

MINUTES

Commission on Graduate and Professional Studies and Policies

October 15, 2025

3:30pm

<https://virginiatech.zoom.us/j/83812796651?from=addon>

Meeting ID: 838 1279 6651

Present: Renee LeClair (presiding), Stephen Biscotte for Jill Sible, Sonja Crockett for Meng Zhu, Kiri Goldbeck-DeBose, Ioannis Koutromanos, Joshua Neal, Phil Nelson, Kayla Robertson, Molly Ryan, Kaylee South, Brian Strahm, Aimée Surprenant, Kwok Tsang, Veronica van Montfrans, Jerald Walz

Absent with Notice: Nicole Holt, Kendyl Lewis

Absent: Aaron Bond, Kirk Cameron, Leslie LaConte, Cayce Myers, Tyler Walters

Guests: Kevin Edgar, Katie Gregg, Barbara Hoopes, William Huckle, April Myers

Renee called the meeting to order at 3:31pm. A quorum was present.

1. Adoption of Agenda

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

2. Approval of and posting minutes of October 1, 2025.

A motion was made and seconded to approve the October 1, 2025, minutes.

3. Unfinished Business

Resolution 1 CGPSP 2025-26A Second Reading

Renee presented the resolution for second reading and made a motion to approve. The motion was seconded. Included a minor wording adjustment to align more with the Undergraduate Catalogue by including: "through the last day of classes." A vote was taken on the motion, and the motion passed. Renee will double check the precise catalog language with Janice to confirm the exact wording from the Undergraduate Catalogue included.

Resolution 2 CGPSP 2025-26B First Reading

Renee presented the resolution for first reading. Language for this resolution was pulled from the original Board of Visitors resolution and includes that our graduate programs, policies, and practices will comply with the Equal Protection Clause and the Civil Rights Act. Katie Gregg suggested focusing on reaffirming the Principles of Community. The Commission's affirmation is advisory based on President Sands' executive decision. First reading concluded; second reading and vote scheduled for next meeting after suggested edits are included.

4. New Business

Update from the Graduate and Professional Student Senate (GPSS)

Renee provided a summary of the report to the commission, which includes four key topics related to graduate student concerns:

- Graduate Contracts
 - Contracts issued in April; exact TA/GRA assignments are often not known until August. Leave policies being undergraduate focused; existing policies need more clarity.
 - The commission agreed to begin addressing the leave policy first.
- Salary Increase
 - Concerns about students being flexed between GTA and GRA roles to maintain a set salary as opposed to seeing an increase.
 - The commission agreed to monitor the issue and ensure clear communication about rate consistency.
- Work Agreements
 - Provide clarity around dress code, lab presence, and timely feedback. Enforcement mechanism not available; templates from other institutions provided and supplied to programs.
- Summer Assistance and Access
 - Resources (library, gym, student center) are unavailable when students are not actively enrolled.
 - The commission agreed this could improve retention and student wellbeing but would require administrative coordination and fee structure review. The committee will collect best practices from other institutions.

Pooja Vilas Bhagawat, Chair of GPSS, will join the commission on November 19, 2025, to expand on the leave policy.

5. Reports

- Graduate Student Appeals – Aimée Surprenant: No pending appeals at this time.
- Graduate School – Aimée Surprenant: Ongoing discussions about university-industry partnerships are in the early stages of planning and foundations are being developed for a template for PhD students to gain industry experience. Application season has begun, and Dean Surprenant is looking for insight as to how recruiting and accepting new PhD and master's students is going despite international student restrictions.
- Degrees and Academic Progress – Jerald Walz: Clarification: A separate working group will be formed to address 4+1 program policy questions and provide recommendations.
- NTCO GS Committee – Barbara Hoopes: The committee has a new Teams channel to share meeting documents. Janice and Barbara are exploring ways to keep services active for students who are on extended leave for no longer than a year. Graduate certificates are assigned to the Blacksburg campus for state approval, resulting in incorrect billing for online and Northern Virginia students. Credit for prior learning is also being explored by Aaron Bond and Jason Deane, committee members who have volunteered to research peer policies and report back.
- Graduate and Professional Student Senate: None at this time.
- Graduate Honor System – Molly Ryan: None at this time.

- University Libraries – Kiri Goldbeck DeBose: International Open Access week events will include workshops on Open Access, AI, authorship, etc.: <https://calendar.lib.vt.edu/>.
- Faculty Senate – Phil Nelson: None at this time.
- Undergraduate Student Senate: None at this time.
- Board of Visitors – Katie Gregg: None at this time.
- AP Faculty Senate – Aaron Bond: Previous meeting included presentations from Facilities and Parking Services.
- Staff Senate – Kayla Robertson: None to report.
- University Council: None to report.
- Commission on Undergraduate Studies and Policies - Stephen Biscotte for Jill Sible: CUSP 2025-26B was approved, moving the foreign language requirement from graduation to admission. CUSP 2025-26A, the suspension of Concept 7, is now with UCCGE (Gen Ed Committee that reports to CUSP).

6. Announcements

- Next meeting will be on November 5.
- Presentations in next meeting by Cameron Kirk and Bryan Hanson

7. Adjournment

There being no further business, a motion was made to adjourn the meeting at 4:28pm.