

MINUTES

Commission on Graduate and Professional Studies and Policies

January 21, 2026

3:30PM

Zoom

Present – Renée LeClair (presiding), Aaron Bond, Stephen Biscotte for Jill Sible, Kiri Goldbeck DeBose, Leslie LaConte, Kendyl Lewis, Kaylee South, Molly Ryan, Phil Nelson, Joshua Neal, Cayce Myers, Kayla Robertson, Aimée Surprenant, Kwok Tsang, Jerald Walz

Absent with Notice: None

Absent: Kirk Cameron, Nicole Holt, Ioannis Koutromanos, Veronica van Montfrans, Brian Strahm, Tyler Walters, Meng Zhu

Guests: John Chappell, Kevin Edgar, Katie Gregg, William Huckle, April Myers, Lauren Surface

Renée called the meeting to order at 3:31 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 of minutes of January 7, 2026

A motion was made and seconded to approve the January 7 minutes.

3. Reports

- Graduate School Appeals – Aimée Surprenant: One appeal concerning dismissal from a program is currently under review by an appeals committee following the department-level process. Appeal volume has increased in recent years, and the possibility of a standing CGPSP appeals committee is under consideration.
- Graduate School – Aimée Surprenant: The Graduate School recently offered a “Teaching in Turbulent Times” workshop for graduate student instructors and faculty, with a focus on managing sensitive topics in the classroom. Work on mentoring initiatives continues in collaboration with departments and graduate program directors. The University Mission Initiative report on graduate funding is expected soon and may lead to a review of assistantship policy by the commission. Graduate applications are significantly lower overall due to a decline in international applications, while domestic applications have increased slightly.
- Degrees and Academic Progress – Jerald Walz: The committee will continue to work on submitted resolution proposals.
- NTCO GS Committee – Barbara Hoopes: The committee met on January 13 to discuss admissions and recruitment strategies, including accelerated pathways and external partnerships. An ongoing analysis of the G4 “no space available” rejection code indicates increasing use of this code, raising concerns that it may, at times, reflect administrative default rather than actual capacity limits. Further analysis is planned, and additional guidance on the appropriate use of this code may be developed.

- Graduate and Professional Student Senate – Joshua Neal: The Senate is monitoring the status of a proposed working group resolution currently under review by the University Council Cabinet.
- Graduate Honor System – Molly Ryan: The Graduate Honor System is experiencing a typical increase in cases at the start of the spring semester, mainly involving plagiarism and cheating from the end of the fall term. A complex teaching-related case is ongoing and may establish a new precedent once resolved.
- University Libraries – Kiri Goldbeck DeBose: The spring “Research Tools for Graduate Students” workshop series will be offered online from January 26 through March 4. The series will cover discipline-specific literature searching, citation management, data management, publishing, artificial intelligence tools for research, and related topics.
- Faculty Senate – Phil Nelson: None at this time.
- Board of Visitors – Katie Gregg: A special Board of Visitors meeting is scheduled online for February 5 with a focus on undergraduate housing. The Graduate Student Resource Fair will be held on February 3 in the Graduate Life Center. A leadership retreat for graduate student leaders is planned for February 21.
- AP Faculty Senate – Aaron Bond: The AP Faculty Senate recently received an overview of the university’s information technology governance structure. Nominations for AP Faculty Senate will open soon, and ranked-choice voting will be used.
- Staff Senate – Kayla Robertson: None at this time.
- Commission on Undergraduate Studies and Policies – Stephen Biscotte for Jill Sible: None at this time.

4. Other Items

- Renée reported that three additional proposals from last semester’s work have been submitted to the University Council Cabinet to determine whether they fall within the commission’s purview. The three proposals are as follows:
 - A proposal drafted by GPSS to address concerns raised by graduate students.
 - A proposal from the Degrees and Academic Progress (DAP) committee to revise the grievance policy.
 - A proposal from DAP to extend the “sundowning” provision in PPM 232 so that courses are dissolved after five years of non-enrollment instead of three.
- Copyright Memo Discussion
 - [December 12 memo](#) reviewed providing faculty guidance on protecting instructional materials via optional copyright syllabus statements (course/seminar content from unauthorized redistribution). Virginia’s one-party consent law permits student recordings without instructor permission, though faculty retain intellectual property rights per faculty handbook.

5. Announcements

- Next meeting will be on February 4 at 3:30 p.m.

6. Adjournment

There being no further business, a motion was made to adjourn the meeting at 4:05 p.m.