

## CGPSP Meeting Minutes

September 2, 2020

3:30 – 5:00 pm

**Present:** Madlyn Frisard, Nancy Bodenhorn, Anurag Mantha, Awad Abelhalim, Irving (Coy) Allen, Karen DePauw (ex officio), Maruf Hoque, Rachel Holloway, Ashley Shew, Nathaniel Porter, Gabriela Carillo, Hannah Parks, Robert Sumichrast, Barbara Hoopes, Lujean Baab, Pengtao Yue, Montasir Abbas, Cliff Shaffer, Paul Emmons, Sarah Karpanty, Hypatia Alexandria, Emily Burns, Marcia Feuerstein

### **Absent with Notification:**

**Absent without Notification:** Lesa Hanlin, Richard Vari

**Visitors and Invited Guests:** William Huckle, April Myers, Kevin Edgar, Janice Austin, Tyler Walters, Roxanne Kehr

### **Call to Order**

The meeting was called to order by Madlyn Frisard at 3:33 pm. A quorum was verified.

### **Approval of the Agenda**

The agenda was approved as presented

### **Approval of the Minutes**

The minutes from April 15, 2020 were approved as presented.

### **Introduction and Charge to the Committee**

Madlyn Frisard presented an introduction to the purpose and structure of the committee, as well as the charge for the 2020-21 academic year.

### **Committee Reports**

#### Graduate Curriculum Committee

There was no report, as their first meeting for Fall 2020 has yet to occur. The minutes from April 15, 2020 were erroneously presented, as there was no meeting on this date. The minutes from the April 1<sup>st</sup> meeting were approved at the April 15 CGPSP meeting.

#### Graduate Student Appeals Committee

Dean DePauw reported that there were no appeal cases for the past year. Two cases occurred over the summer, for which a 5-person committee was found. Both appeals were related to admissions, and were resolved. The students have been notified of the decisions. One student wrote back to say they were content with the decision and grateful for the process, which they felt managed the case justly and allowed for improvement in the admission process.

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

Madlyn Frisard facilitated election of the new committee for 2020-21, composed of 4 faculty members and 2 student representatives. Members volunteered include:

Barbara Hoopes (chair), Coy Allen, Lujean Baab, Nancy Bodenhorn, and students Anurag Mantha and Gabriela Carrillo. Kevin Edgar will advise in an unofficial role.

All volunteers were accepted without contest. Dean DePauw will coordinate with members soon to set their first meeting and issue the charge.

### **Vice President and Dean's Progress Report and Priorities for 2020-21**

Dean DePauw presented (full presentation is available for review in the SharePoint folder for the meeting). The report began with student poll results regarding why they've chosen VT, and what their concerns are for the upcoming semester. While all students were concerned about covid-19 and funding, Northern Virginia students differed from Blacksburg students in seeking graduate education for career growth and advancement. Marcia Feuerstein confirmed that many Northern Virginia students are already in their desired field. Barbara Hoopes noted that Northern Virginia students have also commented on the desire for in-person instruction in an increasingly virtual world.

Dean DePauw presented statistics for enrollment in our different campuses and programs, noting increased development and enrollment in the new Innovation Campus program, now held at the Falls Church campus. Cliff Shaffer noted that there are currently 50 students enrolled in the new accelerated CS MEng program. Diversity in enrollment was also discussed; members (initially prompted by Ashley Shew) requested further breakdown in statistics regarding "Under-Represented Minorities", which may include students with disabilities, students identifying as LGBTQ+, and gender.

Plans for growth include increased enrollment in doctoral programs and professional masters programs, increased funding to create more GRA positions, and a goal of \$75 million in new funding for fellowships. Dean DePauw presented Virginia Tech's enrollment compared to peer land grant universities, indicating room for growth. Fields of interest in increasing enrollment were identified, including competitive stipend offers, multi-year offers, affordable housing, accessible childcare, and healthcare.

Trends in enrollment for this semester show a national decrease in graduate enrollment due to the coronavirus crisis as well as changes in immigration policy that hinder international students from enrolling and attending. The graduate school itself has reported roughly 895 deferrals for the Fall semester, in contrast to the typical 40-50. By college, the College of Liberal Arts and Human Sciences has seen a drop in enrollment largely due to changes in the State of Virginia's requirements for educators. All enrollment numbers presented were preliminary – a full census will not be available until the end of September.

The strengths of the University were presented, with a focus on holistic education, professional development, and certificate offerings. Initiatives and organizations discussed included Academia 2 Industry (A2I), IGEP and IPHD programs (which are approved by CGPSP), the Global Perspectives Program that was cancelled this year but will be celebrating 15 years in 2021, VTGrATE, Citizen Scholar

Engagement, and Communicating Science. There was a special focus on Inclusion and Diversity initiatives, which included changes to make admissions more holistic (partially by removing the GRE requirement), the Office of Recruitment and Diversity Initiatives, and affirming environments. Members were encouraged to continue pushing their departments to complete their required Inclusion and Diversity plans, and to make sure graduate students are included in these conversations. The College of Engineering was congratulated for their 100% compliance in developing these plans.

Challenges for the fall semester were outlined, including concerns regarding Covid-19, racial and social injustice, international policy changes, and economic hardships faced by students. Priorities identified include maintaining the health and safety of students while providing quality, rigorous education, opportunities for research and scholarly pursuits, and preparing students for their careers. Dean DePauw also presented guiding principles for the November 13 “pivot”, which will focus on supporting graduate students, providing administrative support by continuing operations, and continuing/adapting assistantships.

Dean DePauw concluded by highlighting CGPSP’s efforts in 2019-20, which included the work of the Graduate Education Report Task Force, measures taken to address food insecurity and mental health issues within the graduate student community, and the work done within the GHS to create policies and procedures related to rescinding degrees.

## **Questions**

Anurag Mantha asked for clarification on the BoV decision regarding 2019-20A (Resolution to Edit Constitution of the Graduate Honor System to Add Revoking Graduate Degree to Penalty Options). This measure was not approved as expected due to a discussion on the required majority. Dean DePauw has consulted with the BoV, and the resolution will go to the BoV with a 2/3 majority requirement at the meeting in November.

Anurag also asked about the constitution changes to the GHS constitution mentioned earlier in a discussion about the charge to DRSCAP. Dean DePauw clarified that there are no specific new recommendations, but DRSCAP will continue the ongoing efforts to amend and adjust the constitution as needed.

Paul Emmons asked for an update on the new Falls Church building construction. Dean DePauw confirmed that the project was delayed, but is slowly beginning work again. The committee will continue to receive updates on this matter.

## **Old Business**

None to report

## **New Business**

None to report

## **Constituency Updates**

### Graduate Student Assembly

Maruf Hoque discussed the initiatives the GSA hopes to support this semester, including a focus on increasing graduate program completion, improving student services, and involving students more in Inclusion and Diversity plan development within departments. GSA also hopes to work with capital planning projects to advocate for dedicated graduate student housing, and they will continue to support VT's green initiatives. The GSA will not have their first meeting until September 3<sup>rd</sup>.

### Student Affairs

Maruf Hoque volunteered to be the representative for Student Affairs this semester if another representative is not found. Student Affairs hopes to focus on increasing student involvement in University governance. They will not have their first meeting until September 3<sup>rd</sup>.

### Graduate Honor System

Anurag Mantha reported on the Graduate Honor System, which has no open cases. The GHS will bring resolution for amendments to DRSCAP.

### Faculty Senate

The faculty senate has not had their initial meeting, and as such has no updates to report.

No other constituency had updates to report, including the University Council and commissions.

### **Announcements**

No specific announcements were made.

### **Adjournment**

The meeting was adjourned at 5:00 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Roxanne Kehr

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

Vice President and Dean of Graduate Studies

