

Minutes

Commission on Graduate Studies & Policies

January 22, 2014

3:30 pm – 5:00 pm

Graduate School Conference Room

Present: Dr. Chad Bolding, Mr. Jordon Booker, Dr. Karen DePauw, Ms. Kara Dietz, Ms. Nancy Dudek, Dr. Kay Dunkley via phone, Dr. Joe Eifert, Dr. Alireza Haghighti via videoconference, Dr. Saul Halfon, Dr. Bernice Hausman, Dr. James Jones, Mr. Greg Purdy, Dr. Hans Robinson

Absent with Notification: Ms. Shaimaa Abdallah, Dr. Cyril Clarke, Dr. Gary Seidel, Dr. Elankumaran Subbiah, Ms. Sally Wieringa

Absent without Notification: Mr. Matt Banfield, Ms. Samantha Erwin, Mr. Mordecai Harvey, Dr. Rachel Holloway, Dr. Mayuresh Patil, Dr. Christopher Zobel, Dr. Tyler Walters

Visitors and Invited Guests: Ms. Janice Austin, Dr. Muhammad Hajj

Dr. Joe Eifert, Chair, called the meeting to order.

Approval of the agenda: Approved.

Approval of the minutes from December 4, 2014, 2013: Approved with minor corrections.

Committee Reports

Graduate Curriculum Committee (GCC)

No report.

Graduate Student Appeals

The appeal cases from the fall are closed. There will be a meeting on January 31st to discuss a new appeal.

Degree Requirements, Standards, Criteria, and Academic Progress (DRSCAP)

The committee will meet next week to continue their discussion on continuous enrollment.

Constituencies Updates

Graduate Student Assembly (GSA)

- Mr. Greg Purdy reported that the GRPD awards have been awarded.
- The TFP has a dual cycle and a new chair.
- A chair has been hired for the Graduate Research Symposium and the GSA will be asking for judges.
- The first delegate meeting is January 30.
- A pilot program funding professional development will begin in the fall of 2014.

Graduate Honor System (GHS)

Mr. Booker reported that the GHS received a number of new cases at the end of the fall semester. Most of the old cases from the fall semester have been resolved. The orientation for new students was just completed, and new student and faculty panelists will begin training next week. The ethics workshops last semester went well.

University Library Committee

The library has consolidated its reference desks. There is now one reference desk on the first floor. This semester the library will offer a number of Network Learning Initiatives (NLI) classes.

University Council and Commission Updates

University Council: Dr. Eifert is sending the council an agenda summary for the commission.

Commission on Undergraduate Studies and Policies (CUSP): Dr. Eifert reported that CUSP was discussing enrollment management issues. They are also reviewing policies related to satisfactory progress to degree. There are four new undergraduate degree proposals.

Graduate School Updates: Dr. Karen DePauw

Dr. DePauw introduced the Graduate School's new associate dean, Dr. Muhammad Hajj, who has replaced Dr. Janet Rankin.

Growth in Graduate Students: All colleges have submitted their tentative plans for their projected type of growth, and Mr. Will Walton has put together a spreadsheet with the data. The plans seem doable with additional resources. The plans reflect 62% growth in Ph.D.s. About 60 percent of the students would be full time. The part time students would be in the National Capitol Region, some online, some in Blacksburg. A relatively small number of courses were online and Dr. DePauw would like to have more conversation about developing this area. More work will need to be done on developing resources. She will be working with the deans on moving forward.

ESS and Application Systems: We have received over 7000 applications since the new system went live. We are continuing to update the application and electronic signature system. If departments wish to continue to use a signature card as part of the approval process, it can be in addition to the electronic signature process, but cannot replace it. Dr. Hausman asked the Graduate School to review the language in the generated e-mails for clarity. Ms. Austin has already submitted some language changes to help clarify the processes and hopes that the changes will be completed by February. She hopes to also solicit feedback this summer which will make the systems more user-friendly. Dr. DePauw also suggested that some of the suggested changes could be an agenda item for commission discussion.

The SCHEV report on degree productivity is out so meetings are taking place with departments and colleges where numbers of enrolled students or graduates didn't meet SCHEV's threshold numbers. This is coupled with an effort by the provost who wants to roll out a plan for program review this July. Dr. DePauw will keep the commission informed as she receives more information from the assessment office.

Dr. DePauw asked commission members to remind their colleges and departments that ethics proposals are due this semester. Dr. DePauw will be assigning a deadline. Physics was the first department to submit a proposal.

Dr. DePauw gave an update on academic appeals. The vast majority of cases have been appealing decisions to dismiss a student from the Graduate School for lack of academic progress including progress on research. Dr. DePauw stressed that when a department wishes to dismiss a student for good reason they must give the student written notification steps to remediation, as well as a timeline to correct the problem. Some appeals are related to the examination process, assistantships (e.g., lack of continuation, immediate termination, a change in pay during the semester), or repeating grades or grades received for a class. Dr. Hausman noted that the annual progress review is the "gold standard" for academic success. Also, she suggested if a faculty member gives negative feedback, they document the conversation.

Old Business

Resolution, Enrollment Requirement for the Graduate Cooperative Education Program: Dr. Eifert has met with the finance office and described some of their minor recommended changes. The DRSCAP committee will amend the proposal to incorporate changes discussed in the budget and commission

meetings. Dr. DePauw suggested that the revised resolution include an appendix to describe the implementation.

New Business

Dr. Hausman suggested that the commission talk about the honor system information and how it can best be disseminated to faculty. Dr. DePauw would invite Monika Gibson to the meeting.

Announcements

None

Adjournment: The meeting was adjourned at 5:00 pm.

Respectfully submitted:

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