

## Minutes

### Commission on Graduate Studies & Policies

October 15, 2008

3:30 pm – 5:00 pm

Graduate School, GLC, Conference Room

Present: Ms. Megan Armbruster, Dr. Paul Deck, Dr. Karen DePauw, Dr. François Elvinger, Dr. Joe Eska, Mr. Thomas Gorman, Mr. Thomas Martin, Ms. Penny McCallum, Ms. Margaret Merrill, Dr. Patrick Miller, Dr. Kerry Redican, Dr. Cliff Shaffer, Ms. Hanna Swiger, Dr. Muzzo Uysal for Dr. Sue Murrmann

Absent with Notification: Mr. James Freeman, Ms. Laura Freeman, Dr. Kumar Mallikarjunan

Positions needing to be filled: Ms. Amanda Olejarski, GSA, needs a replacement for fall 2008; Dr. Kumar Mallikarjunan needs a replacement for fall 2008; Northern Virginia needs a representative for the 2008-2009 academic year

Absent without Notification: Dr. Richard Benson, Dr. Ron Daniel, Dr. Eileen Hitchingham, Ms. Evelyn Richardson,

Visitors and Invited Guests: Ms. Linsey Barker, Mr. Marvin Foushee, Ms. Ennis McCrery, Dr. Brian Mihalik, Ms. Jacqueline Nottingham

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

**Approval of the agenda:** The agenda was approved with one an addition under *New Business*, “Winter Summit with the Undergraduate Commission”.

**Approval of minutes from October 1, 2008:** Approved.

### Committee Reports

Graduate Curriculum Committee (GCC): No report.

Graduate Student Appeals: Dr. Deck reported that the committee has finished one appeal. A second appeal is underway.

Graduate Student Relations: No report.

### Degree Requirement Standards Criteria and Academic Policy (DRSCAP):

Ms. Merrill reported that the committee was taking a serious look at the question of “fair use” in relation to ETDs, and discussing what kind of policy Virginia Tech could have which would be useful to students and faculty. The committee will ask a copyright attorney to advise them. Dr. Shaffer suggested that the committee investigate guidelines from other universities.

### Other Reports

#### Graduate Student Assembly (GSA):

- Next meeting is October 30
- The Travel Fund for graduate students closes this Friday [October 17].
- The Research Fund closed last Friday [October 10].
- Resolutions on (1) meal plans for graduate students, and (2) diversity will be presented for a second reading at the October 30 meeting. If they pass, they will be presented to the commission.

Graduate Honor System (GHS):

Mr. Freeman reported that the GHS had a full slate of cases. The GHS is actively seeking faculty members to serve as panelists.

University Library Committee (ULC): No report

University Council: Dr. Deck attended the last University Council meeting, and a list of priorities was presented to the council. Dr. Miller will attend Monday's meeting [October 20].

**Old Business:**

*Interdisciplinary Graduate Education and Research*

Dr. DePauw gave an overview of the history which led to the interdisciplinary summit convened on August 11, 2008. The organization of most universities is disciplinary-oriented, not interdisciplinary. Policies and procedures can become barriers to interdisciplinarity. The summit looked at the barriers, opportunities, and how we could reaffirm our commitment to interdisciplinarity, and move forward.

Dr. DePauw asked the commission to review and discuss the recommendations made by the participants of the summit. Participants invited to participate in the summit included institute directors, IGERT faculty members, administrators, and Carol Stoel, Acting Director, NSF Graduate Education Division.

The commission expressed their interest in, and support of, the future efforts of Dr. DePauw and the Senior Vice President, Dr. McNamee, as they make progress on adapting and/or developing new policies, procedures, and practices.

*Office of the Graduate Student Ombudsperson*

Dr. DePauw asked the commission if they had any questions about the office of ombudsperson. Ms. Ennis McCrery distributed a handout with information from the International Ombudsman Association to help clarify the role of an organizational ombudsman. Dr. DePauw explained that the position is a two year pilot program. At the last meeting of the commission, Ms. McCrery presented an overview of the first year, and will do the same for the second year. A decision will be made about the continuation of this position in the spring.

**New Business:**

*New Questions on Graduate Applications*

Dr. DePauw informed the commission that all graduate admissions applications will include two new questions. (1) *Have you been convicted of or received a juvenile adjudication for a violation of any local, state, or federal law other than a minor traffic violation?* [answer "yes" or "no"] (2) *Are you currently on court ordered supervised or unsupervised probation or under the terms of finding under advisement?* [answer "yes" or "no"] *Please give full explanation of any past criminal convictions.*

The Graduate School has had to develop a process for addressing the answers to these questions if answered "yes". This must be in effect for fall 2009. The questions will be on a separate page of the application, and will be kept separately from the rest of the application. If the department makes a positive recommendation for admission, and there is a "yes" answer on the application, Dr. DePauw will involve the department before processing the application. Some commission members raised concerns about possibly discouraging international applicants who didn't understand the question. Since international applicants already undergo a screening process before being allowed to study in the U.S., some commission members questioned what appeared to be a duplication of efforts. Dr. DePauw said that *all* applications *must* include this language.

*CUSP and CGSP*

The commission expressed an interest in scheduling another winter summit, Friday, January 23<sup>rd</sup>, before spring semester starts.

**Announcements**

Dr. DePauw reminded the commission that the Graduate School Distinguished Lecturer, David Whyte, will be speaking on October 22<sup>nd</sup> at 12:15 in the multipurpose room.

**Adjournment:** The meeting was adjourned at 4:59.

*Respectfully submitted:*

Ms. Nancy B. Feuerbach, on behalf of Dr. Karen P. DePauw, Vice Provost for Graduate Studies and Dean of the Graduate School