

CGPSP Meeting Minutes

January 20, 2021

3:30 – 5:00 pm

Present: Madlyn Frisard, Coy Allen, Chad Bolding, Kayla Alward, Hypatia Alexandria, Nancy Bodenhorn, Marcia Feuerstein, Richard Vari, Pengtao Yue, Sara Hooshangi, Lujean Baab, Gabriella Carillo, Nathaniel Porter, Montasir Abbas, Robert Sumachrist, Paul Emmons, Barbara Hoopes, Maruf Hoque, Sabrina Sturgeon, Emily Burns, Rachel Holloway (ex officio), Karen DePauw (ex officio), Tyler Walters (ex officio)

Absent with Notification:

Absent without Notification: Lesa Hanlin, Ashley Shew, Hannah Parks, Awad Abdelhalim

Visitors and Invited Guests: Michael Mortimer, Janice Austin, Bill Huckle, Kevin Edgar, April Myers

Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 3:30 pm.

Members once again approved a motion to vote by objections and abstentions, assuming approval unless otherwise stated. This motion was made to accommodate the Zoom meeting format.

Approval of the Agenda

To accommodate guest Michael Mortimer, New Business was approved to be moved to the top of the meeting. Agenda was approved with this small modification.

Approval of the Minutes

The minutes from December 2, 2020 were approved as-is

Committee Reports

Graduate Curriculum Committee – Marcia Feuerstein

No updates; their first meeting will occur next Thursday

Graduate Student Appeals Committee – Karen DePauw

Dean DePauw requested a committee for one, new appeal case. Kayla Alward, Madlyn Frisard, Nathaniel Porter, and Pengtao Yue volunteered and will be briefed shortly.

Degree Requirements, Standards, Criteria, and Academic Progress (DRSCAP) Committee – Barbara Hoopes

DRSCAP has finalized a draft for the procedures for posthumous degree requests. There is a preliminary version in the SharePoint, and the most recent version in the DRSCAP report in the SharePoint. The newest version removes mention of a possible in-memoriam citation for students who have not made sufficient progress toward their degree, as this merits a separate discussion.

The current proposed procedure allows family to request a posthumous degree, or for the department or college to request with family consultation when possible. Requests are then reviewed and approved by the graduate school and the commission, with input from the department.

Eligibility includes significant progress to their degree, including the completion of most of their course work, a plan of study, and substantial progress towards completion for students with research, thesis, or manuscript requirements. A committee or department recommendation is also requested. Language is purposefully vague, as the department/committee are most able to interpret what constitutes significant progress for their specific program. If awarded the student's name will be noted at commencement, and the posthumous status will be noted on the degree itself.

Further discussion among the committee members acknowledged that there are procedures in place for undergraduate posthumous degrees, and Rick Sparks has helped to consult DRSCAP on graduate procedures. Language was also clarified to be more inclusive, and concerns were raised regarding contact with the family, as the Dean of Students is the typical point of contact.

DRSCAP is also continuing their work on revising and clarifying the principles of residency for doctoral students. They are still carefully reviewing language to ensure that is general enough to include the many forms residency takes in various programs.

Old Business

Second Reading and Vote for PPM 194

The draft resolution was sent to the senates, GSA, and SGA. All either approved or waived their commentary. The resolution was approved, and will now be sent to University Council.

Graduate Education Task Force – Student-Initiated Fellowships – Kevin Edgar

A committee of students and faculty have been working to create frameworks for better support and resources. Progress has been made in creating courses around proposal opportunities, which would be hosted by relevant colleges but open to all disciplines. Some of these courses already exist, so the work being done now is an expansion of current practice. Work is also being done on a web resource center for proposal development, which has been proposed an addition to the graduate school site.

Discussion centered around implementation, and the influence of faculty research mechanisms on student opportunities. Incentives were also discussed, as students who earn funding based on proposals can take their funding to any institution. Per the task force report, Virginia Tech has roughly 100 fewer student-initiated proposals than its peers, and up to 200 fewer than aspirational peers (land grant universities).

New Business

School of Environmental Security – Michael Mortimer

The proposal for the creation of the School of Environmental Security comes to the commission from the College of Natural Resources and Environment, as resolution 2020-2021B. The curriculum has been vetted by the department heads, and the resolution is available for review on the SharePoint site.

Discussion helped to clarify the structure of the school, which will support the current Master of Natural Resources, and add an additional degree with (ideally) more to follow. The creation of the school also reflects the wider scope of the program and its geographic center in Northern Virginia.

The commission discussed the possibility of a more complete presentation, which we may revisit after the commission is able to review and discuss at the second reading.

As a reminder, these proposals are typically first vetted through the college, then given to Karen DePauw and Rachel Holloway for general review. After this, they are shared with the Deans before being presented to CGPSP. This specific proposal so far has had full support, with no opposition. The proposal will be sent to the senates, GSA, and SGA for feedback prior to the second reading and vote. If approved, the proposal will then go before University Council, onward to the BOV, and finally to SCHEV.

Graduate School Updates

- The CGS Statement of Principles and Commitments on Graduate Student Mental Health and Wellbeing was posted to the SharePoint for member review. The commission put their endorsement to a vote, with full, unanimous approval. The statement will eventually be shared with students and the broader community.
- The EDRE PhD program is being retired. Students and faculty have been notified, and applications have been suspended. The program will soon be retired following the official process.
- The Graduate Program Director's meeting has been set for February 16th, 2021 at 1:30 pm. Members will be sent registration details via email.
- Candidacy Status is still in progress, with the goal of going before the BOV at their March meeting for a Fall 2021 implementation. As a reminder, the changes to candidacy status will allow students to utilize the financial benefit of candidacy for 48 months (over 3 years) after passing their prelims and entering candidacy status. This financial benefit allows candidates to register for 3 research credits (only paying tuition for these 3 credits) while maintaining full-time student status. This also allows students to retain the benefits of full-time enrollment, which includes the ability to hold an assistantship. The resolution passed several years ago, and will be posted to the SharePoint. The current resolution on implementation is not yet fit for the public.

Constituency Updates

Graduate Student Assembly – Maruf Hoque

No updates; the GSA will meet Thursday, January 21

Graduate Student Honor System – Kayla Alward

Last semester, the GHS had a total of 5 cases. One case remains open from Fall. The GHS constitution was revised last summer to address cases that may require degree revocation. The new constitution was passed by the BOV, and is now available on the website.

University Library Committee – Nathaniel Porter

No updates; the ULC has not met this semester

Faculty Senate

No updates; Brian Hanson will present on Academic Bullying at their next meeting.

Student Government Association – No Representative

Board of Visitors – Sabrina Sturgeon

No updates

University Council and Commission Updates

University Council

No updates; UC has not met this semester

Commission on Administrative and Professional Faculty Affairs – Lujean Baab

No updates

Commission on Student Affairs

No updates

Commission on Undergraduate Studies and Policies – Rachel Holloway

No updates; CUSP has not met this semester

Announcements and Discussion

Rachel Holloway and Dean DePauw are reviewing a platform currently used for undergraduate student case support and management. If expanded to graduate students, this platform will allow administration to work more easily with Schiffert, Cook, career support services, International Student Services, and others to best support students. It also allows for easy appointment bookings. Discussions are still in early stages.

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 4:47 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Roxanne Kehr

On behalf of Karen P. DePauw, Ph.D.

Vice President and Dean of Graduate Studies