

## Minutes

### Commission on Graduate Studies & Policies

April 1, 2009

3:30 pm – 5:00 pm

Graduate School, GLC, Conference Room

Present: Ms. Megan Armbruster, Dr. Paul Deck, Dr. François Elvinger, Dr. Joe Eska, Mr. James Freeman, Ms. Laura Freeman, Mr. Thomas Gorman, Dr. Eileen Hitchingham, Dr. Kumar Mallikarjunan, Ms. Penny McCallum, Ms. Margaret Merrill, Dr. Patrick Miller, Dr. Michael Mortimer, Dr. Sue Murrmann, Dr. Cliff Shaffer, Ms. Hannah Swiger

Absent with Notification: Dr. Ron Daniel, Dr. Karen DePauw, Dr. Kerry Redican

Absent without Notification: Dr. Richard Benson, Ms. Amanda Olejarski, Ms. Evelyn Richardson

Visitors and Invited Guests: Ms. Monika Gibson, Ms. Ennis McCreery, Dr. Brian Mihalik, Diane Zahm

Dr. Paul Deck, Chair, called the meeting to order.

**Approval of the agenda:** Approved, with addition of the second reading of the GHS revised constitution.

**Approval of minutes from March 18, 2009:** Approved.

## Committee Reports

Graduate Curriculum Committee (GCC): Minutes from March 26, 2009 were approved.

Graduate Student Appeals: No report.

Degree Requirement Standards Criteria and Academic Policy (DRSCAP): The committee has been discussing whether or not a graduate student on assistantship may seek outside [VT] work to supplement his/her income. Ms. Merrill [handout] reviewed two options for language which could be used as a template for a policy statement. Ms. Monika Gibson offered clarification on current policy found in the enrollment section of the catalog, and noted, there is no mechanism in place to track outside VT employment. DRSCAP will continue to discuss the issue based on the input of the commission, graduate students, and guests, and will incorporate payroll policy and the graduate assistantship contract into a revised recommendation on graduate student employment.

## Other Reports

Graduate Student Assembly (GSA):

- The annual Research Symposium was a great success. The awards banquet is scheduled for April 2<sup>nd</sup>, with keynote speaker, [Dr. Grant Wilson](#).
- Two resolutions were passed at the last delegate meeting, (1) medical leave and (2) fitness and VT “rec sports”.
- The GSA is now accepting applications for program chairs.

*Resolution to Provide Medical Leave for Graduate Students on Assistantships, or “Please don’t fire us if we get hit by a bus”*

Dr. Deck amended the agenda to list “medical leave” in place of “long term disability”. Ms. Freeman described the history and research which led to the resolution. The GSA would like a policy which would

give guidance to departments and the Graduate School if a student were to become medically disabled. Currently there is a leave policy in place which covers maternity leave. This, and the Family Medical Leave act, could serve as a model for a medical leave policy. Two existing policies at other universities were used as examples.

The commission supports the efforts of the GSA, and the GSA will incorporate the feedback from the commission into the resolution and bring this item before the commission at a future meeting.

Graduate Honor System (GHS): Mr. James Freeman, Chief Justice of the Graduate Honor System, presented [handout] the results of the online survey which asked for comments on the proposed revisions to the constitution. Discussion on the constitution was tabled until the next commission meeting. Mr. Freeman asked the commission to study the proposed changes to the constitution.

University Library Committee (ULC): Dr. Hitchingham thanked the commission for their support of the libraries, and reported that much needed funding has been awarded.

#### University Council:

##### *Accelerated Undergraduate / Graduate Degree Programs*

Dr. Diane Zahm, Chair of the Commission on Undergraduate Studies and Policies, and Dr. Paul Deck presented feedback from the University Council on the proposed resolution, "Resolution 2008-09B Accelerated Undergraduate/Graduate Degree Programs".

Two issues were discussed:

(1) Whether or not students could double count 4000 level courses that are part of an undergraduate degree program also on a graduate degree program.

Our resolution states that students may count courses taken as an undergraduate on their graduate plan of study *only if* those 4000 level courses are not part of their undergraduate degree program. Some programs expressed concern that this restriction would negatively impact their ability to recruit quality students.

(2) Switching between degree programs

Discussion was primarily focused on switching between "professional" and "research" graduate degrees.

Dr. Deck noted that graduate students, in either program, would still need to meet basic admission requirements. Commission members also agreed that graduate programs in either case would still need to be approved by a faculty member and would be appropriate for either program track. Mr. Freeman expressed concern that a student switching from a research track to a non-thesis track could potentially waste research dollars.

The following amendment was proposed and approved: A student may change once up to one term past their bachelor's degree. The commission agreed not to alter the 4000 level proposed change as stated in the submission presented at the first reading.

**Old Business:** None.

#### **New Business:**

##### *Public Health Program*

Dr. Elvinger presented the new degree proposal for a first reading. Following discussion, the commission voted to approve the proposal with suggested edits, and without a second reading. The proposal will appear on the next University Council meeting agenda.

#### **Announcements:**

Dr. Brian Mihalik passed out a handout entitled "Presidential Memorandum No. 232, Deletion of Untaught Classes from the Graduate School Catalog". He is currently working on identifying untaught classes.

**Adjournment:** The meeting was adjourned at 5:12 p.m.

*Respectfully submitted:*

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