community, and to raise awareness of the GSAC among the University community.
- Active recruitment of GSAC membership and assistance with departmental orientations.
- Provide monthly updates to the larger GSAC body.

GSAC “Talking Points” for Departmental Orientations

1. Introduce the variety of functions of the GSAC:
 - a. Addressing broader University issues with the University administration (e.g. cost of tuition, parking problems, availability of classes). Let students know that if they notice an issue that fits this description, they can bring it up with their GSAC representative to be discussed at an upcoming meeting of the GSAC.
 - b. Putting on events that are relevant to the graduate student community. Let students know that if they have suggestions for events (e.g. social, professional, speakers) that they should contact a GSAC representative with their ideas.
 - c. Providing funds to Registered Student Organizations (RSOs). Encourage students in the department to establish an RSO if they don't have one and if they do, encourage them to apply to GFAC for operational (up to \$500 a year) and/or event (up to \$2,500 a year) expenses. Notify students they can contact the Vice-Chairperson of GSAC for help on either/both of these items. Examples of past proposals that have been funded include a conference put on graduate students in the Philosophy department, a lecture series put on by graduate students in the Music department, and a keynote speech and meeting with a notable historian put on by graduate students in the History department.
 - d. Advocating for graduate student needs on a state and national level. Let students know that if they hear of legislation that may positively or negatively impact graduate students, to bring this to the attention of the GSAC.
 - e. Connecting graduate students to resources at the University. Let students know that they can contact us with questions about who to talk to at the University if they are encountering a problem. We can likely connect them to whomever or whatever they are trying to find.
 - f. Connecting graduate students with one another. Individuals who are involved in the GSAC, either as representatives or simply through attendance at GSAC events, have the opportunity to meet graduate students from a wide variety of departments at WMU.
2. Talk about who the GSAC consists of:
 - a. The GSAC has a Chairperson (Brandi L. Pritchett) and Vice-Chairperson (Alyssa H. Kalata) who are appointed to their positions.
 - b. We also try to have at least one representative from each department. Departments are allowed to have up to five representatives. Individuals interested in becoming a representative can contact the GSAC Chairperson or Vice-Chairperson or simply show up at the next meeting of the GSAC.
3. Examples of tentative events likely to be put on by the GSAC for the 2008 – 2009 school year: CommUniverCity, three social events (one in the Fall and two in the Spring), two Professional Development Days (one in the Fall and one in the Spring), a forum with the graduate student body, and Research and Creative Activities Day. Please let students know that we would love their input on ideas for events.
4. Let students know how they can contact the GSAC:
 - a. By e-mail: gsac@wmich.edu

- b. Through our website: <http://www.wmich.edu/gsac>
 - c. By phone: 387-8207
 - d. At our office: 260 W. Walwood Hall
5. Also, *STRONGLY* encourage students to familiarize themselves with the Graduate College website: <http://www.wmich.edu/grad>
- a. Things they can find on this website include information about assistantship opportunities and other sources of funding (e.g. Graduate College Research and Travel Fund), workshops and lectures, applications for graduation, thesis and dissertation planning, flowcharts, and documents, and conflict resolution and mentoring.