

**Graduate Student Advisory Committee**  
Meeting Minutes  
Connable Board Room, The Bernhard Center  
11-14-03

**Representatives Present:** Marcel Brouwers (chair), Jay Cawthorne (PPSE), Jessica Baby (CECP), Craig Tollini (Sociology), Paul Chen (Econ), Peter Voice (Geosciences), Doris Dirks (TLL), Jonathan Chesman (Music), Rodger Zanny (CS), Sankar Shanmugam (Construction E), Nalaka Kodituwakku (Physics), Philip Ngali (Blindness & Low Vision), Joscha Graff (Geography), Angela Prater (Com), Antonio Zaldivar (History), Heidi Campbell (CECP), Coleen Harrington Barry (CECP)

**Guests:** Paula Boodt (Grad College), Janice Quakenbush (Student Affairs)

**The meeting was called to order at 3:08 p.m.**

**Introductions**

**Approval of the minutes from October 10, 2003 – unanimous**

**Report from the guests from Legislative Affairs:**

Greg Rosine and Melissa Burk from Legislative Affairs attended the meeting to educate GSAC representatives about the ensuing state budget cut debate in Lansing. Rosine and Burk reported that:

- a. The state is 920 million dollars in debt
- b. Higher education represents 20% of the current budget
- c. Last year there was a 10% cut to education on the whole (secondary and postsecondary)
- d. WMU is ranked 8<sup>th</sup> in the state of state appropriations per student, but has the second largest undergraduate population in the Michigan
- e. Each year \$30,000 is allocated to state prisoners while support to students in higher education is only \$4,500 a year.
- f. Most cuts last year at WMU were taken in administrative positions and services, and academic programs and positions were protected. This year protecting academics no longer means no cuts.
- g. As of now, the state is only providing 40% of the institution's budget

Rosine and Burk suggest that students need to raise their voices in Lansing. Students inform legislators about what it means to have funding cut to WMU and how increasing tuition costs and decreasing services have affected their educational experience. Students need to show legislators that education is an investment and due to increased costs of higher education, higher learning is going from a public good to a private good.

Rosine and Burk provided legislator names to contact: Mike Gashka, Shirley Johnson, Jennifer Granholm, Jack Hoogendyck, Laurence Wenke, Sandy Lipsi, and Tome George

Jessica offered to send representatives a list of all pertinent legislators and their contact information. She also offered to try to set up meetings with key legislators on campus, although this may be difficult with the Thanksgiving holiday approaching.

**Report from the Dean:**

Dr. Wiener reported on the following:

1. McNair Funding Grant
  - a. The McNair program is for minority students transitioning in to graduate school. The program provides educational programs and financial scholarships for students.

- b. Due to postal fraud, the grant writer for WMU's McNair program and for 20 other universities in the U.S. was imprisoned. Countless schools and WMU lost grant funding for many of their programs, including the McNair program
  - c. All hope is not lost though
    - i. Dr. Martha Warfield, Associate Vice President and Director of Multicultural Affairs, reported that the McNair program is looking for other sources of funding
    - ii. One way to attain this funding is through the launching of a peer review journal. Plans to publish the journal are still being discussed.
2. Graduate Studies Council (GSC)
- a. PTG status
    - i. Dr. Wiener asked for the opinion of GSAC representatives on the quality of PTG students in their respective programs. This question was asked in response to the GSC study on PTG status.
    - ii. Representatives reported that PTG students add to the quality and dynamics of the class, however there was concern that these students receive no advising.
    - iii. Representatives also commented that instead of PTG status students could audit classes. Other suggestions included: placing a time limit on how long a student can take classes, and making stipulations between students from the local community who would just like to take a course from time to time and a potential new masters student.
    - iv. Dr. Wiener noted that the problem with creating stipulations and time limits is that ISIS cannot track students in this manner.
    - v. Dr. Wiener ended the discussion by asking the representatives to consider whether or not PTG status is a big enough problem to even rectify?
  - b. Honor Code
    - i. The GSC has been charged along with the Undergraduate Studies Council to develop a honor code for students
    - ii. This code would hold every student accountable for the actions of other students in his or her class.
    - iii. Representatives noted that if there is to be such a code, a code should also be developed for faculty.

**Report from the Chair:**

Marcel reported the following:

- 1. Homecoming
  - a. It went very well, although only five representatives showed up.
  - b. Kurt's t-shirt cannon was a hit. Kids were chasing the GSAC float down the street.
- 2. President's Advisory Committee
  - a. The president gave a severe reprimand against the Greek Community for noise and parties
    - i. There were calls from parents and neighbors complaining about members urinating on their property.
- 3. Middle Passage exhibit
  - a. Marcel noted that while the exhibit was here on campus there were many snafus.
  - b. Jessica added that these snafus caused a lot of problems.
  - c. The Provost's and the President's Offices became involved with the exhibit as well due to the snafus.
  - d. GSAC will write a letter to the museum curators in support of the exhibit and its educational prowess.
  - e. Jessica and Marcel will help take down the exhibit tomorrow afternoon
- 4. NAGPS trip
  - a. GSAC won graduate and professional organization of the year
  - b. Doris won the NAGPS lifetime achievement award

- c. Kurt, Jessica and Nancy along with Benita Barnes from Michigan State lobbied Michigan federal legislators. In all, the group met with six Representatives and Michigan's two Senators.
      - i. All graduate and professional students at the NAGPS conference lobbied their legislators for HR 3412, a tax exemption bill for graduate student stipends, fellowships and grants.
    - d. At the Business Meeting, Nancy Greer-Williams won Diversity Chair and Benita Barnes won the Presidency
- 5. Faculty Senate
  - a. The topic was the budget
    - i. It was reported that a 1% cut from the state would be equivalent to 1.1 million dollars of WMU's current budget.
    - ii. Everything but utilities, toxic waste, and building debt payments is up for cuts.
    - iii. Classes, however, will not be cut for the Spring semester since they are already published.
    - iv. Cuts will impact the mission of the university
- 6. WSA SAF Task Force
  - a. Marcel noted that due to a preexisting Board of Trustees document, the WSA has no authority to investigate how GSAC allocates SAF funds.
  - b. What the document does present is a structure that allows organizations to evaluate how the SAF is distributed to the four major organizations and one department that receive SAF from the University (GSAC, WSA, WSA Allocations Committee, and CAB as well as Student Activities and Leadership Programs).
  - c. Suzie Nagel, Assistant Dean of Students and Interim Director of Student Activities will spearhead the SAF meeting.
- 7. GSAC Resolution
  - a. Went to the Board of Directors
  - b. It is endemic of a larger attitude, Marcel noted
- 8. Unionization Sub-committee
  - a. The committee will meet next Tuesday at 10:00 a.m.
  - b. Last meeting the committee began to research
    - i. 4-5 members picked a school and will report on their union at the next meeting
  - c. The committee also considered whether with 982 graduate assistants on campus, whether assistant numbers are big enough to unionize.
  - d. Doris suggested looking at the Coalition of Graduate Employee Unions' website, [cgeu.com](http://cgeu.com)
- 9. GSAC gift to WMU
  - a. Trees are on their way from Ohio, a whole was dug for the bench though.
- 10. Search Committee for GSAC Chairperson
  - a. Marcel will not be returning next year.
  - b. The position is open to all graduate students
  - c. Students will submit an application and an interview will follow
  - d. After the interviews the committee will bring a recommendation to GSAC for a vote.
  - e. Marcel noted that the committee will be looking at restructuring the process a bit.

**GSAC Sub-Committees and University Councils:**

- 1. Web-Committee – Marcel
  - a. No report
- 2. Public Relations – Jessica
  - a. Jessica noted that she will need help planning Professional Development with Paula and Graduate and Professional Student Appreciation week activities for next semester.
  - b. Kurt, Angela, Heidi offered to participate on the Public Relations Committee

3. University Assessment (absent)
  - a. General Education Sub-Committee – Craig T.
    - i. The committee is looking at how effective general education courses are for students.
4. Legislative – Jessica
  - a. Reported earlier in the meeting
  - b. Asked for help with committee work – Kurt and Paul volunteered
5. University Councils
  - a. Research Policies Council – Rodger and Jay
    - i. Internet 2 conference
    - ii. Graduate appointments are due for next year on November 17<sup>th</sup>.
    - iii. Research ethics fellows
      - Fellows would be funded through a grant
      - Typically these individuals are seminal figures in their profession and require large salaries
      - These fellows would help WMU become a stronger research institution
    - iv. Electronic Theses and Dissertations
      - going along well
      - 15 departments are actively participating
      - WMU may make it mandatory someday
    - v. WMU as a Carnegie Research Institution
      - WMU is at the bottom of this category
      - Working on developing a five year plan to move up into the middle of this ranking
      - To do this there needs to be 10% more grants each year
    - vi. Center of Excellence
      - Provost will designate areas of excellence
      - Criteria for this
        2. More money will be given to areas that bring in grants and other federal monies
        - Indirect cost recovery for WMU through grants
        3. A percentage of grant money goes back to university.
  - b. Technology and Operations – Peter
    - i. The meeting focused on technology in the classroom. Classrooms on campus have been classified as levels 0, 1, 2, and 3.
    - ii. Level 0—the basic classroom, equipped with an overhead projector and a chalkboard (or dry erase board). [FAR MAJORITY OF CLASSROOMS ON CAMPUS]. There are a few classrooms with even less equipment—mostly studios in the art department’s Sangren facilities.
    - iii. Level 1 and 2—classroom equipped with overhead projector, LCD projector, VCR, CD/DVD player, Ethernet connection, and audio systems (major difference between the two levels—class size; level 1: 20-49 students, level 2:50-99 students).
    - iv. Level 3—similar to levels 1 and 2 but accommodate 100+ students. Main campus has roughly 15 lecture halls of this size with the appropriate technology.

Issues related to adding technology to the classroom:

1. **The technology itself is rather reasonably priced, BUT:**
2. **The security costs for protecting the equipment have skyrocketed.** And
3. **The costs of maintaining the equipment are expensive**—for example LCD projector bulbs cost several hundred dollars, whereas overhead projector bulbs are around fifty dollars.

Cases of theft have increased with increasing amount of technology on campus. The security system cannot keep up. The addition of the four newest buildings on campus (Haenicke,

Parkview campus, Health and Human Services Building [in the planning stages only right now], and the Seelye center) has doubled the security costs. Several departments have had their theft insurance revoked due to the sheer number of thefts of equipment under their purview. An additional quirk that is making life impossible for DPS is the presence of electronic card passes on the doors of the newer buildings (Haenicke and the Parkview campus)—if the doors are not shut properly they set off alarms, and DPS does not respond to the door alarms any more because of the frequency of false alarms. Video surveillance of high-risk areas is not an option—DPS has one person in charge of 9 video feeds who is also the operator for 387-5555. Every time security is ramped up in one part of campus, crime is displaced to some other part of campus.

The Office of Information Technology would like to add more technology and upgrade many of the level 0 classrooms. Unfortunately, even with the cheap cost of the technology, the university does not have enough funds to facilitate additional technology upgrades, due to security costs and maintenance on existing technology.

One solution that seems to deter theft: Close the door on the classroom when you leave it. The business college reduced the number of thefts that were occurring in Schneider Hall significantly by hiring a student, whose duties include closing any open doors in the building.

- c. Graduate Studies Council – Marcel, Jen, and Jay
    - i. Research and Travel Grants - \$65,000 total to distribute
    - ii. \$16, 000 for Fall and Spring and \$33,000 for Summer
    - iii. President Bailey may come to next meeting
  - d. Campus Planning – Greg
    - i. Went over budget
    - ii. Discussed hiring freeze
    - iii. Construction – Admissions Building for 2005 and redoing Howard/Stadium intersection
    - iv. Created a sub-committee concerning the permanent sculptures on campus.
  - e. International Education Council - Paul
    - i. Election of Chair and Vice-Chair
    - ii. Paul was elected as Secretary
    - iii. Brief discussion on history and goals of committee
    - iv. “Role Statement” – delegate or govern all issues concerning international students and faculty.
    - v. The Committee is awaiting charges from Faculty Senate.
6. GFAC – Rodger
- a. GSAC budgeted \$30,000 for the academic year to allocate to student organizations. Thus far, GSAC has allocated \$7,500 to student groups.
  - b. HGSO
    - i. Operational expenses: \$ 500.00
    - ii. Two Speakers: \$ 770.00  
Dr. Hilgarth and Dr. Burns \$ 2,040.00
    - iii. Paul motioned that GSAC allocate \$2,040.00 to HGSO, Jay seconded
    - iv. Motioned passed unanimously
  - c. Graduate Christian Development group (GCD)
    - i. Debate – Evidence for intelligent design: A morality system without God. The group will present both sides of the issue.  
\$600.00
    - ii. GFAC encourages the organization to fund raise on their own
    - iii. Paul motioned that GSAC allocate \$600.00 to the GCD, John seconded.
    - iv. Motion passed unanimously
  - d. Muslim Student Association

- i. Discussion: Window into the Islamic World  
A speaker will present on misconceptions of Islam and answer questions  
Islamic Art will presented as well as traditional foods.
    - ii. The Association has already asked for \$9,000 from CAB and WSA
    - iii. They are asking for \$2,000 from GSAC
    - iv. Jay motioned that GSAC allocate \$2,000.00 to the Muslim Student Association, Kurt seconded.
    - v. Motion passed unanimously
  - e. Graduate Student Music Therapists Association (GSMTA)
    - i. Two speakers: Dr. Michael Thaut and Professor Corene Hurt-Thaut  
The speakers are well known in this field and have written the basic textbooks for the discipline. –  
Total Cost:\$4,500.00  
Asking for \$1,173.00
    - ii. The speakers will give a lecture and work with students in the classroom
    - iii. Students from Michigan State and University of Michigan will also be attending the lecture and classroom activities.
    - iv. Paul motioned that GSAC allocate \$1,173.00 to the GSMTA, John seconded.
    - v. Motion passed unanimously
  - f. Sociology Graduate Student Association
    - i. Operational budget - \$158.15
    - ii. Paul motioned to fund \$160.00, Jay seconded
    - iii. Motion passed unanimously
- 7. MLK Committee – Doris and Angela
  - a. Sunday, January 11 6:00 p.m. in Miller Auditorium will be the keynote speaker for the Celebration Week, Eric Dyson
  - b. The question the Committee now has is will the University fund MLK week next year?
  - c. Right now the budget is \$25,000 for the whole week of activities.
- 8. Old Business
  - a. PFF/Interfolio
    - i. Still collecting registrations for the free year of Interfolio
    - ii. It was mentioned that the letter that went out to faculty was intimidating and too much work for faculty.
- 9. New Business
  - a. Holiday Dinner – December 5, 2003
    - i. McGinnis Landing
  - b. Professional Development Week
    - i. January 26-29, 2004
    - ii. Charged to the Publicity Committee
  - c. Graduate and Professional Student Appreciation Week – April 5-9
- 10. General Announcements
  - a. GFAC meeting – December 5
  - b. GSAC meeting – December 5
- 11. Open Discussion – “The State of Graduate Schools”/Food
- 12. Adjourn at 6:00 p.m.