

MINUTES

Commission on Graduate Studies & Policies

March 16, 2016

3:30 pm – 5:00 pm

Graduate School Conference Room

Present: Dr. Saul Halfon, Dr. Lujean Baab, Mr. Anthony Carno, Ms. Kira Dietz, Dr. Kay Dunkley, Dr. Charlene Eska, Ms. Samantha Fried (representing Matthew Chan), Dr. Rachel Holloway, Dr. William Huckle, Dr. James Jones, Ms. Erin Lavender-Stott (representing Nathan Carter), Mr. Brian Mathews (representing Dr. Tyler Walters), Dr. Sally Paulson, Ms. Tara Reel, Dr. Hans Robinson, Dr. Scott Salom, Dr. Gary Seidel, Mr. Mohammed Seyam, Ms. Maria Stack, Ms. Sally Wieringa, and Dr. Christopher Zobel.

Absent with Notification: Dr. Karen DePauw (ex officio), Mr. Nathan Carter, Mr. Matt Chan, Dr. Cyril Clarke, and Dr. Kevin Edgar.

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

Visitors and Invited Guests: Ms. Janice Austin, Dr. Steve Culver, Dr. Muhammed Hajj and Ms. Jaime Williams.

Call to Order

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

Approval of the Agenda

The Commission approved the agenda moving the SPOT process presentation following the approval of the minutes.

Approval of the Minutes from March 2, 2016

The minutes were approved as amended.

Committee Reports

Graduate Curriculum Committee

Dr. Seidel reported there had not been a meeting since the last CGS&P meeting.

Graduate Student Appeals Committee

Dr. Jones reported there are no new cases.

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

Dr. Zobel had no updates to report.

Constituencies Updates

Graduate Student Assembly (GSA)

Ms. Reel delivered the GSA report for Mr. Chan. The second to the last GSA General Assembly meeting will occur on March 17th. The new Vice President for Strategic Affairs & Vice Provost for Inclusion and Diversity, Dr. Menah Pratt-Clarke, will be visiting and presenting her office's vision of inclusion and diversity at Virginia Tech as well as taking questions from graduate students. The GSA Constitution is under revision. We are required by our own policy to notify CGS&P for feedback. A digital copy of the track-change document for CGSP members has been provided with today's materials for this meeting. The main changes are creating a new Executive Board officer position, the Director of Events, in charge of smaller but more frequent events and services to further GSA's mission. Another change would extend the terms of GSA Delegates. These are graduate student representatives to the GSA from departments and communities across campus that would serve through the summer. This ensure graduate student representation while the GSA General Assembly is in recess. Delegate terms now end the day before class starts in the fall. The other change would be clarification of staff support for the GSA. The graduate assistant and the staff advisor from Student Affairs are now only mentioned in our Constitution in such a way that the oversight of these staff rest with the supervisors in university units, the DSA and the Graduate School, not the GSA. These amendments will be considered for approval by the GSA General Assembly on March 17th. Final approval authority rests with the Commission on Student Affairs. A new set of GSA Bylaws will be considered for first reading on March 17th as well. Approval authority rests entirely within the GSA. The Travel Fund Program application cycle is now opened and will close on March 27th. Graduate students traveling from January 1st through June 30th, 2016 are eligible to apply. The Graduate Research Development Program application cycle will be opened from March 21st through April 1st, 2016. The GSA will support up to \$1000 for doctoral projects and \$750 for masters project for selected participants. The GSA Annual Research Symposium and Exposition will take place next week on March 23rd, during Graduate Education Week. Approximately 180 presentations will be given during the Graduate Research Symposium. Graduate students have increased their participation in advocacy and were represented in Washington, D.C. this past week at the ACC Academic Consortium.

Graduate Honor System (GHS)

Ms. Lavender-Stott indicated there was no report.

University Library Committee

Ms. Dietz had no report.

Faculty Senate

Dr. Salom reported that Faculty Senate met yesterday. Mr. Sparks announced upcoming changes, including the opportunity to change majors up to three times per year. This will be an ongoing discussion with other groups regarding these changes. Faculty requested there not be an overlap with course requests and major changes. The College Collegiate Professor Series was discussed and included the question of whether tenure will be offered for those with a focus on teaching and not research. Several options were discussed. If tenure is involved, the recommendation will need to be submitted to SCHEV.

SGA

There was not a representative in attendance to give a report.

University Council and Commission Updates

Dr. Halfon noted there was no University Council meeting.

There were no other commission updates.

Graduate School Update

On behalf of the Dr. DePauw, Ms. King reported on the events for Graduate Education Week. She also reminded everyone of the schedule for Bring Your Kids to Work Week.

Old Business

Dr. Culver and Ms. Williams provided background for the SPOT process. SPOT has not previously been used for continuous improvement. Perceptions vary regarding whether SPOT is a course evaluation or faculty evaluation. Future enhancements will include flexibility to improve the new process. Faculty and departments will be able to add their own questions to the survey. SPOT is reliant on accurate Banner data. Dr. Culver presented a new draft of the SPOT form for sharing, review, and recommendations. He encouraged everyone to give him feedback on any changes and/or improvements to the questionnaire. He expects the new process to be available Spring, 2017. Reliability may need to be considered in relation to the impact of the questions for undergraduate vs. graduate students. Mid-term evaluations are also another option that will have a profound effect on pedagogy and outcome. Dr. Culver noted the instrument cannot stand alone. Another option would include peer evaluations. Critical to a qualitative or quantitative process is to be certain design encourages participation. An entirely qualitative evaluation creates increased risk in participation.

New Business

Dr. Robinson has drafted a charge to the University Library Committee to complete a comparative study on the state of the Virginia Tech Libraries and the libraries of a selection of SCHEV-approved peers and the libraries of other research universities in Virginia. Dr. Huckle requested that the Commission on Research be included in the process. Mr. Matthews reported the physical size and footprint of the Library is limiting options available. The study would afford more information on what services students want. There is a shortage of workspace for students on campus. Humanities and social sciences will likely maintain print support, while sciences will more readily adapt to electronic services. Some renovation may be considered in the future that will appeal to graduate student needs. Dr. Jones encouraged thought of what the library should look like in the next century. Dr. Salom encouraged consideration for outside reviewers to be included in the self-study process. Dr. Holloway noted the master planning process is starting again and will tie into the destination areas. Planning space and infrastructure is an important consideration. Dr. Seidel noted the need for digital delivery across the campus. There is also a concern of classroom creep in spaces needed to support library function. Dr. Robinson will begin circulating the draft wider for additional input. A revision to the charge will be made to consider the 21st century library. Dr. Jones will draft language to include this as part of the revised charge. Suggestions should be sent to Dr. Robinson in the next few days.

Announcements

Mr. Seyam announced the Board of Visitors will meet this Sunday and Monday and encouraged everyone to attend the open sessions.

Adjournment: The meeting 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