

Commission on Graduate and Professional Studies and Policies
Meeting Minutes – October 16th, 2024
Zoom

Present: Lisa Becksford, Aaron Bond, Nancy Bradley, Zai Cook, Carolyn Commer, Rachel Holloway, Barbara Hoopes, Nathan Lau, Renee LeClair, Sattar Mansi, Kaustuv Ray, Brian Strahm, Aimée Surprenant, Jerald Walz

Absent with Notice: Leslie LaConte, Jacquelyn Pelzer

Absent: Kirk Cameron, Zai Cook, Paul Emmons, Rose McGroarty, Veronica van Montfrans, Kaylee South, Kwok Tsang

Guests: Janice Austin, Catherine Cotruppi, Kevin Edgar, William Huckle, April Myers, Lori Rose, Lauren Surface

Renee called the meeting to order at 3:32pm. A quorum was met.

1. Adoption of Agenda

The agenda was approved and adopted.

2. Approval of or announcement of approval and posting of minutes from October 2nd, 2024

Minutes were approved

3. New Business

- **CGPSP 2024-25A** - Resolution to Form a Task Force to Propose a University-wide Policy to Combat Unprofessional Behaviors Towards Graduate and Professional Students is going through the first reading: <https://governance.vt.edu/ResolutionTracker/StatusDetails/520>
- There isn't a clear process for when a student presents a complaint, which results in these complaints being managed on a one-off basis.
- There are four points outlined in the draft resolution. This resolution is meant to be a restorative justice process, similar to the Graduate Honor System process.
- A letter of support has been submitted from the Student Senate, by Ronnie Mondal. Any edits or suggestions should be sent to Renee LeClair.
- **CFA 2024-25F** - Resolution to Form a University Mission Initiative Committee to Recommend Updated Policies for Funding Graduate Research at Virginia Tech is going through the first reading: <https://governance.vt.edu/ResolutionTracker/StatusDetails/522>
- CFA is looking for feedback and a letter of support from CGPSP.
- CFA is looking for recommendations by the end of the Spring 2025 semester.

- Global Distinction is the pursuit of the University Mission Initiative Committee, there is a need for a more comprehensive and engaged focus group.
- Feedback and modifications for this resolution can be sent to Renee LeClair.
- **The Commission voted to support this resolution and provide a letter of support. Renee will draft the letter.**

4. Committee Reports

- **Graduate Student Appeals Committee – William Huckle**
 - Nothing to report
- **DAP (Degree and Academic Progress) - Jerald Walz**
 - Discussion surrounding their three areas of charge, provided by Dean Surprenant.
 - Plan to invite those from the Commission that are relevant to their discussions, Janice Austin included.
- **Ad Hoc Master’s Committee – Barbara Hoopes**
 - The change to a minimum of 1 committee member for NTCO program students has been handled on an “as request” basis, but the committee recommended that Janice move all NTCO programs to the 1-member-committee list, and any program that desires to continue with 3-member committees may do so. A notification to the affected programs will be sent out.
 - The “bulk” ESS scheduling has been unexpectedly delayed due to the unavailability of development support in the short term. Janice will report back to the committee, and a message to all NTCO programs will be distributed, when this work is completed.
 - Messaging regarding programs carefully considering all the auxiliary items they request in student applications, and choosing only those that will be used in the admissions process, was distributed in the summer. Janice informed the committee that her team will be involved in a study involving holistic admissions and student success with ETS. Specifically, the study will be looking at rubrics for how admission elements are considered and evaluated.
- **Graduate School Updates - Aimée Surprenant**
 - Dean Surprenant has continued to send a weekly message/update to graduate students.
 - There were eight key recommendations in response to the compensation task force that concluded its work in 2023.
 - Increased the minimum step level for full-time assistantships by 40%, and that has affected the overall number of assistantships by 18% over two years. There are challenges in the realm of comprehensive fees that they are talking about.
 - Dean Surprenant has been visiting programs, she attended the open house for the Center for Humanities in War Memorial. This is relevant to us because Paul Quigley, the director of the center, has ideas for collaborating with graduate students, particularly graduate students in

STEM areas. They are interested in fundraising to create opportunities for assistantships/COOP positions for students in the summer.

- On 10/15 the Interdisciplinary Grad Ed Reception took place. The global distinction initiative fits nicely into our narrative around interdisciplinary graduate education at Virginia Tech. Working with advancement to come up with fundraising around fellowship to support this, will likely use IGEP as an organizing tool in this.

- **Graduate Professional Student Senate – Kaustuv Ray**
- Discussed policies regarding the use of university lawns and spaces for activities that are non-academic.

- **Graduate Honors System – Rose McGroarty**
- None to report

- **University Libraries – Lisa Becksford**
- None to report

- **Faculty Senate – Carolyn Commer**
- None to report

- **Undergraduate Senate**
- None to report

- **Board of Visitors – William Poland**
- Fall meeting is coming up in a few weeks.

- **AP Faculty Senate – Aaron Bond**
- None to report

- **Staff Senate – Zai Cook**
- None to report

University Council and Commission Updates

a. University Council

- None to report

b. Commission on Undergraduate Studies and Policies – Rachel Holloway

- Had first reading on the revision for Policy 65. It has been renamed Satisfactory Progress for Associate and Undergraduate Students.
- A VT News story outlined the University census that reported 38,857 active students. Of those, 31,035 are undergraduates, 7,129 are graduate students, 494 in Vet Med, 199 in Carilion School of Medicine.
- Virginia Tech has started to show some recovery from the pandemic. Of last year's entering class, 93.1% of first time in college students returned for their second year.

5. Adjournment – Renee LeClair

- Meeting was adjourned at 4:06pm.