

Graduate Studies Council

Minutes of 23 January 2025

Call to Order

The regular meeting of the Western Michigan University Faculty Senate Graduate Studies Council was called to order at 3 p.m. on 23 January 2025 via Webex by Marcellis Zondag, chair.

Members Present: Upul Attanayake, Louann Bierlein-Palmer, Christine Byrd-Jacobs, Carrie Cumming, Lisa DeChano-Cook, Jose Embil Jr., Maria Cristina Fava (substitute for Jennifer Fiore), Regina Garza Mitchell, Lori Gray, Chansheng He, Cindy Linn, Jocelyn Medina, Dianna Sachs, Larry Simon, Marcellis Zondag

Members Absent: None

Ex Officio: David Szabla

Guest: Diana Berkshire Hearit, Graduate Award Specialist

Quorum

A quorum was present with 17 members in attendance of the eight needed to establish a quorum.

Agenda

[MOTION] It was moved by Sachs, seconded by Simon, to accept the agenda as presented. The motion carried unanimously.

Minutes

[MOTION] It was moved by Garza Mitchell, seconded by Simon, to approve the 12 December 2024 minutes. The motion carried unanimously.

New Business

1. Process Overview for Graduate Awards – Berkshire Hearit overviewed the InfoReady system, which will be used for GSC members to review all upcoming university teaching and research awards.
2. Curriculum Proposals
 - a. Accelerated Degree (MIDA) in International Development Administration (which had been previously approved by GSC, but it had been filed incorrectly as a new undergraduate program).

[MOTION] It was moved by Bierlein Palmer, seconded by Garza Mitchell, to accept the proposal. The motion carried unanimously.
 - b. Graduate Conversions to Programs (all taken as a package)
 - i. Master of Science in Finance (FINM, FSMM, FFPM, FDAM)
 - ii. Ph.D. in Educational Leadership: Higher Education Leadership (ELHD).
 - iii. Doctor of Philosophy in Psychology (PYBD, PYCD, PYID) & Master of Arts in Psychology (PYBM, PYOM).

[MOTION] It was moved by Simon, seconded by Medina, to accept these proposals. The motion carried unanimously.
3. “Masters en Route” – Byrd-Jacobs and DeChano-Cook overviewed an issue related to students receiving a master’s degree en route to getting a doctorate degree, but students currently do not have to apply to get that master’s degree. There was a discussion, and a decision was made that all students must apply to any degree or certificate program for which they will be awarded such degrees or certificates. It was further discussed that this could be added to the Memorandum of Action (MOA) that GSC was working on related to other graduate issues.

Reports of Officers

Chair Zondag did not provide a report.

Ex Officio Szabla summarized some recent Faculty Senate Executive Board discussions, including issues related to the recent push for experiential learning, potential Research 1 status, and enrollments.

Reports of University Representatives

Byrd-Jacobs reported on several issues, including graduate enrollment increase, the upcoming graduate grants and fellowships, and other graduate issues of interest.

DeChano-Cook had no updates to present.

Embil, Jr. and Medina reported on several graduate student concerns, including recent changes to the international student insurance, as well as future planned activities such as the three-minute thesis.

Unfinished Business

Proposed Language for MOA on Credit Transfer Issues:

Byrd-Jacobs and Chair Zondag reviewed a draft MOA that attempted to capture previously discussed issues. There were a number of questions as to whether the summary within the MOA matched the actual MOA revision, and the need for some additional clarifying language within the MOA. It was decided that an informal subcommittee of Zondag, Byrd-Jacobs, Fava, Bierlein, Palmer, and Cumming will collaborate and bring a revised draft to the GSC's next meeting.

Announcements

The February GSC meeting will be in person in Walwood Hall on 27 February 2025.

Adjournment

[MOTION] It was moved by Simon, seconded by Linn, to adjourn the meeting at 4:45 p.m. The motion carried unanimously. The Graduate Studies Council will next meet in person at 3 p.m. in Walwood Hall on 27 February 2025.

Approval

Submitted by Louann Bierlein Palmer, Secretary

Minutes approved on 27 February 2025.