

Minutes of CGSR Meeting #8 on 11/13/2018

The Committee on Graduate Studies and Research (CGSR) held its 8th meeting of AY '18/'19 on November 13, 2018 (Monday) in Salisbury Labs room 305.

Present: S. Scarlata (Co-Chair), R. Rao (Co-Chair), S. Johnson, M. Rolle, G. Fischer, B. Choate (GS), T. Camesano (Dean of Graduate Studies), B. Vernescu (Vice Provost for Research)

Absent: M. Timko

Guests: M. McGrade (Graduate Admissions), Sarah Miles (Registrar), Rory Flinn (Director, Graduate Student Professional Development)

Professor Scarlata called the meeting to order at 3:04 PM

1. The minutes of the November 6, 2018 meeting were approved.
2. Rory Flinn presented results of a recently administered "Graduate Student Needs Survey". The survey asked demographic questions, as well as questions about campus resources, advising, courses, career and professional development opportunities, and research milestones (fellowship applications, conference presentations, publications). Respondents were generally satisfied with the WPI graduate program experience. Areas of student dissatisfaction primarily focused on academic advising (no advisor assigned, advisor inaccessible, not helpful, etc), course offerings (not enough courses to select from, courses not challenging/useful, not enough courses relevant to my research area) particularly among doctoral students. Committee asked whether student satisfaction correlates with the size of the department/program; for example, if smaller departments/programs (which may offer fewer courses to fewer students) correlate with decreased satisfaction with course selection.
3. Prof. Scarlata led a discussion about draft templates for proposing interdisciplinary degrees and programs. Three templates are proposed: 1) individual student interdisciplinary degree proposal, 2) new programs housed within a single department, and 3) interdisciplinary program with multiple contributing departments. Discussion focused on the rationale and structure of the second type of program, which may be characterized as a specialized degree within a department, rather than an interdisciplinary program (as defined in the WPI Graduate Catalog).

The meeting adjourned at 3:58 PM.

Respectfully submitted,
Marsha Rolle
CGSR secretary (B18)