

Graduate Program Review Appeals Committee Summary Note #1: June 12, 2006

Attending: Adrian “Ed” Edwards (Academic Deans), Leigh A. Ford (Graduate Studies Council), John Jellies, chair (Faculty Senate), Mary Lagerwey (Faculty Senate), William Liou (Research Policies Council), Richard O’Hearn (Academic Chairs, Directors), David Reinhold (Undergraduate Studies Council), Gwen Tarbox (Graduate Studies Council) **Absent:** Lee L. deLisle (College Curriculum Committees), Bruce Ferrin (College Curriculum Committees)

Jellies called the meeting to order at 8:37 A.M.

1. **Agenda** was approved as written.
2. **Introductions.**
3. Jellies handed out excerpt from **Robert C. Dickeson’s *Prioritizing Academic Programs and Services: Reallocating Resources to Achieve Strategic Balance*** (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1999), the deans’ first point of reference for the original graduate program review. WMU chose not to weight the criteria, and to combine criteria 7 (“Revenue and Other Resources Generated by the Program”) and 8 (“Costs and Other Expenses Associated with the Program”).
4. Jellies began discussion of **President’s Charge** by confirming that Drs. Bailey and Pisaneschi are committed to the appeals process. The committee has latitude to make any range of recommendations, including new reviews of programs already scrutinized. Jellies pointed out that managerial and administrative matters are the president’s responsibility, and suggested that the committee confine itself to academic considerations. Programs that have not appealed do not fall under the committee’s charge.

Ratings system. Concerns and clarifications were shared amongst committee members:

- Around 80 percent of departmental review teams’ ratings were 4 or 5.
- High-rated programs had false sense of security. Most were well into respective review processes when it became apparent that meaning of ratings was ambiguous.
- Review teams intended rating of 3 to indicate solid program and were caught off guard when these programs were also considered for elimination. Reasons given for targeting 3-rated programs had financial aspects, yet projected savings (\$2 million to \$3 million over four years) would seem to be minimal.
- Widespread disapproval of ways in which data were generated and used, and of perceived lack of strategic thinking behind graduate program review.

Financial issues. Committee held discussion of impact of cost/revenue issues:

- In light of decline in state funding, committee recognizes that review of WMU’s graduate programs was and is necessary.
- Committee does not have time or expertise to address budgetary details. The issue of whether a program should be retained or closed may be a management-based decision for the president, but the appeals process should help clarify that this is the case.
- Financial data was derived from Delaware Study, a way of assessing programs based on relative cost of enrollment, tuition, faculty budgets, etc. Committee has access to Delaware Study.
- When considered alone, neither cost nor generation of revenue is sufficient reason to close or retain a program. Similarly, programs that are costly or that generate no revenue may be retained because they reflect the faculty and students’, deans’, provost’s, or president’s vision, or because they have a national or international reputation and contribute to University identity.

Availability and flow of information:

- Committee has access to all GPR data. Contrary to rumor, none has been withheld (in the estimation of committee members who have had access to it).
- Deans' and teams' departmental information will be provided to committee on CD. Hard copies will be made available to individual committee members on request.
- It is conceivable that some data received by provost's office may contain errors.
- All information examined by the committee is to remain confidential.
- Committee will not consider new information put forward since original review.
- Programs are advised not to overwhelm committee with anecdotal evidence such as letters of support from alumni, etc.

Appeals:

- Most important factor in appeals process is the 10-page document.
- Appeals should concentrate on addressing the ABC criteria.
- President has indicated that programs are also expected to make a rhetorical argument and that committee is to provide a narrative as part of its advice to her.

Informational sessions:

- Program representatives will be given opportunity to attend informational session for purposes of clarification and openness, and to ensure that committee understands substance of appeal report.
- Sessions will need to adhere to strict schedule.
- Committee should specify exactly what form sessions will take.
- Committee will make clear that rules governing sessions are for consistency and to ensure that no one program is favored over another.
- Attendees should only be those actively involved with program under review (i.e., faculty members, chair, dean, etc.).
- Although sessions will be flexible and informal, attendees should concentrate on discussing information already in committee's possession.
- Attendees should avoid making comparisons between programs. Arguments should refer to data and be based upon the program's strengths.
- Sessions will be private.
- All questions about committee procedure will be directed to Jellies.

Role of Undergraduate Studies Council:

- Clearly, the graduate program review has implications for the undergraduate program review. Because of this link, input from a USC representative is desirable. As long as none of the members of the appeals committee has direct ties with any of the programs making an appeal, there is no conflict of interest. (Jellies, in response to Reinhold)

5. **Timeline:** July 5 is the committee's deadline for submitting its recommendations to the president. Dr. Bailey will inform each program of her final decision before she meets with the trustees on July 14.
6. **Next meeting** (Monday, June 19, 8:30 A.M. to 10:30 A.M., Bernhard Center Board Room): Committee will review individual appeals.

Jellies adjourned the meeting at 10:43 A.M.