

COLLEGE ASSEMBLY

FEBURARY 25, 2025

Report from the Graduate Council: Young-Ro Yoon, associate professor, economics

Doctoral Leave of Absence Policy Working Group

The committee has begun reviewing leave policies from other institutions to develop a framework for the department. The policy will cover major topics such as bereavement leave, parental leave and jury duty. Discussion included: Defining which leaves would be paid or unpaid and how they would impact student status (especially for international students). A finalized policy draft is expected to be reported to the Graduate Council in April for a vote in May.

Establishment of Ph.D. Programs in the School of Public Health

To gain accreditation, the School of Public Health must establish at least two Ph.D. programs. A committee has proposed three Ph.D. programs: Kinesiology (existing program, see below), Environmental Health Population Analytics and Biostatistics (new program), and Community Health (new program). The goal is to have program proposals completed by the end of 2025 for accreditation and application. With the target of implementation by early 2026.

Community health program

There is an existing Ph.D. Concentration in Community Health within the kinesiology department in the College of Education. The new community health program in the School of Public Health will operate as an independent program. The key issue is defining the relationship between these two programs. A critical question is how existing faculty members will be assigned. Currently, it is assumed that faculty members in kinesiology may transition to the School of Public Health, but this has not yet been confirmed.

Graduate Research Symposium

February 26, 2025: It will feature oral presentations, posters and a three-minute thesis competition. The winner of that competition will advance to the next regional competition, the Midwest Association of Graduate Schools Competition. This year has the

highest number of presentations ever recorded. Faculty members are encouraged to attend and support students.

State of the Graduate School Address

To happen on March 19 at 1 p.m. This is a new initiative aimed at providing an annual update on graduate education at the university. The Graduate School dean will deliver a speech covering various topics. The event will feature breakout sessions tailored to specific interests. Discussion on the strategic plan for the university's direction as an R1 institution. Heavy hors d'oeuvres will be served!

Climate survey for graduate students

The Executive Committee proposed conducting a climate survey to assess graduate student well-being, workload and equity in compensation. Discussions included whether existing university-wide survey data could be used instead of creating a new survey. A survey specifically for graduate students would likely provide more meaningful insights. Some departments already hold town halls or feedback sessions for graduate students. A separate survey for doctoral and master's students could also be considered. As they represent distinct groups with different experiences and needs. As survey implementation becomes more segmented by units, there are both advantages and drawbacks. Advantage: More unit-specific questions enhance relevance and usefulness. Drawback: Excessive surveys at the university, graduate school, college, department and degree levels may lead to student fatigue. The details remain under consideration.

Graduate admissions

Funding question in applications: A proposal was discussed to add an optional question on the graduate application regarding applicants' funding sources. The goal is to improve applicant yield and retention by identifying financially supported students early. Concerns were raised about whether departments should have access to this information and how it might influence admissions decisions. A decision will be made in the next meeting. Dean's perspective: This information can be shared after the admission decisions are made. So, departments can have a clearer picture of the financial aid package.

TOEFL exemption for Kenyan Applicants

Proposal to exempt Kenyan applicants from TOEFL requirements, as English is the primary language of instruction in secondary and higher education. Many peer institutions already provide this exemption. No objections were raised and the exemption is expected

to be implemented. Currently we have about 28 countries that are on the list of exemptions. So, soon 29 countries.

Federal policy changes affecting higher education

The Department of Education issued a Dear Colleague letter. It indicates potential federal funding cuts for universities that host race-based programs, graduation ceremonies or courses. The interpretation of the Civil Rights Act is being used to justify these cuts, which could significantly impact university programs. Faculty were encouraged to speak out on these policy changes, given the high stakes for academic freedom and diversity initiatives.

Report from the Academic Senate: Linda Beale, President

Updates

- **Honoraria** – students can receive an honorarium
- **Freedom of expression** – small group formed, made progress on the language; once completed, a few items that need to be addressed regarding permits, web pages have been updated and changed and made clearer.
- **Foreign relationship disclosure** – under revision and close to resolution
- **Campus Police Oversight Committee** – mandated by the Michigan Statute, the membership of the committee needed to be inclusive of faculty members, for claims to be reviewed by this committee, how it needs to work and review complaints
- **Wayne Experience course** – policy committee is having this course reconsidered and taught by faculty, gen ed oversight committee will be reviewing this course
- **Center reviews** – charters should be reviewed in their fifth year, the Humanities Center and IOG was recently reviewed, DCBS was recently given a temporary charter.
- **Canvas and software issues** – security issues of software and working with C&IT
- **Student publications** – The South End has a board under review, working to have the appropriate membership.
- **Student Code of Conduct issues** – will be reviewed.
- **School of Public Health** – Two Ph.D. programs are being created for a total of three Ph.D. programs in the new school. Twenty-one full-time faculty are required for the Ph.D. programs, faculty will have a voluntary decision to move to the School of Public Health or not and a number of affiliated faculty needed for the SPH. New faculty hires for the SPH, it is proposed, will include a grant-funded expectation, not for the current faculty that are likely to move. WSU expects an increase in student enrollments, especially in master's programs.

- **Dear Colleague letter** – please read this letter, at the senate and policy committee meetings it has been discussed as WSU has open events. WSU does not exclude people.

Report from the Faculty Council: Pramod Khosla, Secretary

FC is reviewing the college's bylaws with a few members of the council, wanting them to reflect the full AAUP body membership.

Ed Cackett updates

Biology, economics and sociology departments have submitted changes to the credit hours by removing electives in their Ph.D. programs, these changes were reviewed by the CLAS curriculum committee and the Faculty Council.

Jenn Wareham updates

P&T workshops have been done for those faculty members interested in the process and packets.

Master's degree dashboard being worked on currently and its being tested with select programs, including plan of work forms. The next step will be to create a dashboard with C&IT.

Lori Pile updates

Academic staff packets are being reviewed for promotion and/or ESS.

Held a meeting regarding AGRADE processes to see what can be improved, working with the Registrar's Office and will provide updates as needed.

Stephanie Hartwell updates

Undergrad Enrollment for the winter term held steady. Master's degree programs – pilot status for seven CLAS programs will be able to offer 150% of instate tuition (Chemistry, Audiology, Urban Planning, Political Science, Speech Language, Environmental Science, Anthropology). If successful, five more programs may be included next year. AMP is still around and being piloted to the community colleges. CLAS created a phone tree regarding the Dear Colleague letter/email to disperse information. National Humanities Conference is happening in Detroit in Nov. 12- 16, 2025.

Budget reductions for CLAS for 3-7% this year. All hires are being reviewed by the Financial Oversight Committee. 54% reduction for the ICR is being reviewed by Division of Research Innovation and carry-forward monies are being reduced by half and held as savings by the university. BAC will have a meeting prior to the university's CLAS budget hearing.

Matters arising

An announcement regarding a survey for the five-year review of the Graduate School.

A matter was discussed regarding the department/school policies and procedures regarding proper processes for reimbursement/billing. The dean mentioned that she will investigate these types of issues, as it pertains to budget issues and lots of paperwork.

Next meetings

- Apr. 22 @ 2-3:30 p.m. held in the Community Room, third floor UGL.
- CLAS Commencement: May 1, 9 a.m. ceremony (sciences) and 1 p.m. ceremony (arts) held at the Field House.