

MINUTES

Commission on Graduate and Professional Studies and Policies

April 1, 2026

3:30 p.m.

Zoom

Present – Aimée Surprenant (presiding), Aaron Bond, Kiri Goldbeck DeBose, Nicole Holt, Ionnis Koutromanos, Leslie LaConte, Cayce Myers, Phil Nelson, Kayla Robertson, Molly Ryan, Jill Sible, Kaylee South, Jerald Walz, Meng Zhu

Absent with Notice: Renée LeClair

Absent: Kirk Cameron, Veronica van Montfrans, Joshua Neal, Kendyl Lewis, Kwok Tsang, Tyler Walters

Guests: Catherine Cotrupi, Sonja Crockett, Kevin Edgar, Katie Gregg, Barbara Hoopes, William Huckle, April Myers, Koehler Slagel, Hallie Stern,

Aimee Surprenant called the meeting to order at 3:30 pm. 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 March 18, 2026.

A motion was made and seconded to approve the March 18 minutes.

3. Unfinished Business

Vote: IPhD Proposal – Sarah Tucker

Aimée summarized the proposal introduced at the March 18 meeting, “Immersive Museology: Applied Research in Museum Immersion” and reminded the commission that the vote is on fir within the IPhD framework and demonstrated interdisciplinarity, not scholarly merit. A motion was made and seconded to approve the proposal. Motion carried.

4. New Business

IPhD Proposal – Hallie Stern

Hallie Stern presented a proposed IPhD program titled “Sociotechnical Signal Dynamics: Behavioral Attribution, Identity Formation, and Surveillance Architectures in Global Signal Ecologies.” Hallie described the central problem as what happens to identity when it is inferred entirely from signals across systems never designed to work together, producing what she terms a “shadow persona.” The proposed program spans signal processing, behavioral systems, and national security, with a committee drawn from Statistics, Engineering, Social & Behavioral Sciences, and the National Security Institute. A vote will be taken at the April 15 meeting.

IPhD Proposal – Koehler Slagel

Koehler Slagel presented a proposed IPhD program titled “Designing for Adaptive Innovation Capacity: The Developmental Role of Structured Failure in Entrepreneurial Education.” Koehler described the core research question as how individuals develop the capacity to engage productively with failure, not as an outcome to avoid, but as a mechanism to build adaptability.

The proposed program integrates entrepreneurship theory, psychology, and education science. A vote will be taken at the April 15 meeting.

5. Reports

- Graduate School Appeals – Aimée Surprenant: None at this time.
- Graduate School – Aimée Surprenant: Fall enrollment is uncertain at this time, particularly for international students facing visa processing delays and federal funding disruptions. Dean Surprenant recently met with a group of Iranian graduate students who expressed their concerns and worries regarding the issues they are facing right now. Faculty and staff are encouraged to extend patience and flexibility with affected students.
- Degrees and Academic Progress – Jerald Walz: DAP met with Janice Austin and heard a proposal to streamline the pipeline for students entering accelerated graduate programs, with small policy changes to the transfer policy and the Graduate Catalog.
- NTCO GS Committee – Barbara Hoopes: The last NTCO meeting will be on April 21, where Shelly Jobst, the Director of Continuing and Professional Education, will talk to the group about contract partners.
- GPSS: Both the annual Research Symposium and Awards Reception were successful and well attended.
- Graduate Honor System – Molly Ryan: Wrapping up cases from Fall 2025 and earlier this spring semester, while anticipating some new reports when classes go through finals.
- University Libraries – Kiri Goldbeck DeBose: None at this time.
- Faculty Senate – Phil Nelson: The coach survey is still active; members are encouraged to submit feedback.
- Board of Visitors – Katie Gregg: The April 13-14 BOV Meeting will be held on campus at the Inn at Virginia Tech and live-streamed. The tuition increase under consideration reflects a range due to the state's unresolved budget. Student representative interviews were held; low graduate student interest was noted, and members are encouraged to promote this professional development opportunity to any graduate students who may be interested. Katie's report to the BOV will include graduate student stressors and GPSS initiatives.
- AP Faculty Senate – Aaron Bond: None at this time.
- Staff Senate – Kayla Robertson: Nominations are open for staff members in Staff Senate.
- Commission on Undergraduate Studies and Policies – Jill Sible: CUSP met on March 23. Three resolutions had their second reading: a review process update for Pathways Concept 7 ([CUSP 2025-26A](#)), an update to the foreign language admissions requirement ([CUSP 2025-26H](#)), and a resolution on text messaging policy, which was withdrawn on the recommendation of the chair and advisors for the further development, in part to ensure adequate graduate representation before the policy moves forward.

6. Announcements

- Next meeting will be on April 15.

7. Adjournment

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