

Minutes of CGSR Meeting #14 on 2/4/2019

The Committee on Graduate Studies and Research (CGSR) held its 14th meeting of AY '18/'19 on February, 4 2019 (Monday) in FI 207.

Present: R. Rao (Co-Chair), S. Johnson, B. Choate (GS), M. Timko, T. Camesano (Dean of Graduate Studies)

Absent: B. Vernescu (Vice Provost for Research), S. Scarlata (Co-Chair), G. Fischer, M. Rolle

Guests: Kristin McAdams (Academic Program), Michael McGrade (Dean of Graduate Admissions), Christine Love (registrar), K. Tichenor (Senior Vice President, Undergraduate Admissions), Steven Taylor (Foisie School of Business)

Professor Rao called the meeting to order at 11:04 AM

1. The minutes of the January 28, 2019 meeting were approved.
2. CGSR discussed its options for appointing a representative to a newly formed committee on improving Workday for tracking unconventional graduate credits.
3. Data Science submitted three petitions for minor changes of their existing graduate course work, 1) modifying the policy on internship credit hours, 2) converting an existing course to a core requirement, and 3) modifying the requirements of the BS/MS degree program and their explanation in the graduate catalog. CGSR approved all with no substantive changes requested. The Registrar noted that CS 4531 should be listed as CS 3432 and that DS 4635 has not yet been approved by the faculty; its MA equivalent, 4635, has been approved previously.
4. CGSR discussed a proposal it plans to submit to the faculty to limit the number of credits that non-degree students can acquire before officially applying to either a certificate or degree program. The objective is to prevent students from acquiring all or most of the credits required for a degree or certificate – which can be as few as 12 credits – without formally applying. At present, the graduate catalog permits non-degree students from acquiring as many as 12 credits. CGSR's original proposal will impose a WPI-limit of either 6 or 9 credits, ensuring that all students undergo a vetting process at the departmental level before acquiring sufficient credits to complete a certificate or degree. Departments can impose more stringent restrictions, at departmental discretion. One concern that CGSR has raised previously and has not yet been addressed is whether employees should be excepted from the policy. Graduate Admissions suggested that exceptions might be made for students who apply and are denied with encouragement.
5. The details of a newly approved dual MS degree in ME and Management was discussed. The dual degree appears not to follow usual norms for double counting course work implemented at other universities, with the WPI policy being more lenient. However, WPI does not have a specific guideline for double counting in dual degree programs, and this dual degree would therefore set an important precedent. Graduate Admissions raised potential concerns about third-party accreditation of the dual degree. All present agreed that WPI should strike a balance between flexibility to offer innovative degree programs, while maintaining a reputation for rigor with students and accreditors. One solution was proposed to change the name of the degree not to include degrees in two different departments; however, a counter point was raised that the dual degree was important to the marketing. Since the position of accrediting agencies is not known, CGSR agreed to reach out to the appropriate accreditor so that this and similar programs might be developed in compliance. Another possibility was suggested to add a credit-bearing internship as a requirement.

The meeting adjourned at 12:03 PM.

Respectfully submitted,
Michael Timko
CGSR secretary (C19)