

## **Minutes of CGSR Meeting #2 on 9/22/2022**

The Committee on Graduate Studies and Research (CGSR) held its second meeting of AY '22/'23 on September 22, 2022 (Thursday) via Zoom.

Present: D. Medich (PH, Chair), L. Fichera (RBE, Secretary), T. Camesano (Dean of Graduate Studies), R. Neamtu (CS), S. Olson (Math), S. Shell (BBT)

Guests: S. Miles (Registrar), M. Terrio (Executive Director of Graduate Recruitment and Admissions)

Prof. Medich called the meeting to order at 2:02 pm.

1. The minutes of meeting #1 (AY '22/'23) were reviewed and approved with minor corrections.
2. Discussion Item: Motion to introduce a BS/MS program in Learning Sciences & Technologies (LS&T)
  - a. The committee discussed a motion proposed by Prof. N. Heffernan (CS, LS&T Program Director) to introduce a BS/MS program in LS&T. The proposed program would provide an option for students to pursue a five-year BS/MS, where the BS can be in any of the majors offered at WPI, and the Master's degree is in LS&T.
  - b. Discussion in the committee focused on how the proposed program, being highly interdisciplinary, relies significantly on courses taught by other departments and programs, including Computer Science (CS), Data Science (DS), and Mathematics. Committee members concurred that the motion should receive the endorsement of the heads/directors of such departments/programs before it is approved.
  - c. Committee members agreed to return the motion to the originator so that the points noted above can be addressed.
3. Voting Item: Motion to introduce a new BS/MS program in Biotechnology (BBT)
  - a. The committee discussed a motion proposed by Prof. A. Manning (BBT Graduate Coordinator) to introduce a BS/MS program in BBT.
  - b. The motion was received positively. Some committee members expressed concern at the proposed program's dependence on the Office of Graduate Studies for teaching support:
    - i. Many of the credits for the BBT Master's program are currently offered by adjunct faculty hired through Corporate and Professional Education (CPE – which is now part of the Office of Graduate Studies). The motion indicates that the implementation of the proposed BS/MS program would require continued teaching support.
    - ii. A committee member observed that many courses offered by these adjunct instructors are online. This could make it problematic for international undergraduate BBT students to enroll in the new BS/MS program due to visa rules that limit the maximum number of online credits that can be taken in a semester.
  - c. A friendly amendment was introduced to remove the statement in the proposal about the need for support by the Office of Graduate Studies.
  - d. The motion was approved as amended.

4. Discussion Item: Draft academic calendar for the '23/'24 Academic Year
  - a. S. Miles shared the current draft of next year's academic calendar with the committee and sought the committee's inputs/feedback.
  - b. The draft calendar incorporates and observes most federal holidays, which was viewed positively by the committee.
  - c. An issue was noted in the E1 term (Summer '24), where there are not enough Mondays. This issue was noted and will be fixed in the next draft of the calendar.
5. Discussion Item: Drop deadlines for graduate courses
  - a. The committee reviewed the deadlines for dropping graduate courses. The current policy, established in the graduate catalog, is that courses can be dropped without a fee until day 10 of the term.
  - b. There was consensus in the committee that the current policy does not provide adequate time for students to understand if they can keep pace with a course or not. For a graduate course that meets only once a week, a student may have to take a decision after only two lectures.
  - c. S. Miles and M. Terrio noted that extending the deadline for the add/drop of graduate courses could prove logistically challenging, as it would affect the schedule for tuition adjustment/refund.
  - d. The committee agreed to set up a task force to study the logistical feasibility of extending deadlines for add/drop of graduate courses. CFO Horan will be invited to be a part of the task force, as such a change in policy would likely have financial ramifications.
6. Discussion Item: Template for graduate theses and dissertations
  - a. The committee discussed the creation of a template for graduate theses and dissertations. WPI currently does not have a template for these documents.
  - b. In general, committee members agreed that providing a template could save students the time to create their own. Several committee members expressed the view that such a template, if it is created, should not be made mandatory.
  - c. Prof. Fichera will seek the inputs of University Librarian A. Gold on this topic and will report back to the committee at a future meeting.
7. Discussion Item: Adoption of electronic laboratory notebook software
  - a. The committee discussed the adoption of electronic laboratory notebook software.
  - b. Some committee members described their recent experiences transitioning from paper notebooks to electronic notebooks for their laboratories. It was observed that electronic notebooks can facilitate information storage and retrieval.
  - c. Discussion on this topic will continue at a future meeting.

The meeting was adjourned at 3:23 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Loris Fichera  
CGSR Secretary (Fall 2022)