

Minutes

Commission on Graduate Studies & Policies

March 20, 2013

3:30 pm – 5:00 pm

Graduate School Conference Room

Present: Ms. Shaimaa Abdallah, Mr. Jordon Booker, Mr. Marc Brodsky, Dr. Karen DePauw, Ms. Nancy Dudek, Dr. Joe Eifert, Dr. Alireza Haghighat via videoconference, Dr. Bernice Hausman, Dr. Jennifer Hodgson for Dr. Gerhardt Schurig, Dr. Karen Hult, Dr. Patrick Miller, Dr. Gary Seidel for Dr. Wayne Neu, Dr. Mayuresh Patil, Mr. Greg Purdy, Dr. Dan Thorp, Mr. Nicholas Vaught, Dr. Linda Wallace

Absent with Notification: Mr. Mehmet Altin, Dr. Chad Bolding, Dr. Kay Dunkley, Dr. Stephen Smith, Dr. Victoria Soghomonian

Absent without Notification: Mr. Mohammad Jalali

Visitors and Invited Guests: Ms. Janice Austin, Dr. Janet Rankin

Dr. Mayuresh Patil, Chair, called the meeting to order.

Approval of the agenda: Approved.

Approval of the minutes from March 6, 2013: Approved.

Committee Reports

Graduate Curriculum Committee (GCC): No report.

Graduate Student Appeals: The committee has completed a fourth appeal. No appeals are pending.

Degree Requirements, Standards, Criteria, and Academic Progress (DRSCAP): No report.

Graduate Student Assembly: Ms. Shaimaa Abdallah reviewed activities of the GSA

- Next week is the research symposium. GSA is still trying to recruit more judges. Awards are funded by sponsors. There are 93 abstracts, 43 posters. Submissions from undergraduates were lower this year, perhaps impacted by spring break.
- The travel fund opens next week, March 25th.

Graduate Honor System: Mr. Jordon Booker, GHS Chief Justice, reported on recent activities:

- 2 cases resolved (fall and spring)
- 1 case gong to judicial process this Friday
- 1 case submitted recently

University Library Committee: Next Tuesday the library is hosting a reception from 11:30 – 1:30 for graduate students for Graduate Education Week.

University Council: Dr. Patil announced that a bachelor's degree from an old interdisciplinary program was eliminated. There is a proposal for a new major in Natural Sciences.

Graduate School Updates: None.

Old Business: None

New Business: First Reading: Doctor of Philosophy in Translational Biology, Medicine and Health (TBMH) Michael Friedlander, Executive Director and Professor of Biological Sciences, and Audra Van Wart, Director of Education and Training at the Virginia Tech Carilion Research Institute, reviewed the new degree proposal. The degree crosses all disciplines and responds to a perceived need nationally for the training of students with these skill sets working in translational approaches to biological, biomedical health sciences. He cited a number of studies which all came to the same conclusion.

Dr. Friedlander addressed the questions below:

- Who gets credit in reporting? Departments will receive the same credit for a TBMH student as they would for a student housed in their own department.
- Where will the TBMH program live in the governance system in the institution? The Faculty Health Sciences is an organizational unit established by the Provost to coordinate academic activities. The Graduate School will be the administrative unit. Students are supported by the program the first year [rotation] and then the students would select a lab/advisor. At that point the advisor would assume some financial responsibility for the student's support. The program would continue to lend some support but at a declining level each year.
- How would existing money support and additional 30 students per year? Research has indicated that funds are sufficient to cover the additional costs. With 6 tracks, only 5 students are in each track. Faculty have reacted positively to program concept as a potential for generating additional research dollars, new growth from grants. For example, once established, the program could attract training grants; currently we have three. A university the size of Virginia Tech should have 300.
- Will students already funded by a department be at a disadvantage or competing with students funded by this program? What they have found is the opposite. Students from TBMH are more expensive to fund. The initial push-back was "nobody can afford these students". The program will subsidize the stipends; and stipends will be the same for all students unless they are able to secure their own funding from grants.
- Are there similar programs in the country, especially in our peer institutions? Quite a few private and publics, going by various program names. University of California, San Francisco; University of Illinois; University of Alabama, Birmingham; Baylor College of Medicine; University of Minnesota; Vanderbilt.
- Will we be able to fund necessary library resources? They have done an analysis of all the journals that would be necessary. The cost was \$95,000. The provost has assured him that the necessary funds for library resources would be made available.
- Why start with 30 students? The thirty students are drawn from six colleges, dozens of departments (not a single department). Five students will be in each of the six tracks. Dr. Friedlander noted that students from other programs will be invited to take classes with TBMH students. For example, students could come from the life sciences, human nutrition, biomedical engineering, psychology.
- Will 8 hour credit courses be valuable to other students (because that credit hour load is prohibitive)? Will teaching these courses place an undue burden on faculty time? There may be shorter components of interest to other students, but we don't know yet which components they may be. Developing a modular program could address this. No one faculty will teach a whole 8 hour course; it will be a team-teaching concept, perhaps a week block. Course directors will have oversight of the whole course, funded from the program budget. Faculty feedback has indicated that they think this is a venue for getting students and being part of this program.
- Concern that there is substantive knowledge at VT that is not being included [as a resource] in this proposal. The program anticipates drawing on additional faculty, especially in the second semester core course in Health Implementation Science, as well as some elective classes. This is an area currently being studied and growth is anticipated and necessary. Carilion M.D.s and academically oriented physicians from other institutions will also be teaching courses.

- Will the degree name be marketable? Anticipate that employers will look at publications, research, and track, just as they do with other degrees. The name "translational" may open doors that aren't open to other students.

If there are additional questions, commission members were asked to e-mail them to Dr. Patil who will forward them to Dr. Friedlander.

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