MINUTES

Commission on Graduate and Professional Studies and Policies
August 26, 2026
3:30 p.m.
Zoom

Present – Jerald Walz (presiding), Aaron Bond, Kiri Goldbeck DeBose, Nicole Holt, Bryan Hsu, Ioannis Koutromanos, Renée LeClair, Leslie LaConte, Veronica van Montfrans, Phil Nelson, Shaun Rosier, Molly Ryan, Jill Sible, Aimée Surprenant, Brian Strahm, Tyler Walters, Tyler Wiltshire, Meng Zhu

Absent with Notice: Cayce Myers

Absent: Kirk Cameron

Guests: Janice Austin, Catherine Cotrupi, Monika Gibson, Barbara Hoopes, William Huckle, Helen Phillips

Jerald called the meeting to order at 3:34 p.m. A quorum was present.

1. **Consent Agenda: Adoption of Agenda and Approval of Minutes**

   Jerald introduced a consent agenda process the commission will use going forward, allowing the agenda and the previous meeting's minutes to be approved together without separate motions unless a member requests than an item be pulled for discussion. As a trial run of this process, no items were pulled for separate discussion, and the agenda was approved. Jerald noted that the minutes of the May 6, 2026 meeting had already been approved electronically and can be publicly accessed on the Governance website.

2. **Unfinished Business**

   Update on Working Group to Review and Modify Policy 6210 (Assistantship Policy)
   Monika Gibson provided an update on the Assistantship Policy Working Group. Meeting biweekly since early June, the group reviewed several topic areas, including the purpose of an assistantship, HR leave policy, standard contract end dates, and expectations for duties and performance, and added a fifth topic on the twelve-credit enrollment requirement for eligibility. The group chose not to pursue further work on assistantship financing given rigid federal requirements, though a subgroup continues to examine how candidacy status affects tuition remission. Six smaller working groups are now developing implementable proposals, due back to the full group by mid-October before coming to CGPSP.

   Review of Action Items from CGPSP 2024-25A: Resolution on Unprofessional Behaviors
   Monika Gibson reported that she and Bryan Hanson, the Graduate School Ombuds, have begun translating the approved resolution into workable policy for the graduate catalog, faculty handbook, and related procedures. The resulting process has three stages: an informal review and resolution stage with no formal record, a semi-formal stage, and a formal stage that begins once a student submits the Graduate and Professional Student Grievance Report Form, after which the Graduate School case manager tracks the case and documents each step. A visual outline of the process is available in the working documents for reference.

Curricular Modifications CGPSP 2025-26B
The exigent circumstances resolution will be referred to DAP.

Acceptable Pass/Fail Graded Courses
Update existing transfer policy to explicitly allow P/S grades from professional degree programs only (since they are graded P/F S/U only). This will be referred to DAP.

Change in Graduate Grading Scale
DAP will look into options for more granularity in grading options for research hours.

3. **New Business**

CGPSP 2026-27 Work Plan
Jerald introduced the CGPS&P 2026-27 Work Plan, which will be presented to University Council.

4. **Reports**

- Aimée Surprenant – Graduate School Appeals: Dean Surprenant shared that there were three formal appeals of dismissal from programs this summer, beginning in May.
- Aimée Surprenant – Graduate School: The Graduate School held a series of well-attended pre-arrival webinars covering a range of topics to prepare incoming students for graduate school. The Provost has provided additional assistantships to the Graduate School to help address growing uncertainty surrounding federal funding and regulations affecting international students. The Graduate School has also hired someone to lead a redesign of its website.
- Degrees and Academic Progress (DAP) – Chair Needed: None at this time.
- Non-Thesis Course-Only Master's Committee (NTCO) – Barbara Hoopes: None at this time.
- Graduate and Professional Student Senate (GPSS) – No representative: None at this time.
- Graduate Honor System – Molly Ryan: The Graduate Honor System is wrapping up remaining cases from the spring and summer. It has also been active in early intervention education, with Molly or another GHS representative available to visit classes to discuss academic integrity and the Graduate Honor System. These presentations can range from a five-minute overview to a full class period and include case studies and discussion of AI-related issues. Faculty interested in scheduling a presentation can reach out to ghs@vt.edu.
- University Libraries – Kiri Goldbeck DeBose: Kiri reported that the University Libraries is hosting Research Tools for Graduate Students, a free virtual workshop series offered in both fall and spring semesters. Sessions are designed for graduate students, but undergraduates and faculty/staff are welcome to attend as well. Workshops cover a variety of topics related to graduate-level research.
- Faculty Senate – Phil Nelson: None at this time.
- Board of Visitors – Helen Phillips: The Board approved in-state tuition for VT Carilion students. At the BOV Retreat on Monday, Dean Surprenant presented on the risks and realities on graduate education at Virginia Tech. All of the slides and materials are available on the BOV website.
- AP Faculty Senate – Aaron Bond: None at this time.
- Staff Senate – Tyler Wiltshire: None at this time.
- University Council – No representative: None at this time.
- Commission on Undergraduate Studies and Policies (CUSP) – Jill Sible: None at this time.

5. Other Items

- Jerald reviewed the commission's charge, which is posted on governance.vt.edu along with meeting minutes, the commission's work plan, and its roster, and is also available on the commission's SharePoint site.
    1. Degrees and Academic Progress (DAP) Committee: A standing working group that reviews policy matters referred by commission members or the Dean of the Graduate School and develops proposals for the commission's consideration. The committee is seeking a chair for 2026-27, and commission members interested in chairing or joining are encouraged to contact Dr. Walz.
    2. Non-Thesis Course-Only (NTCO) Master's Committee: Chaired by Barbara Hoopes, this committee continues to develop policies and procedures for non-thesis, course-only master's programs, an area for continued growth for the university.

6. Announcements

- Next meeting will be on Wednesday, September 16th.

7. Adjournment

There being no further business, a motion was made to adjourn the meeting at 4:30 p.m. Motion carried.