President Report:
February – March 2021

Advancing the university’s mission of learner centered, research driven, and globally engaged through programming and advocacy

There have been continued representation of graduate students in discussions across the university community. Some of our efforts includes representation on committees and councils:

Faculty senate councils: Met with the leadership of the faculty senate to advance greater collaboration between faculty and students. There was a call for greater mentoring of graduate students across departments as this also helps to foster graduate student’s development. There has also been a discussion around exercising grace and compassion as a template for the university in general and that as a family we be mindful of how we talk/communicate with each other.

Graduate studies council: There has been revision to graduate programs. Moving forward there will be a prior learning/experience that is taken into account when students apply for our programs here at WMU. This not only make us competitive but will add value to the experience of students entering WMU which will positively impact enrollment.

Research Policy Council: Through their platform, we have seen an increase in the number of submissions for the Hilltop Journal. We thank Editor Jessica for making this connection to advance our journal especially in these times.

International student activities: GSA is represented in the plans for this year’s festival. We have been a part of the planning and there is a round table discussion that will be hosted ASAP.
Persons interested in the round table of how important international student community is to our campus can reach out to us to be included.

Racial Justice Advisory Council: This involves WMU members from across the campus and the community. I specifically sit on the student training sub-committee and talks are advance in rolling out summer bridge programs for critical areas such as English, math, engineering. What this does is provide new students opportunities to be on campus prior to the official start of the fall semester to become more familiar with campus, classes and culture. There is also talk to have a GA in the training of the student/peer to peer mentors. Monies from the hilltop initiative is being looked at to fund this.

Support to RSOs: I have been consulted and invited to be a part of RSOs structural leadership and organizational development and also activities. It is always great to see what our students are doing in their own neck of the woods and to connect with new and old students.

Student Assessment Fees: Student leaders meet to discuss the percentage distributions for student assessment fees. At the moment there is a discussion around providing a one time “stimulus” payment to those entities that may not be able to finish out the year based on their financial constraints. As your GSA representative I have not committed to such as we may have a surplus this year, but it will be a cushion for the incoming leadership. Why I made this claim is that with Graduate student enrollment down nationally, we cannot commit to that.

There is a proposal for the enrollment fee be rolled into the tuition for undergrads, similar to what happened to ours last summer.
Commencement committee: Have been working with the registrar and other key persons for the virtual ceremony. There have been some concerns with the ceremony being virtual and there has been a strategy meeting to see how to improve the experience for graduates.

Continued consultation with the GSA advisor and other members of the university to look at best practices and setting a firm foundation for the next leadership team to advance GSA’s mission.