

MINUTES

Commission on Graduate Studies & Policies

March 1, 2017

3:30 pm – 5:00 pm

Graduate School Conference Room

Present: Dr. Karen DePauw (ex officio), Dr. Sally Paulson (Chair), Dr. Lujean Baab, Dr. Sudip Bhattacharjee, Dr. Kevin Edgar, Dr. Charlene Eska, Dr. Rachel Holloway (ex officio), Dr. William Huckle, Ms. Alex Hyler, Ms. Erin Lavender-Stott, Dr. Kathy Lu, Mr. Brett Netto, Ms. Hannah Parks, Ms. Tara Reel, Ms. Libbie Sonnier-Netto, Dr. Zhiwu Xie, and Dr. Ying Zhou.

Absent with Notification: Dr. Rajesh Bagchi, Dr. Nancy Bodenhorn, Dr. Lesa Hanlin, Mr. Timothy Kinoshita, Dr. Annie Pearce, and Dr. Robert Sumichrast.

Absent without Notification: Dr. Tyler Walters (ex officio).

Visitors and Invited Guests: Ms. Janice Austin, Dr. Michael Friedlander, Dr. Muhammed Hajj, Dr. Hal Irvin, Dr. Marcy Schnitzer, Dr. Audra Van Wart, and Dr. Anisa Zvonkovic.

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 15, 2017

The minutes were approved as presented.

Committee Reports

Graduate Curriculum Committee

Dr. Edgar reported that eight courses were reviewed with four tabled. The minutes were accepted by the Commission.

Graduate Student Appeals Committee

There was no report.

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

Dr. Huckle provided an update on the meeting on February 23rd.

Oral English proficiency for GTAs: Rosemary Blieszner shared with DRSCAP information compiled by Kacy Lawrence in the Grad School regarding the impact on applicants of changing our TOEFL or IETLS minima. Data in hand suggest that scores of a significant percentage of applicants admitted over the last 3 years would fall below a total TOEFL score of 100 (80 is the current standard) or would be

affected by raising the TOEFL subtest standard from 20 to 25. Before reaching a recommendation for CGS&P, we will request a higher resolution breakdown of effects of less dramatic TOEFL minimum increases, such as to 82, 84, 88, etc., seeking to find points of minimal adverse impact on numbers. Also, we are seeking, with the help of Janice Austin, information from selected individual programs (e.g., those employing the greatest numbers of GTAs and/or with the highest representation of international students) regarding the TOEFL scores of students they assign to be GTAs, recitation facilitators, or instructors of record.

Diversity training for grad students: We agreed that recommending the implementation of diversity training for graduate students would be a fitting expression of CGS&P's support for the VT Principles of Community. There ensued a wide-ranging discussion of how such training might be developed (by internal vs external experts?), delivered (via engagement of TLOS?), and documented (as part of the Plan of Study, akin to required Ethics training?). Dr. Blieszner has provided a copy of the CGS&P Resolution on ethics training (2012-13B) to use as a template for drafting an analogous document calling upon the Grad School to devise and deploy a diversity training process.

Dr. DePauw commented on the possibility for raising the overall TOEFL scores or speaking scores. Others commented on the need to consider the impact on the students and to keep the focus on English proficiency with the potential of improving the effectiveness of our students.

Constituency Updates

Graduate Student Assembly (GSA)

Mr. Netto reported there was a General Assembly meeting last Thursday. Students discussed the impact of immigration requirements to enroll fulltime. A possible resolution may be forthcoming to address this issue.

Graduate Honor System (GHS)

Ms. Lavender-Stott reported cases are moving forward.

University Library Committee

There was no report.

Faculty Senate

There was no report.

Student Government Association (SGA)

There was no report.

University Council and Commission Updates

Dr. Paulson reported that the University Council meeting was cancelled.

Dr. Hajj attended CUSP and discussed possible academic calendar changes for the future to accommodate adding the Labor Day holiday. Resolutions will likely come forward in the future.

Graduate School Update

Dr. DePauw reminded everyone the President's executive order is now on hold. She reminded everyone of the VT immigration website. She continues to work toward a goal of one student returning to the country. Dr. DePauw reminded everyone to be proactive in anticipating international student tension and stress. At President's Council, Kay Heidbreder advised international students to exert caution if traveling. President Sands' letter advised everyone to carry passports and documents with them. International students with concerns should be referred to student legal counsel or make contact with staff through the website. Dr. DePauw is waiving the April 15th timeline for accepting assistantships for international students and instead accept a March 15th deadline. Immigration processing will be taking 4-6 months prior to start of enrollment, thus, this change in deadline will better ensure the student completing all immigration requirements.

Old Business

The Resolution to Establish a Master of Science in Translational Biology, Medicine, and Health was approved, following the Faculty Senate waiving its review, with the modification of the year of first graduates being May, 2019, and the term and year of initiation as Fall, 2018.

New Business

Dr. Zvonkovic presented the Resolution for Renaming the Department of Human Development to the Department of Human Development and Family Science, the Resolution to Approve the Degree Title Change from Master of Science in Human Development and Family Science, and the Resolution to Approve the Degree Title Change from Doctor of Philosophy in Human Development to Doctor of Philosophy in Human Development and Family Science for first readings. These resolutions will move to the Faculty Senate for review.

Dr. Schnitzer addressed the requirement that all incoming students will be required to take a diversity course, Diversity.edu, following the BOV's endorsement last fall. This will include graduate students. The courses will be accessed through Canvas, it is forty minutes and self-paced. Dr. Schnitzer will communicate with faculty and departments to ensure students understand why they are enrolled in these courses. This will be a one-time online course, minimizing time constraints for students. Students will not be required to repeat this course. The course must be completed by October or there will be a hold placed on the student's account.

Announcements

There were no announcements.

Adjournment: The meeting was adjourned at 4:55 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

/s/

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