

Minutes of CGSR Meeting #9 on 3/10/2022

The Committee on Graduate Studies and Research (CGSR) held its ninth meeting of AY '21/'22 on March 10, 2022 (Thursday) via Zoom.

Present: D. Korkin (CS, Chair), S. Shell (BBT, Secretary), M. Demetriou (AE), L. Fichera (RBE), D. Medich (PH), Y. Telliel (HUA), J. Tourtellotte (BCB, GS), B. Vernescu (Vice Provost of Research).

Guests: K. McAdams (Director of Academic Program Planning), M. Timko (CHE).

Prof. Korkin called the meeting to order at 2:30 pm.

1. The minutes of meetings #7 and #8 were reviewed and approved with minor edits.
2. Voting item (discussion phase): Motion to allow WPI BS students to pursue an MS degree, with the double-counting option, within 5 years of the BS completion.
 - a. It was noted that the language needs to be more precise to make clear what is meant by 5 years. For example, if a student receives their BS in May 2022, can they start their MS in August 2027 and be considered to be within 5 years?
3. Voting item (discussion phase): an interdisciplinary PhD proposal in development engineering. Committee comments on this proposal had previously been sent to the originators. One of the advisors for the proposed PhD, Professor Timko, was invited to join the 3/10/22 meeting.
 - a. Professor Timko joined the meeting at 3:00 pm to address questions about the interdisciplinary PhD proposal.
 - b. Professor Timko addressed committee comments about both the technical component and social sciences component of the proposed PhD.
 - c. The committee discussed the proposed title and if it adequately captured the topic. It was noted that the originators of the proposal had chosen the title carefully based on their deep expertise on the topic, and that CGSR members in other fields do not have the specific expertise needed to understand why that title was in fact most appropriate. It was noted that both within CGSR and broadly at WPI, scientists and engineers sometimes appear to be dismissive of the expertise of social scientists.
 - d. The committee recommended adding course lists for comparable programs at other universities. However, it was noted that when a new field forms, there may not yet be comparable programs at other universities. CGSR should therefore use caution when deciding how much weight to place on the existence of programs comparable to interdisciplinary PhDs being proposed at WPI.
 - e. It was noted that use of the interdisciplinary PhD proposal template on the CGSR website will facilitate faster review and approval of interdisciplinary PhD proposals. Furthermore, the proposals must be formatted to match this template prior to submission to the full faculty, so it saves everyone time to use the proposal template from the beginning.
 - f. Professor Timko left the meeting.

The meeting was adjourned at 4:09 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Scarlet Shell, BBT, Secretary