

MINUTES

Commission on Graduate and Professional Studies and Policies

April 15, 2026

3:30 p.m.

Zoom

Present – Renée LeClair (presiding), Aaron Bond, Sonja Crockett for Meng Zhu, Kiri Goldbeck DeBose, Ioannis Koutromanos, Leslie LaConte, Kendyl Lewis, Joshua Neal, Phil Nelson, Kayla Robertson, Molly Ryan, Jill Sible, Kaylee South, Aimée Surprenant, Kwok Tsang, Jerald Walz

Absent with Notice: None

Absent: Kirk Cameron, Nicole Holt, Veronica van Montfrans, Cayce Myers, Brian Strahm, Tyler Walters

Guests: Janice Austin, John Chappell, Kevin Edgar, Alan Fellers, Katie Gregg, William Huckle, Cristen Jandreau, Sharon Kurek, April Myers, Lauren Surface

Renée called the meeting to order at 3:33 p.m. A quorum was present.

1. Adoption of Agenda

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

2. Approval or Announcement of approval and posting of minutes of April 1, 2026.

A motion was made and seconded to approve the April 1 minutes. The motion carried.

3. Unfinished Business

Vote: IPhD Proposal – Hallie Stern

No additional comments or modifications are requested. A motion was made and seconded to approve the IPhD proposal from Hallie Stern as presented. Motion carried.

Vote: IPhD Proposal – Koehler Slagel

No additional comments or modifications are requested. A motion was made and seconded to approve the IPhD proposal from Koehler Slagel as presented. Motion carried.

4. Reports

- Graduate School Appeals – Aimée Surprenant: None at this time.
- Graduate School – Aimée Surprenant: The Board of Visitors approved a tuition increase of 2.9% and a student activity fee increase of \$160 (\$60 in various fees and \$100 in the athletic fee). The university is working across units to support international students whose immigration status is frozen due to federal processing suspensions, leaving affected students unable to pursue optional practical training, change of status, or summer travel. The Graduate School has awarded 23 Cunningham Fellowships and identified bridge funding for students who have lost federal grants. A one-page resource guide is being developed.
- Degrees and Academic Progress – Jerald Walz: None at this time.
- NTCO GS Committee – Barbara Hoopes: None at this time.

- Graduate and Professional Student Senate – Joshua Neal: Officer elections for the coming year will be held on April 16 in Roanoke. A senator lunch with Dean Surprenant is scheduled for the following week. The [GPSS Travel Fund](#) summer application period opens April 20 and runs through May 18.
- Graduate Honor System – Molly Ryan: Several new student panelists have been trained and welcomed to the Honor System. Faculty panelists are also sought; interested individuals should contact ghs@vt.edu. Associate Chair Mitch Gerhardt recently hosted a well-attended symposium on AI.
- University Libraries – Kiri Goldbeck DeBose: None at this time.
- Faculty Senate – Phil Nelson: None at this time.
- Board of Visitors – Katie Gregg: The Board approved tuition and fee increase as noted in the Graduate School's report. The resolution on living learning programs was tabled until June. There was limited information shared about the presidential search; the rector has indicated a desire for broad board involvement, including constituent representatives. Helen Phillips, a PhD student, was announced as the incoming graduate student board representative. She holds an undergraduate degree from Virginia Tech, has a background in law, and lives near Charlottesville.
- AP Faculty Senate – Aaron Bond: The senate heard presentations from the Division of IT. Key updates include: the HokieSpa replacement is not expected until late 2026 or early 2027; an enterprise-level Hokie AI tool for faculty, staff, and students will launch in July ahead of fall semester, and the transition from QuestionPro to Qualtrics is ongoing, with graduate student access currently limited to those on assistantship.
- Staff Senate – Kayla Robertson: None at this time.
- Commission on Undergraduate Studies and Policies – Jill Sible: Following recent presentations on admissions, AI, and the Undergraduate Honor System, CUSP anticipates taking up honors system recommendations formally in the fall.

5. Presentation

Sharon Kurek, Cristen Jandreau, and Alan Fellers presented an overview of the university's updated conflict of interest and commitment disclosure processes. The university is moving to a centralized, annual disclosure system that will apply to all employees at 0.75 FTE or greater, as well as graduate students on assistantship. The new process will consolidate multiple existing policies into a single framework, prompt annual disclosures from all covered individuals, and require a one-time training. A new software system is under development, with a pilot planned for Fall 2026 and full implementation expected in January 2027.

6. Announcements

- The final meeting of the semester will be on May 6th.

7. Adjournment

There being no further business, a motion was made to adjourn the meeting at 4:09 p.m. Motion carried.