

Commission on Graduate and Professional Studies and Policies

Meeting Minutes – March 5th, 2025

Zoom

Present: Renee LeClair, Lisa Becksford, Stephen Biscotte, Aaron Bond, Carolyn Commer, Zai Cook, Nathan Lau, Leslie LaConte, Sattar Mansi, Kaylee South, Aimée Surprenant, Kwok Tsang, Jerald Walz

Absent: Nancy Bradley, Brian Bush, Kirk Cameron, Paul Emmons, Rose McGroarty, Veronica Montfrans, Jacque Pelzer, Kaustuv Ray, Kiera Schneiderman, Brian Strahm, Tyler Walters

Guests: Janice Austin, Catherine Cotruppi, Kevin Edgar, Monika Gibson, Barbara Hoopes, William Huckle, Bahareh Nejati, April Myers, Elsie Paredes, Lori Rose, Nazila Roofigari-Esfahan, Lauren Surface

Renee called the meeting to order at 3:35pm. A quorum was met.

1. Adoption of the Agenda

The agenda was approved and adopted.

2. Approval of or announcement of approval of minutes from February 19th, 2025

Minutes were approved.

3. New Business

- Current resolutions going through governance:
<https://www.governance.vt.edu/ResolutionTracker/UnderReview#under-review>
- CGPS&P 2024-25B First Reading: [GHS Constitution Revision Committee recommendations](#)
- IPhD Proposal: Bareth Nejati
 - o An Interdisciplinary Framework for Workplace Safety Innovation: Enhancing Highway Construction Worker Vigilance and Hazard Recognition through Virtual Reality
- TOEFL vs. Duolingo: Dr. Elsie Paredes, Language and Culture Institute
 - o The LCI works with international students who want to study at Virginia Tech. They have programming, testing, and tutoring designed to help international students succeed.
 - o LCI offers English courses for spouses of international students and faculty that range from intermediate to advanced. More information: <https://lci.vt.edu/>
 - o Duolingo's testing has flaws and does not test for the same proficiencies that TOEFL or IELTS do. Duolingo lacks testing on nuances that students will encounter with academic writing.

4. Committee Reports

- **Graduate Student Appeals - Aimée Surprenant**
 - None at this time.

- **DAP (Degree and Academic Progress) - Jerald Walz**
 - Running [recommendations](#) through the official governance process.

- **NTCO Master's Committee – Barbara Hoopes**
 - None at this time.

- **Graduate School Updates - Aimée Surprenant**
 - [Message from the Provost: Updates on Federal Actions and Support for Campus Community](#)
 - Fulbright fellowships have been paused, so we are trying to find ways to continue to support them.
 - Students do not need to change their dissertation topics. Academic Freedom specifically covers research.
 - Funded projects that have stop work orders need to work with the Office of Sponsored Programs to find a way to continue scholarship and research in a way that does not violate the stop work order.

Constituency Updates

- a. Graduate and Professional Student Senate – Kaustuv Ray
 - None to report.

- b. Graduate Honors System – Rose McGroarty
 - None to report.

- c. University Libraries – Lisa Becksford
 - None to report.

- d. Faculty Senate – Carolyn Commer
 - None to report.

- e. Undergraduate Student Senate – Kiera Schneiderman
 - None to report.

- f. Board of Visitors - William Poland
 - None to report.

- g. AP Faculty Senate - Aaron Bond
 - None to report.

- h. Staff Senate – Zai Cook
- None to report.

University Council and Commission Updates

- a. University Council - Renee LeClair
- None to report.

- b. Commission on Undergraduate Studies and Policies (CUSP) - (Stephen Biscotte) Rachel Holloway
- None to report.

5. Adjournment

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 4:25pm.