

Minutes

Commission on Graduate Studies & Policies

February 3, 2010

3:30 pm – 5:00 pm

Graduate School Conference Room

Present: Ms. Betsy Brucker, Ms. Kimberly Carlson, Dr. Carolyn Copenheaver, Dr. Paul Deck, Dr. Karen DePauw, Mr. Jonathan Duggins, Dr. Joe Eska, Dr. Tom Grizzard via videoconference, Mr. Mark Halsey, Dr. Eileen Hitchingham, Dr. Kumar Mallikarjunan, Dr. Tom Martin, Ms. Laura Freeman for Ms. Michelle McLeese, Dr. Patrick Miller, Dr. Suzanne Murrmann, Dr. Cliff Shaffer, Ms. Penny McCallum for Dr. Susan Short via videoconference, Dr. Aaron Purcell, Ms. Hannah Swiger, Ms. Catherine Tredick, Dr. Robin Panneton for Dr. Daniel Wubah

Absent with Notification: Dr. Don Leo for Dr. Richard Benson, Dr. François Elvinger, Mr. Reghu Anguswamy

Absent without Notification: Dr. Kerry Redican

Visitors and Invited Guests: Ms. Dannette Beane, Ms. Rebecca French, Ms. Ennis McCrery, Dr. Janet Rankin, Ms. Jacqueline Nottingham, Mr. Jeff Feaga, Mr. Jeremy Sippel

Dr. Patrick Miller, Chair, called the meeting to order.

Approval of the agenda: The agenda was approved with one change to the format.

Approval of the minutes from January 20, 2010: Approved.

Committee Reports

Graduate Curriculum Committee (GCC): Dr. Joe Eska reviewed the minutes from January 28th, 2010. The minutes were approved.

Graduate Student Appeals: There are no new or pending appeals.

Degree Requirement Standards Criteria and Academic Policy (DRSCAP): Currently the committee is continuing their discussion on student employment. They are seeking input from students. They will have a report for the commission at the next meeting.

Other Reports

Graduate Student Assembly (GSA):

- Graduate students are participating in “Hokie Day” in Richmond. Senator Edwards officially acknowledged their presence.
- GSA has had their first delegate meeting. They are currently considering 4 resolutions
 - 1) Curriculum Practical Training (CPT), second reading
 - 2) Revisions / updates of bylaws
 - 3) Addition of another graduate student representative to the Commission on Graduate Studies and Policies (new resolution)
 - 4) Request for separate “Hokie Passport” for graduate students in order to recognize them as a distinct [from undergraduates] student body
- GSA is working on an event entitled Hokie Stone: An event of student shared knowledge for April 16, 2010. The event is in collaboration with SGA and will add a more academic tone to the programming for 4/16 this year. Please encourage students to participate.

- There was a discussion of the Hokie Handbook and graduate student concerns with existing policies.

Graduate Honor System (GHS): Ms. Kim Carlson, Chief Justice, clarified that there are currently two cases from summer and eight cases from fall.

University Library Committee (ULC): Dr. Hitchingham reported that the library committee will be participating in usability studies in March which eventually will be opened up to a wider university audience. The committee also viewed a video on auto-retrieval.

University Council: The council passed the accelerated graduate / undergraduate degree proposal resolution. A friendly amendment lowering the QCA requirement to 3.3 was accepted and the resolution passed with this amendment.

Graduate School Update: Dr. Karen DePauw

- SACS accreditation, external site visit: the review can be found at <http://www.sacs.vt.edu/>. The VT-MENA program in Egypt will be reviewed the week of February 8th. Dr. DePauw will accompany Dr. Lohman on his visit to the site.
- Summary and Action Steps recommended from report of Culture of Graduate Education Task Force, four key areas: (1) expectations for graduate study, (2) diversity and inclusion, (3) making sure we have a civil environment [bullying and incivility in our culture], (4) holistic development of graduate students. Dr. DePauw recommended that the Graduate Student Relations committee revise and update the expectations document. Dr. DePauw would like the committee to work on an increased understanding of bullying in graduate education and develop some clear policies and procedures. The task force recommended that definitions for diversity and inclusion be clarified, as well as clarifying definitions of the graduate student population. Dr. DePauw is recommending that the Graduate School Office of Diversity and Inclusion take the lead in these action items. Dr. DePauw will take the lead on focusing more on the professional development of graduate students as a part of their holistic education. The Graduate Student Relations committee is composed of two faculty and two graduate students, but Dr. DePauw recommended that the committee membership be increased to include interested faculty and students outside the commission and asked for volunteers or appointees. Dr. DePauw would like the first committee meeting scheduled within two weeks.
- Interdisciplinary Graduate Education: [The Provost's response and action plan is posted on his webpage.](#) Dr. DePauw is charged with how to move forward with interdisciplinary graduate education. Dr. DePauw invited interested commission members to join her in this effort.

Dr. DePauw would like to have discussions on the following subject areas:

- Should we give "F" grades in research credits?
- International dual degrees: one dissertation or two?
- The Institutional Plan for Graduate Degrees will be on the February 17th agenda.
- Ethics courses: There is currently discussion about offering ethics courses and Dr. DePauw would like the commission involved in the conversation.
- Accelerated graduate / undergraduate program: there will be a call for proposals circulated. In order to offer an accelerated degree program, proposals must be approved by the Graduate School. There will be a workshop on February 17th which will address some concerns about the accelerated degree program.

Dr. DePauw thanked Dr. Paul Deck, Dr. Joe Eska, and Dr. Cliff Shaffer for their work on the accelerated degree proposal.

Old Business:

Electronic Signatures: Dr. DePauw gave a history of the Graduate School's investigation into options for initiating electronic signatures, including the e-token option. Because e-tokens would not be issued to students or adjunct faculty, the Graduate School was not able to use this option. Dr. DePauw is considering a number of other options now. Mr. Jeremy Sippel gave an overview of issues facing the Graduate School including different levels of security for various processes, as well as different products that have been considered. The Graduate School hopes to have the electronic signature option available by fall 2010. Dr. DePauw noted that a separate issue that will be discussed is what signatures are actually needed for each form. Dr. DePauw reminded commission members that we don't need original signatures on everything; we can accept faxes, multiple forms. Dr. DePauw does believe that the final exam and ETD should have all of the committee members' signatures.

New Business:

Ms. Dannette Beane, Assistant Director of the Graduate School's Office of Graduate Recruiting & Diversity Initiatives gave a presentation on Graduate School diversity initiatives including Graduate Preview Weekend, Connect Lunches for various populations of students, Coordinated School Visits Program, and sponsoring existing programs.

Announcements: None.

Adjournment: The meeting was adjourned at 4:40 pm.

Respectfully submitted:

Ms. Nancy B. Feuerbach, on behalf of
Dr. Karen P. DePauw, Vice President and Dean for Graduate Education