

Commission on Graduate and Professional Studies and Policies
Meeting Minutes
September 18th, 2024
3:30-5:00pm
Zoom

Present: Lisa Becksford, Stephen Biscotte, Aaron Bond, Nancy Bradley, Carolyn Commer, Zai Cook, Leslie LaConte, Renee LeClair, Barbara Hoopes, Sattar Mansi, Jacque Pelzer, Aimée Surprenant, Kwok Ping Tsang, and Jerald Walz

Absent with Notice:

Absent: Tyler Walters, Veronica van Montfrans, Paul Emmons, Kaylee South, Nathan Lau, Kirk Cameron, Rose McGroarty

Guests: Kevin Edgar, Bill Huckle, Rachel Maizel, Ronnie Mondal, April Myers, Lori Rose, Lauren Surface

Renee called the meeting to order at 3:30. There was an establishment of a quorum.

1. Adoption of Agenda

Agenda was approved and adopted.

2. Approval of or Announcement of approval and posting of minutes of September 4th, 2024

Minutes were approved.

3. New Business-

- Potential Resolution for CGPSA – Ronnie Mondal

- * The proposal is about last year's climate survey. They discovered that harassment and academic bullying are persistent issues that need to be addressed. One way to solve this would be to promote good, collegial behavior. CGPSA is planning on promoting these good behaviors so that everyone knows what expectations there are for faculty and students. A second way would be to have a policy in place so that everyone is aware of what resources there are to help with different issues. The current avenues for reporting are not standardized across departments, so there is no official grievance process.

- * The idea is to have the Provost or the President form a working group that will formulate a standardized policy across the university and recommend a way forward.

- *The working group will report to either the President or the Provost to formulate a university-wide policy. Other universities have done this and found success.

- * Their ultimate goals are to have a restorative justice mechanism that answers the question: What is the guidebook we can follow for this? They plan to collect all data, gaps, and inconsistencies and plug where needed.
- * There is a member of University Legal that will be a part of the working group. A draft resolution will be circulated with CGPSP for review, but it will need to go through cabinet first. The vote to move this to cabinet was so moved.
- * Takeaways: They want to reconcile this policy with the current structure for clarity and consistency. Transparent processes result in trust in administration and being able to communicate resources in a way that they happen will gain that trust.

4. Committee Reports

- **Graduate Student Appeals Committee – Bill Huckle**

- * The grade appeal was denied.

- **DAP (Degree and Academic Progress) - Jerald Walz**

- * Getting ready to meet next week.
- * Bill Huckle, Kevin Edgar, and Nathan Lao have agreed to serve.

- **Ad Hoc Masters – Barbara Hoopes**

* The Ad Hoc Masters Committee met on September 11. Members present included Janice Austin (Graduate School), Allison Jones (Mechanical Engineering), Renee LeClair (Carilion School of Medicine), David Robertson (Natural Resources), Patty Cardenas (Innovation Campus), and Barbara Hoopes (Graduate School), chair. New members who will be joining the committee include Rabeya Rahman of the MIT Program and Jason Deane of Pamplin College of Business.

* This committee was formed last year to identify and address common “pain points” and issues that are present for non-thesis, course-only master's programs at Virginia Tech. In our first year, the committee had some success making changes to policies and procedures in the areas of committee composition, exam scheduling, transcripts, and more. At our first meeting this year, the committee discussed potential areas of interest for this year’s work.

* From our initial brainstorming, the priority list for this year includes:

- Streamlining the process for students to apply for more than one degree or certificate, which currently requires some awkward and archaic steps
- Studying the pattern of rejection codes for unsuccessful applicants to graduate programs to ensure that students are being treated fairly and equitably by the programs to which they are applying – and programs aren’t rejecting valuable applicants by accident
- Examining the admissions process for master's programs to consider best practices, guidelines, and wording of communication regarding deadlines, confirmation of attendance, deferrals, and similar issues – all with an eye toward helping programs predict attendance more accurately so they can use their resources to their best advantage

- Discussing the potential differences between “enrolled campus” and “current campus” coding, and the associated repercussions, to see if any recommendations can be made to make life easier for both the university and students
- The committee welcomes additional suggestions for issues to address in this academic year.

- **Graduate School Updates - Aimée Surprenant**

- * Virginia Tech has enrolled in Stepping Blocks, a company that finds out where our alumni are and what they are doing, and we have asked our Graduate Program Directors to sign up and respond. There is a student facing side of it so they can see what other alumni on similar paths are doing.

- *Events

- Dr. Kevin Edgar will be hosting a mentoring workshop on October 24th. This will be aimed at early career faculty and post docs and include information about NSF requirements for mentoring plans.

- Dr. Edgar will also be hosting a Student Initiated Proposals workshop tentatively on November 1st. This will encourage graduate students to submit proposals for funding for their work and to provide flexibility and opportunities. Virginia Tech is behind in funding for proposals, so this is also aimed at helping this.

- * The 2024-25 catalog has transitioned onto a new platform called Course Leaf. It is live and the previous catalog, 2023-24, is still going to be available as a resource.

- * Steering Committee for Northern Virginia is meeting on 9/26/24 and will be focusing on communicating about the programs that will be moving to the Potomac Yard Campus.

- * Hokie One Stop has launched at the Northern Virginia Campus. This is a “one stop shop” for all student resources.

- **Constituency Updates**

- a. Graduate and Professional Student Senate – Rachel Maizel**

- b. Graduate Student Honor System**

- * They had one honors case over the summer.

- * There is a new associate chair.

- * They are discussing a new way to submit reports and organize case materials.

- * They have been hosting training sessions for those interested in becoming panelists.

- c. University Library Committee – Lisa Becksford**

- *Nothing to report

- d. Faculty Senate – Jerald Walz**

- * Nothing to report

e. Undergraduate Student Senate – TBD

* Nothing to report

f. Board of Visitors - Aimée Surprenant

* Nothing to report

g. AP Faculty Senate - Aaron Bond

* Nothing to report

• University Council and Commission Updates

a. University Council

* Nothing to report

b. Commission on Undergraduate Studies and Policies – Rachel Holloway

* Nothing to report

5. Adjournment – Renee LeClair

There being no further business, a motion was made to adjourn the meeting at 4:12pm.