

Minutes from CGSR Meeting #2 on 9/8/2016

The Committee on Graduate Studies and Research (CGSR) held its 2nd meeting of A-term 2016 on September 8, 2016 (Thursday) in Higgins Labs, Room 102.

Present: M. Demetriou (Chair), K. Burnett (GS), K. Troy (Secretary), A. Zeng, S. Scarlatta, R. Rao, T. Camesano (Dean of Graduate Studies), A. Deskins

Absent: B. Vernescu (Vice Provost for Research),

Guests: none

Professor Demetriou called the meeting to order at 11:05 AM

1. The minutes from September 1 were approved.
2. Motion to Approve Course Proposal for CS5007: A few questions were raised: Is there a 4000 level undergraduate course with substantial overlap or equivalency? This course is currently taught by an adjunct – what if that person is no longer with WPI?
3. CGSR will work on updating templates for motions and providing a checklist of items that should be addressed to streamline the process of course proposals and other routine business.
4. Discussion of changing the minimum standard for TOEFL scores for TAs and/or graduate students.
 - Dean Camesano presented information about current graduate student TOEFL score distribution and a comparison of these values to other similar Universities. Many programs have a higher minimum standard than WPI.
 - The initial proposal would be to raise the minimum standard for TAs to 100, with individual section scores each being at least 20. Pros and cons of this were discussed, and several questions asked. For example, is there any correlation between TA evaluations and TOEFL scores, and graduate student success?
 - Why 100? There are YouTube videos available that show the skills of individuals speaking with specific TOEFL scores, which may shed some light on this issue. Every point is important.
 - Are some sections of the TOEFL more important than others?
 - Could skype interviews of international graduate students, or even skype speak tests, be administered to address this issue?
 - For ESL classes, how are students evaluated after they complete the class? Is there a separate writing clinic? The University-wide writing center supports student writing, and additional funding has been allocated for graduate student support.
 - Should there be a higher score for PhD students than for Masters? For TAs than non-TAs? Mike McGrade will be invited to a future meeting to discuss this in more detail.
5. The secretary assignments for B-D terms were agreed upon as follows: B: Amy Zeng, C: Reeta Rao, D: Suzanna Scarlatta

Meeting adjourned at 11:48

Respectfully submitted,

Karen Troy, CGSR Secretary (A term)