

MINUTES

Commission on Graduate and Professional Student Affairs

March 25, 2026

3:30 p.m.

Zoom

Present – Aimée Surprenant (presiding), Sehrish Altaf, Janice Austin, Meaghan Davidson, Barbara Hoopes, Dan Hong, Lee Learman, Andrea Lopez, Gonzalo Ortiz, Sally Shupe, Lauren Surface, Tyler Walters, Jessica Wilkes, Madison Wypyski

Absent with Notice: Ronnie Mondal

Absent: Mennatallah Fahmy, Matthew Irwin, Natalie Kehrlie, Sudev Namboodri, Nicholas Needham, Mihir Patel, Rohsaan Settle

Guests: Pooja Vilas Bhagawat, Catherine Cotrupi, Katie Gregg, Lori Rose

Aimée called the meeting to order at 3:33 p.m. A quorum was present.

1. Adoption of Agenda

A motion was made and seconded to adopt the agenda. Motion carried.

2. Approval and posting minutes of February 11, 2026.

A motion was made and seconded to approve the February 11 minutes.

3. Unfinished Business

Resolution CGPSA 2025-26A

The [resolution](#), an amendment to the GPSS constitution was presented for second reading. Key changes include clarifications to membership eligibility and senator responsibilities, and a provision locating certain committee-structure decisions to the bylaws to allow future adjustments without a full resolution process. Senate representation will be expanded to include a senator for each campus location. A motion to approve was made, seconded, and carried on a recorded vote with no opposition.

Resolution CGPSA 2025-26B

The [resolution](#) to establish a campus working group to review and optimize graduate and professional student utilization of the student activity fee was presented for second reading. A concern was raised that the Vice President for Student Affairs had not been fully briefed on the resolution. Dean Surprenant indicated she would follow up with their office expeditiously and address any concerns prior to University Council first reading. Additional concerns were raised that the fourth resolved clause, which directed the working group to reduce the financial burden on graduate and professional students, implied fee reduction as a primary goal rather than a possible outcome. A motion to amend the clause was made and seconded. After discussion, the clause was amended to read: if necessary, provide additional recommendations to ensure that the financial burden on graduate and professional students is optimized and that they receive adequate value from the student activity fee they pay. The amendment carried. A vote on the resolution was then held and carried.

4. Reports

- Graduate School – Aimée Surprenant: Graduate Education Week events were ongoing and well-attended, including a writing retreat, workshops, the GPSS Research Symposium, and an awards banquet. A cookout open to the full university community was planned for Friday. The Graduate School also met with a group of Iranian graduate students, who expressed concern about the impact of international tensions on their community and asked for faculty, staff, and students to recognize the distinction between government actions and individual people. Dean Surprenant also noted that she will be assuming the presidency of the Virginia Council of Graduate Schools.
- Faculty Senate – No representation: None at this time.
- AP Faculty Senate – Gonzalo Ortiz: None at this time.
- Staff Senate – Sally Shupe: None at this time.

5. Other Items

- Dean Lee Learman of the VT Carilion School of Medicine was recognized for the medical school's Match Day results. The program achieved approximately 100% placement for its students, continuing a strong record relative to national match rates, which have become more competitive as the number of graduates outpaces residency positions.

6. Announcements

- Next meeting will be on April 8th.

7. Adjournment

There being no further business, a motion was made to adjourn the meeting at 4:15 p.m.