

# MINUTES

## Commission on Undergraduate Studies and Policies

April 27<sup>th</sup>, 2026

3:00PM

In Person in SSB 230 & Via Zoom

**Present** – J. Tokuhisa (presiding), E. Austin, A. Ball, J. Bedore, M. Eick, K. Goynes, M. Kimbrell, H. Lexer, M. Pleimling, S. Over, L. Ricci, J. Russell, S. Rinehart, M. Seref, J. Sible, R. Sparks, S. Sumner, K. Thompson, D. Thorp

**Absent with Notice:** N. Akers, M. Caddick, R. Poff

**Absent:** M. Acosta, S. Clements, S. Dip, K. Edgar, C. Middleton, C. Ruktanonchai

**Guests:** J. Leech, J. Lucas, E. Moon, V. Nguyen, R. Pitcher, D. Somervell, Z. Tucker, K. Wells

J. Tokuhisa called the meeting to order at 3:01. 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 [date of last meeting].

A motion was made and seconded to approve the April 13<sup>th</sup>, 2026 minutes. Motion carried.

J. Tokuhisa noted that these minutes have been voted on electronically and can be publicly accessed on the [Office of the University Registrar's website](#).

### 3. Unfinished Business

#### Financial Aid Presentation

J. Lucas provided an update on federal financial aid changes and their impact on students. The COVID-era repayment pause has ended, and new federal legislation has introduced several changes, including caps on Parent PLUS loans and the elimination of Grad PLUS loans.

Loan servicing disruptions and ongoing legal challenges have complicated repayment processes, particularly for borrowers pursuing Public Service Loan Forgiveness (PSLF). Virginia Tech has worked to provide guidance as a trusted source of information.

Changes to borrowing limits and eligibility are expected to significantly impact all students, with an estimated 40% of Americans not qualifying for private loans. This may be more challenging for graduate students as private loans for their education have stricter criteria. Additional outreach efforts, including virtual sessions and proactive communications, are underway.

Members raised concerns about impacts on student affordability, advising communication, and implications of course withdrawals on financial aid eligibility. Clarification on several federal rules remains pending.

## **4. New Business**

### **Restricted Major Acceptance Pamplin College of Business**

R. Sparks presented restricted major changes for the Pamplin College of Business. Policy 6350 states that restricted majors must be accepted by the Commission on Undergraduate Studies and Policies and then moved to the Vice Provost for final approval. Typically, all restricted majors would be approved together in one year, but with significant curriculum changes in the Pamplin College of Business, an approval off cycle was required. Real Estate is now a restricted major. In addition, there are new courses and additional requirements starting the 2026-2027 academic year. While the resource says, "BIT 2604," R. Sparks noted this should say "BIT 2406."

The Commission on Undergraduate Studies and Policies accepted these restricted major changes for the Pamplin College of Business unanimously and the information will move forward to the Vice Provost for final approval.

### **UCCGE Survey**

J. Tokuhisa encouraged members to complete the University Curriculum Committee for General Education survey prior to the next meeting.

### **2026-2027 Undergraduate Academic Catalog Approval**

R. Sparks presented proposed updates to the undergraduate catalog, including policy revisions and clarifications. Edits included removal of outdated senior residency language and adjustments to admissions criteria. Many of the changes did not appear in the document submitted to the Commission on Undergraduate Studies and Policies. Due to the volume of changes that need to be shown, the catalog changes were tabled and will be sent for electronic approval.

### **Best Practices for Required Course Materials**

A discussion was held regarding the cost of instructional materials not currently disclosed in syllabi (e.g., iClicker, TopHat, subscriptions). Members discussed concerns about financial burden and transparency for students.

Suggestions included improved disclosure policies, consideration of free or institutionally supported alternatives, and the formation of a joint committee (faculty, students, financial aid representatives, and TLOS representatives) to develop recommendations.

## **5. Reports**

- Academic Support Committee – Sherwood Clements: No report
- Academic Policies Committee – Michel Pleimling: There are increasing discussions about academic relief and revising the policy. This work will likely begin next academic year.
- Athletics Committee – Dan Thorp: The policy on Competition Scheduling Oversight Proceedings has been approved. Home or away competitions may not be scheduled during final exams, except in cases where such scheduling is required by the NCAA or the applicable athletic conference. Any exceptions to this restriction must receive prior approval from the Vice Provost for Academic Affairs. The Vice Provost has the authority to approve or deny such requests.

- Commencement Committee – Monica Kimbrell: Colleges will have volunteers assembled by Friday. Individual ceremonies are being finalized.
- Honor Council – Hannah Lexer:
  - Tiffany met with TLOS regarding issues with LockDown Browser. Students affected by a LockDown Browser ban are required to proceed through the standard student conduct process. In such cases, an alternative solution must be identified to accommodate the student's inability to use the LockDown Browser.
  - Additional discussion included the Incoming Class Management Policy and whether these matters fall under the Student Conduct Policy or the Honor Council Policy.
  - A grade penalty tracker is being implemented and must be completed whenever a grade is changed as a result of a conduct or academic integrity case.
  - At present, there are 67 unresolved cases, with a total of 536 cases recorded for the academic year. Once the semester has concluded, departments may request access to their respective case data which will be collated over the summer.
- Library Committee – Sarah Over: No report.
- University Curriculum Committee for General Education – Khanh Ngoc Tran: No report.

## 6. Constituent Reports

- Constituent Reports – Administrative & Professional Faculty Senate – Nicole Akers: No report.
- Constituent Reports – Staff Senate – Misti Acosta: No report.
- Constituent Reports – Faculty Senate – Sherwood Clements, Matt Eick: M. Eick report that the Faculty Senate unanimously approved a statement on the upcoming search for the new university president.
- Constituent Reports – Undergraduate Student Senate – Lindsay Ricci, Cayla Middleton: L. Ricci reported that there is a new memo being sent out for review to the Undergraduate Student Senate in response to the resolution that the BoV presented on LLCs. It will be sent out through Canvas or GobblerConnect for a vote. This will be a more formal proclamation against the BOV LLC resolution.
- Graduate and Professional Student Senate – Sajib Acharjee Dip: No report.

## 7. Other Business – Nominations for 2026-2027 Academic Year Appointment Vacancies

A motion was made to approve the existing chair of the Academic Policies Committee and the existing representative of the University Athletics Committee to continue in their roles. Motion passed.

A motion was made to nominate and approve Michelle Seref as the new representative for the Commencement Committee for 2026-2027. Motion passed.

J. Tokuhisa notified the commission that the following appointments will be opening for the 2026-2027 academic year. Votes for these positions may take place at the next meeting.

- Chair of Academic Support Committee – (1 Year Appointment – Appointee should be selected from College Faculty Representatives) Current Chair: Sherwood Clements
- Representative for Library Committee – (3 Year Appointment) Current Representative: Sara Over
- Representative for University Curriculum Committee for General Education – (1 Year Appointment – Appointee should be selected from College Faculty Representatives) Current Representative: Khanh Ngoc Tran (If not selected from Faculty Representatives, ineligible to vote.)

## **8. Adjournment**

There being no further business, a motion was made to adjourn the meeting at 4:25.