CGPSP Meeting Minutes
October 7, 2020
3:30 – 5:00 pm

Present: Karen DePauw (ex officio), Rachel Holloway (ex officio), Madlyn Frisard, Robert Sumachrist, Montasir Abbas, Ashley Shew, Richard Vari, Pengtao Yue, Coy Allen, Barbara Hoopes, Nancy Bodenhorn, Cliff Shaffer, Paul Emmons, Nathaniel Porter, Hannah Parks, Anurag Mantha, Awad Abelhalim, Maruf Hoque, Emily Burns

Absent with Notification: Tyler Walters, Gabriela Carillo, Marcia Feuerstein, Lujean Baab

Absent without Notification: Lesa Hanlin, Sarah Karpanty, Hypatia Alexandria

Visitors and Invited Guests: Kacy Lawrence, Kevin Edgar, William Huckle, Cathy Grimes, April Myers

Call to Order
A quorum was established and the meeting was called to order at 3:32 pm.

Approval of the Agenda
The agenda was approved as presented.

Approval of the Minutes
The minutes from September 16, 2020 were approved as presented.

Committee Reports

Graduate Curriculum Committee – William Huckle
The GCC met on September 24, 2020. Two courses (HNFE 5304, HD 5324) were approved as is, and five courses (CSES 5634, CEE 5454, HD 5224, WATR 6004, NEUR 5844) were approved pending minor revision. One course was tabled for further discussion (BMES 5234).

A new certificate for the College of Architecture and Urban Studies (CAUS), Science, Technology, and Engineering in Policy (STEP) has been approved, effective Spring 2021. Spring 2021 will be both the first term for enrollment and the first term and year to graduate.

Graduate Student Appeals Committee – Karen DePauw
There are no current appeal cases.

Degree Requirements, Standards, Criteria, and Academic Progress (DRSCAP) Committee – Barbara Hoopes
DRSCAP met on September 23, 2020 and reviewed their three top priorities for the year.
1. PPM 194 – DRSCAP is working to retire PPM 194, which concerns transfer credits for master's students, first approved in 1999. The current PPM is incongruous with practice and policy, and may add unnecessary burden and redundancy. Before retiring the PPM, DRSCAP is planning to review the original reasons for the PPM, why it was not fully implemented, and how different departments currently manage transfer credits. Karen DePauw later added that a uniformity in language across departments is needed. The current policy/practice, which allows transfer

credits to compromise "up to 50%" of a student's program, seems to be reasonable, but it is important to double-check policies across departments and clear up any possible conflicts.

2. Posthumous Graduate Degree Procedures – DRSCAP is continuing to work to build an official policy for awarding Posthumous Degrees. Current un-official policy notes that a student must have made "significant progress" toward their degree, however, this requirement may look very different across departments. DRSCAP plans to work with departments to identify what "significant" work requirements may look like to each program. Research on peer institution's policy is also needed.

3. Doctoral Residency Requirements – DRSCAP is revisiting the current 10 goals of residency, in hopes to move away from current Blacksburg-centric requirements and develop goals that reflect the intent of residency beyond a student's physical location or enrollment status.

   Montasir Abbas noted that many students work full-time while obtaining their degree, so residency requirements may need to be adjusted to account for their circumstances. Karen DePauw noted that there are currently "alternative" residency requirements, but acknowledged that the language needed to be changed so that Blacksburg is not the normal/default. Nathaniel Porter also raised the question of online programs, both now and going forward as we may develop more. Current online or online-heavy programs (mainly, the Executive Business Research Ph.D. concentration) require several weekend meetings, but it was acknowledged that while these are valuable, they may be restrictive to some students.

   The goal of DRSCAP in reviewing these residency requirements is to encourage students to integrate into a professional community and provide the support of the community and their advisor, while also ensuring that the residency requirements are equitable across programs and campuses according to student's needs.

Old Business
Mental Health Task Force – Karen DePauw
Updates to the Mental Health Task Force Recommendations have been added to the SharePoint. As these recommendations and actions steps are developed, the SharePoint will continue to be updated. The GSA for Blacksburg, Roanoke, and Northern Virginia are reviewing the report to give their own feedback, and members of CGPSP are encouraged to contribute their comments or concerns as well.

Nancy Bodenhorn noted that at present, the integrated counselor services in Roanoke are only mentioned in regards to medical students. Karen DePauw affirmed that this is correct for now, but the goal is for non-medical students in Roanoke to be able to access Schiffert resources or other alternatives to the medical school integrated counselors.

Madlyn Frisard asked if we currently have a set policy for time off for students with 12-month assistantships. Karen DePauw responded that students do not have a set number of days for leave like Faculty-Staff might, however, this is intentional. There is an expectation within the Graduate School that students with 12-month assistantships should be allowed to take leave as needed for personal reasons, and they are expected not to work when the University is closed for various holidays. Standardization of student leave policies would require a monitoring structure, and remove some of the flexibility for students.

<u>Commission on Research: Open Access Working Group Policy 13000</u> – Madlyn Frisard
The COR Open Access Policy Resolution and 13000 markups have been added to the SharePoint for members to review. Members are encouraged to give feedback and ask any questions they may have. After a question raised by Nathanial Porter, Madlyn affirmed that the new revision, as requested by CGPSP, includes all Virginia Tech authors, not just faculty authors.

New Business
<u>Graduate Education Task Force Report</u> – Kevin Edgar
Kevin provided a brief summary about the graduate education task force.
The Graduate Education Task Force was formed to review research-based graduate programs with the goal of identifying how to raise the stature, profile, and impact of Virginia Tech, and how to raise the quality and experience of a Virginia Tech Education.

The task force compared Virginia Tech to peer land-grant universities across several metrics including but not limited to endowment, funding sources, and fund allocation. The task force identified aspirational goals for a larger endowment, higher enrollment, and improvement in student support efforts. Peer institutions also provide frameworks for improvements to assistantships and fellowships.

The full report will not be released until after it is presented to University Council in November, and some parts may be redacted for public release. Short-term goals identified by the Task Force include expansion of endowed fellowships, refinements to candidacy status, implantation and support of student-initiated fellowships, mentorship programs for new faculty, and the addition of a Professional Development certificate. Long-term goals include standardized phrasing for multiple-year employment, increased number and scope of self-funded programs, increased student-initiated research, enhanced OSP, a hybrid model of recruitment that includes the Graduate School, and 360-degree feedback for faculty. Some of these goals are already in development.

During discussion, Nathanial Porter asked for a definition of the Professional Development Certificate, which Kevin Edgar identified as a program which would include training for skills needed in the workplace, including writing, statistics, and other general skills.

Montasir Abbas identified the need for increased collaboration between funding institutions and departments if the Task Force's goals of increased funding and diversification of funding are to be met. In regard to student needs, Montasir noted that while institutions support many students financially, a department is focused on providing consistent funding security for individual students to complete their degrees. Similarly, Madlyn raised the question of assistantship longevity. While it is hard to collect data for peer institutions, Kacy Lawrence affirmed that VT is looking to increase the number of 12 month assistantships to better support students.

Awad Abdelahalim asked if the goal to refine candidacy requirements would have an impact on the TA-to-Undergraduate ratio for the University, and advocated for support for TAs beyond research dollars. Kevin Edgar noted that the TA-to-UG ratio is comparable to aspirational peers, although current data does not include the current semester, which may have been significantly impacted by COVID-19. Montasir Abbas noted that these candidacy requirements allow Virginia Tech's money to go further, as it would lead to more publications and citations, which raise the stature of the University to ultimately increase funding.

Graduate School Update – Karen DePauw

No significant general updates to report. Graduate Program Directors will meet Thursday, October 8. Academic changes include a new requirement from SCHEV, which now requires certificates be approved by SCHEV rather than simply acknowledged. This will create some changes in the current process, but will allow staff to approve certificates before they are sent to SCHEV. SCHEV also requires certificates to be a minimum of 12 credits. This does not impact any current 9-credit certificates offered by the Graduate School, but new certificates with less than 12 credits will require justification or adjusted credits to meet this requirement.

Constituency Updates

Graduate Student Assembly - Maruf Hoque
No updates to report

Graduate Student Honor System – Anurag Mantha
The previous open cases have been resolved. A search for a new chair is underway, as Anurag has to resign. Anurag will attend CGPSP until November 4, at which point there may be a gap in which we do not have a GHS representative.

University Library Committee – Nathaniel Porter
No updates to report

Faculty Senate – Ashley Shew
The Faculty Senate has been reviewing the Open Access Policy. At their last meeting the Director of the Board of Visitors fielded questions regarding faculty life.

Student Government Association – No Representative

Board of Visitors – No Representative

University Council and Commission Updates

University Council – Madlyn Frisard
A resolution to update the Faculty Handbook (particularly P&T processes) was presented. There was an update from the Climate Commitment action group and a presentation about the updates to the LMS PageUp system.

Commission on Administrative and Professional Faculty Affairs – No Representative

Commission on Student Affairs – No Representative

Commission on Undergraduate Studies and Policies – Rachel Holloway
No updates to report

Announcements and Discussion
Karen DePauw shared that the Provost is currently looking at a decision for the Spring 2021 schedule and format, which should be announced within the nest few weeks. The Registrar is currently working on course modality options. Karen DePauw specifically thanked the GSA for providing their ideas and concerns regarding the next semester.

President Sands recently released a mid-semester check-in, which highlighted the efforts Virginia Tech has taken and will continue to develop to address COVID-19 concerns and safety on campus.

Adjournment
The meeting was adjourned at 4:55

Respectfully submitted,

Roxanne Kehr
On behalf of Karen P. DePauw, Ph.D.
Vice President and Dean of Graduate Studies