

MINUTES

Commission on Graduate and Professional Studies and Policies

March 4, 2020

3:30 – 5:00 p.m.

Graduate School Conference Room

Present: John Hole, Chair, Coy Allen, Hani Awni, Nancy Bodenhorn, Karen DePauw (ex officio), Paul Emmons, Marcia Feuerstein, Madlyn Frisard, Cynthia Hampton, Maruf Hoque, Anurag Mantha, Hannah Parks, Nathaniel Porter, Cliff Shaffer, and Robert Sumichrast.

Absent with notification: Lesa Hanlin, Barbara Hoopes, Joseph Kozak,

Absent without notification: Mehdi Ahmadian, Lujean Babb, Rachel Holloway (ex officio), Alexis Hruby, Sarah Karpanty, Ashley Shew, and Tyler Walters (ex officio).

Visitors and invited guests: Janice Austin, Rajesh Bagchi, Bill Huckle, Ryan King, John Morris, Annie Pearce.

Call to Order

The meeting was called to order by Dr. Hole at 3:30 p.m. A quorum was verified.

Approval of the Agenda

The agenda was approved as presented.

Approval of the Minutes

The minutes of February 19, 2020 were approved as presented.

Committee Reports

Graduate Curriculum Committee

Dr. Frisard presented the Graduate Curriculum Committee minutes of February 27, 2020. The minutes were accepted as presented.

Graduate Student Appeals Committee

There was no report.

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

Dr. Bodenhorn presented on behalf of Dr. Babb who summarized:

Dean DePauw, Kay Heidbreder, Lujean Baab (DRSCAP) met on 2-25-2020 for review of the current draft of the Resolution to Edit Constitution of the Graduate Honor System to Add Revoking Graduate Degree to Penalty Options

Dean DePauw explained the reasons that DRSCAP was charged with drafting the resolution that CGPSP would bring forward and asked Kay Heidbreder to review for comment prior to the second reading at CGPSP. This second reading will take place during the March 4 CGPSP meeting.

Kay confirmed that this resolution will ultimately go to the BOV. She also indicated that we would need to define 'fraudulently' not only for conversations about the resolution but within the Constitution of the Graduate Honor System/Graduate Honor Code. However, the definition does not need to appear in the Resolution moving forward.

Given this, DRSCAP is charged with investigating a foundational definition for 'fraudulent' that ideally would include some standards that have been adopted and are being utilized at other institutions with policies for revoking graduate degrees.

DRSCAP will undertake a search of the wording used at other institutions to consider strictly within the scope of academic misconduct.

We should not address any situation considered as student conduct prior to or after degree is conferred. It was also confirmed that we should not include any wording regarding intent such as 'deliberately' or 'knowingly' as this would require proof of knowledge of the wrongfulness of the act and would create legal hassles.

The question was asked as to whether VT or the School of Graduate Education would be required to or prohibited from informing others, such as employers, about the revoking of a degree. We were advised to leave this at the Dean's discretion.

We also discussed following a similar approach as that used in Undergraduate education. Kay indicated that, when an undergraduate student is charged with a violation, that student often requests a transcript immediately before anything is showing on that transcript. Rick Sparks has been telling students that VT will send an amended transcript even if one is issued prior to recording the information.

The next steps are then to:

- Present the current version of the resolution to CGPSP on March 4 for second reading
- Investigate wording to define 'fraudulently,' and
- Make recommendations for revision to the Constitution of the Graduate Honor System for review and approval of this change through the proper channels.

In addition, Lujean will meet with Dean DePauw on Mar. 5 to discuss the next areas of focus for DRSCAP.

Old Business

Dr. Bodehorn presented the Resolution to Edit Constitution of the Graduate Honor System to Add Revoking Graduate Degree to Penalty Options; CGPSP 2019-2020A. A friendly amendment was made and approved to list “coursework” in the *Now, Therefore Let It Be Resolved* statement. The resolution was approved by the membership. The resolution will now be forwarded to the Faculty Senate, Staff Senate, Graduate Student Assembly and Student Government Association for review.

New Business

Dr. Hole introduced Dr. Rajesh Bagchi and Dr. Annie Pearce, co-chairpersons of the Graduate Mental Health Task Group. Dr. Bagchi and Dr. Pearce presented preliminary findings from the task group work. The presentation included the task group charge, data source points, barriers to mental health and wellness, and opportunities for improvement.

Graduate School Update

Dr. DePauw announced that the spring Graduate Program Director’s meeting will be held on March 19th.

Dr. DePauw addressed the growing concerns on the COVID-19 virus noting that the University has a website regarding policies (study abroad, academic, etc) that is updated daily. Our graduate enrollment from affected countries (China, Iran, Italy, South Korea) is high and there is likely to be an enrollment impact from this.

There was no notification of academic changes.

Constituency Updates

Graduate Student Assembly

Mr. Awni reported the GSA continues to work on tuition and fee increases that are taking place.

Graduate Honor System

Mr. Mantha reported no update.

University Library Committee

There was no report.

Faculty Senate

There was no report.

Student Government Association

There was no report.

Board of Visitors

Mr. King shared that the BOV will discuss and vote on proposed tuition increases for the upcoming academic year. If approved, graduate students would have a 2.9%-3.1% increase in tuition and 5% increase in mandatory fees. There is doubt the graduate stipend will increase to accommodate this increase in tuition and fees.

University Council and Commission Updates

Dr. Hole reported a resolution regarding promotion and tenure is in front of University Council for consideration.

Announcements

There were no announcements.

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 5:00 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

/s/

Janice E. Austin
On behalf of Karen P. DePauw, Ph.D.
Vice President and Dean for Graduate Education