



Graduate Council

Meeting Minutes

January 15th, 2015 – Taylor 404

*Supporting, facilitating and promoting excellence in lifelong education
through graduate programs of distinction, innovative outreach programs and a diverse student body.*

Members present: Melissa Aleman, Michael Stoloff, Lynette Michael, Teresa Gonzalez (The Provost's Office), Diane Wilcox (Adult Ed/HRD), Karin Tollefson-Hall (Art & Art History), Christine May (Biology), Michael Busing (Business Administration), Ayasakanta Rout (CSD), Hossain Heydari (Computer Science – Info. Sec), Debbie Sturm (Counseling & Supervision/Clinical Mental Health Counseling/School Counseling), Brooks Hefner (English), Dannette Bronaugh (Exceptional Education), Robin Anderson (Graduate Psychology), Natasha DuMerville (Student Representative), David "AJ" Good (Student Representative), Jeremy Akers (Health Sciences), Brian Flota (Libraries & Educational Technology), Anthony Tongen (Math Education), Patty Hale (Nursing), Amy Russell Yun (Occupational Therapy), Jerry Weniger (Physician Assistant Studies), Michael Hall (Psychological Sciences), Fred Mayhew (Public Administration), Tammy Gilligan (School Psychology), Michael Klein (WRTC), Debbi Bandalos (Assessment & Measurement), Greg Henriques (Clinical & School Psychology), Holly McCartney (Education), Danette Bronaugh (Exceptional Education), Maria Papadakis (ISAT), Mary Jean Speare (Music), John Scherpereel (Political Science-EUPS).

Guests Present: Kristi Shackelford (Catalog), Chris Arndt (CAL), Eric Dirth (Graduate Student Association), Sarah MacDonald (Outreach and Engagement), Janet Smith (University Communications), Paula Maxwell (CHBS), Nick Swartz (Madison Center for Community Engagement), Brad Barnett (Financial Aid), Michele White (Registrar's Office).

Graduate programs not represented: College Student Personnel Administration, Communication & Advocacy, Computer Science, History, Kinesiology, and Strategic Leadership.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The minutes of October 9th, 2014 were approved without revisions.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

- The Showcase of Graduate Scholarship & Creative Activity (SGSCA), will be held Thursday, April 2nd, 2015. The event will be celebrating 60 years of graduate education by highlighting graduate student works in various disciplines. Graduate students from every program are encouraged to participate and submit their work. The deadline for applications is Monday, January 19th. Late submissions will be considered.
- The Cohen Center's next event, titled "Engineering Human Nature: Why Humanists Should Join Engineers to Think about Human Nature," will feature speaker Carl Mitcham and take place on January 22, 1-2:30 pm in Taylor 306.
- The next Cohen Center event, "Planet of the Apps: Innovation and the Eclipse of Progress," is scheduled for February 19th, featuring speaker Langdon Winner. Additionally, another presentation by James and Marcia Day Childress will be held on April 22nd.
- The Graduate School will review student requests for travels funds submitted by February 16th.
- The Graduate School welcomes program news and stories to be submitted for the Graduate Community Newsletter.

GSA REPORT – Eric Dirth

Eric noted last semester's success and thanked graduate program directors for their continued support of the GSA. He encouraged their continual involvement for the spring semester.

Additionally, Eric asked program directors to encourage their students to submit works to the Showcase of Graduate Scholarship and Creative Activity (SGSCA). Eric explained that the event is intended to highlight the amazing work that graduate students do. Various platforms and formats are possible to accommodate all forms of research, scholarship, and creative activity.

Lastly, Eric invited program directors and faculty to attend the Graduate Student Association social event at Union Station on January 16th.

Melissa and Michael thanked the GSA for all of their efforts over the past semester as well as thanked program directors for their continued support.

PRESENTATIONS

Graduate program partnership opportunities, including the possibility of developing new graduate assistantships, through the Madison Center for Community Development – Nick Swartz

Nick Swartz, Director of the Madison Center for Community Development (MCCD), discussed the center's purpose and future as it relates to JMU graduate programs. Nick explained that the center's beginnings are founded in a partnership with the Town of Elkton. Then in 2010, JMU was approved for Carnegie Classification as a Community-Engaged University. With this status change, community engagement became an even larger part of the University mission, Provost Jerry Benson formerly chartered the MCCD.

MCCD's charter states that the center is "charged with widening and deepening the University's community engagement by serving as a clearly defined entry portal for public sector organizations and private institutions who are seeking assistance" in various projects. To facilitate community partnerships, Nick noted the location of MCCD in downtown Harrisonburg, in the Ice House building. He also informed program directors that MCCD is searching for faculty and program affiliates to help provide services and programs. Those services can be provided through GAs in-residence programs, courses based projects, faculty-led consulting, and volunteering. Nick noted that the MCCD has already received an overwhelming response, and that additional faculty/program assistance is needed.

Nick informed the council that he can be reached via email at swartznj@jmu.edu. Additionally, Nick welcomes meetings with interested parties to identify needs, services that we might offer, and discuss potentially beneficial plans. MCCD would like to match faculty/student expertise to project needs.

Michael Hall and other program directors asked if there were funding opportunities for graduate students or if the work was purely volunteer. Nick responded by saying that both arrangements are possible; volunteering is welcomed but line item budget requests for each project can also provide funding.

Michael Stoloff asked Nick that if possible, it would be helpful for program directors to know in advance if an upcoming project will need a graduate assistant. This would allow the process to have a potential impact on graduate student recruitment efforts.

Michael Hall inquired if out-of-state partnerships would be available. Nick explained that MCCD is currently focusing on developing partnerships in the Shenandoah Valley. However, he noted that the MCCD's focus moving forward would be to expand to partnerships across the Commonwealth. Partnerships developing across state-lines are also a part of this longer-term conversation.

Nick ended his presentation by encouraging program directors to reach out to him, and informed everyone that he will provide a copy of his presentation and services offered by the MCCD to the council. Nick thanked those present for their time, and asked everyone to reach out if they had any questions.

Federal financial aid compliance and course scheduling – Brad Barnett and Michele White

Michael introduced Brad and Michele, stating that there has been some timing issues with courses as they relate to financial aid. Brad noted that the University disperses over \$150 million dollars a year in federal and state financial aid and that there are various federal compliance issues associated with this. He explained that lately, the financial aid office is seeing more creativity in the way that courses are delivered. He doesn't want to discourage creativity, however, we need to know that the timing of the start and end of courses is critical for federal financial aid compliance.

Brad explained that at JMU, standard courses are delivered during a 16-week period that starts and ends on the dates specified by the University academic calendar. There also is a standard 8-week block course format that has particular

start and end dates. JMU financial aid awards may be out of compliance with federal regulations when courses start or end outside of the standards dates. In some of these instances, JMU cannot provide financial aid to students who complete courses that occur during non-standard terms. Brad explained the federal aid award system takes into account both credit hours completed and living expenses for the time enrolled. Students are not entitled to living expenses during periods when they are not completing classes. The financial aid office is required to properly compute aid entitlement. Errors in this computation can result in the University being required to return large amounts of awarded funding and the payment of fines. While it is technically possible to properly compute aid when courses are offered on varying schedules, Michele White pointed out that the Financial Aid office does not have the right information or sufficient staff to support every possibility at this time.

Brad asked that programs who offer courses outside of the traditional academic calendar dates to work directly with the financial aid office. Initiate this by contacting Brad. In many cases, issues can be resolved by working together. If Michele and Brad can identify a patterns to the scenarios that programs would like to use for course offerings, they may be able to expand the range of options beyond the standard semester and block offerings. If a program would like to do something different, let them know so they can help you accomplish your goals while also allowing the university to conform to regulations.

Brad and Michele concluded their presentation and thanked those present for their attention to this important matter.

Effectively marketing graduate programs to prospective students using program websites – Michael Stoloff & AJ Good

In the recent Program Directors Survey, participants were asked how The Graduate School (TGS) can help with program recruiting efforts. The top responses from 36 program directors indicated that TGS can provide: marketing consultations, support & funding, and program-specific marketing information & strategies. Michael stated that he and AJ have been working to identify ways to improve graduate student recruitment.

Recently, TGS found that approximately 37% of new applicants to JMU graduate school discovered their program of interest through the program website. Michael suggested that it is likely that those students who first learned about a program from faculty member, fellow student, or program alumnus, probably then learned about the program by examining the program website. An important starting point for improving student recruitment would be to create more effective websites. TGS staff worked with Michael and AJ to identify seven critical areas for program websites that, if improved, should enhance student recruitment. Those areas are:

- Program Goals: What can students achieve by completing this program?
- Distinguishing Experiences: What exceptional activities will enrolled students experience?
- Outcomes: What do program alumni typically accomplish?
- Faculty: Describe the expertise and interests of the faculty.
- Program Requirements
- Assistantship/Scholarship Opportunities
- Admission Requirements & Instruction

Michael presented a PowerPoint that showed examples of JMU graduate program websites that have done a great job with each of these seven areas. At the end of the presentation, Michael also suggested that some additional content that contribute to the recruitment of students might include:

- Examples of Innovative Programming
- Professional Development Opportunities for Students
- Engagement Activities
- Program/department/college news or events
- Photos or video
- Social Media

Greg Henriques TGS would be able to provide consultations. Michael stated that TGS can consult with programs, and he encouraged interested programs to contact him.

Michael thanked those in attendance and directed program directors to contact TGS with additional questions. He noted that a copy of the power-point presentation would be made available to council-members.

Using MyMadison Advisor as a tool for academic advisement – Lynette Michael & Michael Stoloff

Lynette informed program directors that there information is now present in MyMadison. She explained that this will allow directors to see the information of every student in their program. Michael provided an example using his MyMadison account. Melissa added that this change allows program directors to have the same access that is granted to a student's current academic advisor. Lynette thanked those present and requested program directors to contact Lynette or TGS if access issues arise or when program directors change.

Concluding Remarks

Melissa thanked program directors and guests for their attendance, and wished everyone a happy spring semester.

Remaining 2014-2015 Meeting Dates:

Thursday, February 12, 2015 – Taylor 404

(No March meeting)

Thursday, April 2, 2015 – Taylor 404

Retreat: Friday, May 15, 2015, 9:00 a.m. – noon – Montpelier Room