

MINUTES
GSAC MEETING November 1, 2002
Walwood Commons, Walwood Hall

Representatives Present: Marcel Brouwers (Chair), Rodger Zanny (Computer Science), James Cawthorne (Paper Science), Peter Voice (Geosciences), Jennifer Smith (English), Ralucca Gera (Math), Greg Waltz (Biology), Coleen Harrington Barry (CECP), Craig Tollini (Sociology), Carol Harris (MOT), Heidi Solberg Viar (History), Scott Viar (PEG), Jessica Baby, Doris Dirks (Keystone), Abubakar Alhassan (Communications), Erik Knedgen (Biological Sciences), Sabbir Hossain (Physics), Kirsten Dooley (Medieval)

Guests: Dr. William Wiener (Graduate College, Dean), Paula Boodt (Grad College, GSAC Advisor)

Report from Dr. Wiener:

Expectations for good practice: known as the whistle blower clause, graduate students will be able:

- To register a complaint without any intimidation or retaliation against them, i.e. a graduate student's academic standing and/or graduate assistantship will not be compromised.
- If there is a negative action taken against a graduate student, then there will be consequences for those who take part in those actions.

DA/GA compensation:

WMU should provide the following:

- Full tuition support
- Create a differential support system for graduate students; increasing the pay scale for some departments while maintaining the current level of pay for others.
- Pay should not differentiate between TA and RA.
- Doctoral students should be funded through doctoral fellowships from the graduate school.

The Graduate Studies Committee will be voting on this at their next meeting. The Research council approved the proposed DA/GA compensation proposal, however debate still continues on with the members of GSAC on the fairness of such a proposal.

Transfer Credit:

The Graduate Studies Committee will be presenting on this issue at the next Faculty Senate meeting.

Academic Assessment:

Dr. Linda Delene, Vice Provost for Academic Planning and Assessment, will be looking at each department to find their strengths and weaknesses. Once this process is complete resources will be reallocated to those departments who need them. Another possibility that will be looked at is whether or not certain programs should be discontinued due to their performance and need by students.

To begin her endeavor, Dr. Delene will begin by assessing ten graduate programs.

Budget Cuts:

Dr. Wiener noted that Summer I & II will be the most vulnerable times for graduate students. Availability of classes and graduate assistantships will present a challenge for most graduate students.

Chair's Report:

Meeting with the President:

Marcel discussed:

- The need for a crosswalk at the intersection of Oakland Dr. and Oliver
- Budget Cuts – WMU is failing as a university because we are not teaching the classes needed.
- The loss of TA's and DA's due to budget constraints

PSAC meeting:

WSA presented a Referendum to raise the Student Activities Fee (SAF). They want to use this money to help build a student union, fund positions in SA&LP, and provide money for a yearbook. The SAF could be raised as much as \$100.00 from the \$12.00 a year students pay now.

GSAC members recommended that the SAF be raised gradually. It was also suggested that the WSA needed to develop a detailed budget to show where this money would be going.

A discussion by GSAC members was also held concerning the proposed yearbook. WSA plans to have this proposal done by August, which would entail a \$35.00 cost for each yearbook, and free pictures for all those who are graduating.

GSAC members did not support the idea of a yearbook and especially had reservations about increasing the SAF fund for this project.

A technology discussion also took place during the PSAC meeting regarding the concern about internet clutter from students downloading music and movies. The current system is continually running at 100% and cannot handle the load students are giving it. It was suggested by VP of Technology, Viji Murali, that the downloading services be limited between the hours of 12 – 6 am.

The question presented to GSAC members was whether this would upset research? The general response to this was “No.”

Campus Visits:

Marcel, Dr. Wiener and Dr. Allen have traveled to Grand Rapids and Battle Creek to meet with students at the regional centers. They found that students have generally had a very positive experience as graduate students, although they did say that they have had problems with the WMU Bookstore. It is too difficult to get what they need from off campus.

Grad Open House – October 29, 2002:

A great success. Thanks to all the GSAC members who helped and participated.

NAGPS – November 6-10, 2002:

The representatives (Raluca, Rodger, Abu, Doris, Marcel and Jessica) will report on the state of graduate and professional programs throughout the nation at the next meeting.

GSAC, Dr. Wiener and Dr. Floyd will be receiving awards at the conference for being supportive friends of NAGPS.

Department Meetings:

Marcel encouraged graduate students in each department to attend their faculty meetings. Graduate students need to be a part of the decision making process. Their lives are most effected by departmental policy.

GSAC Sub-Committees and University Councils:

GFAC:

Money was allocated to the following organizations:

American Humanic Association

\$700.00 was allocated to fund graduate students from the organization who are attending a national conference in Las Vegas.

Upon returning from the conference the organization is required to educate the graduate community about the knowledge they have acquired.

Heidi made a motion to table the proposal until GFAC can ascertain what the organization will be doing to educate the graduate community.

National Communique Association

GSAC will fund \$300.00 per student, up to six graduate students, with a possible total of \$1800.00. The organization will present on the conference to the graduate community when they return from the conference

Rodger made the motion to accept this proposal, Ralucca seconded.

A vote was called to fund the conference trip; the funding passed with one objection.

The vote inspired further discussion. GSAC should send out a letter stating that up to \$500.00 would be allocated to RSO's for organizational fees and up to \$1500.00 allocated to organizations for speakers.

Discussion to be continued at the next meeting.

MLK Committee

GSAC will sponsor the speaker, Awalee Makiba, the Friday of MLK week. GSAC must be named on all advertisements as a sponsor for the speaker.

A vote was called to fund the speaker; the funding passed with one abstention.

African Student Association

Due to the unclear proposal the organization was advised to present their proposal again at the next GFAC meeting.

Web Committee

Need more content!

Departments should email their events to GSAC

Listserv

Make sure to put graduate speakers, events, presentations, etc... on the student events calendar, www.salp.wmich.edu/events.

Once GSAC has established a list-serv, we can begin to send out information to all graduate students

Public Relations

Report from Nancy Greer-Williams:

December 13, 2002 – Murder Mystery Night at Miller Auditorium

Free for all graduate students

5:30-8:30 p.m.

Get-It-Together

January 27-January 30, 2003

Presentations will be given by the Graduate School and Career Services

Assessment Committee

Headed by Vice-Provost Linda Delene

Departments are concerned about the assessment. They are afraid that it might hurt them in the end.

University Councils

Research Policies Council

Rodger reported that the HSIRB committee is working on improving their protocol. He also noted that 25 doctoral students will be graduating in December, this number is up from 15.

Technology and Operations Council

No report

Campus Planning and Finance Committee

Jessica reported that the finance team felt that the state budget cuts is really going to effect Western's budget in a negative manner.

Carolyn Noack from the Physical Plant is looking to form a subcommittee form the CPFC of students, faculty and staff to create a University-wide environmental policy.

Any students interested, please contact Jessica.

Reappointment of a joint subcommittee for Classroom Development, volunteers for this committee are needed, please see Jessica.

Graduate Studies Council

There will be a recommendation for a sixth council of faculty senate to be concerned with international education.

On November 2, 2002, departments will be turning in funding requests for graduate assistantships. Time will tell how much money departments will receive.

The Council will also be reporting to the Faculty Senate on the transfer of credit issue.

Old and Continuing Business:

GSAC speaker, David Brin – www.davidbrin.com

New Business:

Holiday dinner scheduled to be on December 6, 2002. All members and significant others are invited.

Place: TBA

General Announcements:

GFAC meeting to be held on December 3, 2002

Next GSAC meeting will be December 6, 2002