

## **MINUTES**

### **Commission on Graduate Studies & Policies**

**February 15, 2017**

**3:30 pm – 5:00 pm**

**Graduate School Conference Room**

**Present:** Dr. Karen DePauw (ex officio), Dr. Sally Paulson (Chair), Dr. Rajesh Bagchi, Dr. Sudip Bhattacharjee, Dr. Nancy Bodenhorn, Dr. Kevin Edgar, Dr. Charlene Eska, Dr. Lesa Hanlin, Dr. William Huckle, Ms. Alex Hyler, Mr. Timothy Kinoshita, Dr. Kathy Lu, Mr. Brett Netto, Ms. Hannah Parks, Dr. Annie Pearce, Ms. Tara Reel, Ms. Libbie Sonnier-Netto, Ms. Gina French (on behalf of Dr. Robert Sumichrast), Dr. Tyler Walters (ex officio), and Dr. Ying Zhou, Dr. Zhiwu Xie.

**Absent with Notification:** Dr. Lujean Baab, Dr. Rachel Holloway (ex officio), and Ms. Erin Lavender-Stott.

**Absent without Notification:**

**Visitors and Invited Guests:** Ms. Janice Austin, Dr. Muhammed Hajj, Dr. Hal Irvin, and Dr. Audra Van Wart.

### **Call to Order**

The meeting was called to order by Dr. Paulson at 3:30 p.m.

### **Approval of the Agenda**

The agenda was approved as modified.

### **Approval of the Minutes from February 1, 2017**

The minutes were approved as presented.

### **Committee Reports**

#### **Graduate Curriculum Committee**

Dr. Edgar reported that seventeen proposals were reviewed with fifteen approved at the last meeting. The minutes were accepted by the Commission.

#### **Graduate Student Appeals Committee**

Dr. Bodenhorn delivered the current case review to Dr. DePauw.

#### **Degree Requirements, Standards, Criteria, and Academic Progress (DRSCAP) Committee**

Dr. Huckle announced that Dr. DePauw attended the meeting last week's meeting and will attend future meetings with Dr. Blieszner's departure from the Graduate School.

Diversity training: Dr. DePauw asked DRSCAP to consider recommending that CGS&P make a statement supportive of implementing diversity training for VT graduate students, including those in our

professional medical programs. Further, we may wish to suggest what options should be weighed regarding implementation of such training, such as modifying an existing 'universal' online module (analogous to that undertaken by undergraduate enrollees but better suited to the grad student demographics) or distributing to individual programs the responsibility for design and delivery of training at the other extreme. An intermediate option would be to supplement grad student orientation with relevant training, potentially by engaging the expertise of the newly-hired Graduate Ombudsperson, Bryan Hanson. We will resume discussion of the above matters when more of our members could be present to participate.

Ensuring oral English language proficiency for GTAs: We agreed that raising the Grad School's TOEFL and IELTS minima for admission would be a straightforward step toward this end. Rosemary Blieszner indicated that Grad School data personnel will collect 3 years of information allowing us to gauge the impact such a change would have given our recent pool of applicants. In considering new TOEFL and IELTS minima, we will review those employed by our peer institutions for comparative purposes.

## **Constituency Updates**

### Graduate Student Assembly (GSA)

Ms. Hyler reported a Town Hall will be held today at 5 p.m. International student needs are being reviewed and may bring policy changes. Ms. Reel announced that a search is underway for a new BOV representative.

### Graduate Honor System (GHS)

There was no report.

### University Library Committee

Dr. Walters reported a peer study is being considered and will be reported at a later date.

### Faculty Senate

There was no report.

### Student Government Association (SGA)

There was no report.

## **University Council and Commission Updates**

Dr. Paulson attended a meeting with the President and Provost last week and reported on the current year activities. This report was also given to University Council. Her report is posted in Scholar.

There were no other commission updates.

## **Graduate School Update**

Dr. DePauw reported that the Graduate Program Directors Meeting will be held tomorrow. The ban is now on hold for the immigration executive order. Students and faculty can now enter the United States. Meetings with students and others went well. Dr. DePauw is recommending that everyone move forward

as planned. She requested everyone to be proactive in the classroom and assist international students because of the added stress being experienced. She reminded everyone of the VT Immigration website that will assist individuals with answers to their concerns. There is a student trying to get her passport from Dubai and expected to return to the campus soon. The server breakdown has resulted in continued follow-up with students, including providing them information on personal identity protection. Dr. DePauw announced personnel changes at the Graduate School. Dr. Rosemary Blieszner will become interim Dean for CLAHS. Ms. Dannette Beane will become a fulltime student in the fall. Ms. Kacy Lawrence has accepted a position with Institutional Research. Dr. Blieszner's position will likely be vacant until fall. The search will likely be for a 75% position to allow the person to continue as a faculty member. Degree management and interdisciplinary programs will be responsibilities of this position. Dr. DePauw also announced that Mr. Brandon Tighe has been out on leave and is hoping to return in April.

### **Old Business**

The second reading of the Resolution to Establish a Dairy Science Major within the Master of Science in Life Sciences Degree was passed.

### **New Business**

The first reading of the Resolution to Establish a Master of Science in Translational Biology, Medicine, and Health was given. Discussion revolved around the planned coursework. No assistantships are currently affiliated with the program. The resolution will move forward for the Faculty Senate review.

Dr. Edgar expressed his concern for lab safety and the need for improved leadership and increased monitoring of necessary and required safety equipment. He noted that safety practices at VT appear to be less than he experienced in industry. Modeling behavior is important to improve safety. Equipment awareness, cost, and availability need to be considered, such as prescription safety glasses. Ms. Hyler stressed the need for top-down modeling. Dr. Edgar will chair a sub-committee with Dr. Paulson, Dr. Peace, and Ms. Hyler serving on the committee.

Dr. Xie said that the infrastructure is ready to assist in archiving research data. Any VT affiliate can use this storage space. A question remains about how to communicate the availability of this option. The question was raised if students should be required to archive data. Dr. Lu and Dr. Bagchi noted that data from industry would likely have a restriction that would not permit the data to be shared. Dr. Xie suggested a possible graduate student plan for data management. Human subject data restrictions would need to be acknowledged in the process. Dr. Walters will provide a recommendation for consideration by the CGS&P membership.

### **Announcements**

Ms. King announced that CGS&P will begin to use SharePoint in a dual role with Scholar for the remainder of the semester. There were no other announcements.

**Adjournment:** The meeting was adjourned at 5:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

/s/

Marilynn R. King  
on behalf of Karen P. DePauw, Ph.D., Vice President and Dean for Graduate Education