

**Minutes**  
**Commission on Graduate Studies & Policies**  
**April 18, 2012**  
**3:30 pm – 5:00 pm**  
**Graduate School Conference Room**

Present: Ms. Shaimaa Abdallah, Ms. Janice Austin, Mr. Marc Brodsky, Dr. Carolyn Copenheaver, Ms. Natalie Cruise, Dr. Mark Halsey, Dr. Jennifer Hodgson, Dr. Karen Hult, Dr. Patrick Miller, Ms. Akiko Nakamura, Dr. Wayne Neu, Dr. Mayuresh Patil, Mr. Greg Purdy, Dr. Susan Short, Ms. Katelyn Shugart-Schmidt, Dr. Stephen Smith, Dr. Victoria Soghomonian, Dr. Dan Thorp, Mr. Leighton Vila, Dr. Tyler Walters

Absent with Notification: Dr. Karen DePauw, Dr. Kumar Mallikarjunan

Absent without Notification: Mr. Mohammed Jalili, Mr. Jim Yardley

Visitors and Invited Guests: Dr. Janet Rankin

Dr. Victoria Soghomonian, Chair, called the meeting to order.

**Approval of the agenda:** Approved.

**Approval of the minutes from April 4, 2012:** Approved with minor corrections.

**Committee Reports**

Graduate Curriculum Committee (GCC): Minutes from April 12th were approved.

Graduate Student Appeals: No report.

Graduate Student Relations (GSR): No report.

Degree Requirements, Standards, Criteria, and Academic Progress (DRSCAP): Dr. Copenheaver presented the commission with a list of possible “pros” and “cons” of publishing an electronic yearbook, the last discussion item charged to the committee by Dr. Karen DePauw. Dr. Copenheaver will forward the list electronically to Dr. DePauw. Some items included on the pro side were: (1) corresponds with the goal of a land grant college, (2) could be a showcase for the Board of Visitors, recruiters, legislators, journalists, universities, granting agencies. Some cons were: (1) difficult for students writing a non-technical abstract; (2) increased work load on organizer; (3) concerns with ease of plagiarism; (4) quality of photographs.

The committee recommended (1) providing students with models of general abstracts; (2) making sure advisor’s signature is obtained; (3) Graduate School workshop / training; (4) strategy for encouraging viewing of the online link.

The discussion will continue as a commission agenda item next year.

Graduate Student Assembly Report (GSA):

- The GSA has a new executive board
- The GSA Comedy for a Cure was last night
- The GSA raised over \$1,000 for Relay for Life
- The GSA is working on a resolution to address the proposal for building a new athletic facility; there is also a proposal addressing the multi-modal transportation facility plan

Graduate Honor System (GHS):

Ms. Shugart-Schmidt reviewed the case history for the year, noting that there was a substantial decrease in cases this year. Four of the cases chose to use the facilitated discussion process. All cases this year were plagiarism cases.

Ms. Shugart-Schmidt clarified that when a case is active, a hold is put on the student's account. A student may not drop a class while the hold is in place. When the case is finished, and the penalty is determined, the hold is lifted. The student resumes regular standing. For example, if a student receives a zero on an assignment as part of a penalty, once the hold is lifted, the student may then decide to drop the class.

She hopes that better educational materials (e.g., workshops) will help to inform students about expectations at Virginia Tech. Dr. Rankin noted that the GTA workshop series now incorporates more discussions on ethics. Each student enrolled in the training will have to take one session on ethics.

Ms. Shugart-Schmidt will leave office July 1<sup>st</sup>. Ms. Monika Gibson, Director of Graduate Student Services, will initiate the search for a new chief justice.

University Library Committee (ULC): The committee has met and is continuing to work on a letter of support as well as space renovations.

University Council: No report.

Graduate School: No report.

**Old Business:**

Election on Chair and Vice Chair for 2012-2013: The commission elected Dr. Mayuresh Patil to serve as chair, and Dr. Karen Hult to serve as vice chair.

**New Business:**

- The commission voted to approve the discontinuation of the MS in Information Systems.
- Research Hours, 7994 & 5994: The commission was asked to discuss whether or not two distinct numbers were needed to distinguish master's plans of study research hours (5994) from doctoral study research hours (7994). Dr. Rankin distributed a handout describing credit hour requirements for degrees, which stated "No Research and Thesis or Project and Report credits from a master's degree can be used for a doctoral plan of study." Ms. Austin noted that, from the Graduate School's perspective, keeping separate designations makes it very clear which research hours were taken for a master's or doctoral program on a student's plan of study. The commission will continue the discussion next year.
- Ms. Michelle McLeese announced that Ms. Robyn Jones will be the Graduate Student Representative to the Board of Visitors next year. Ms. Jones is pursuing a Master's of Education degree in educational leadership and policy studies. Ms. McLeese reviewed her handout, the *Graduate Student Representative Constituency Report To The Virginia Tech Board Of Visitors*, which covered graduate climate, graduate mentoring, and childcare concerns. Ms. McLeese invited the members of the commission to e-mail her with questions.

**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