

**Minutes**  
**Commission on Graduate Studies & Policies**  
**December 7, 2011**  
**3:30 pm – 5:00 pm**  
**Graduate School Conference Room**

Present: Ms. Shaimaa Abdallah, Ms. Janice Austin, Mr. Marc Brodsky, Dr. Carolyn Copenheaver, Ms. Natalie Cruise, Dr. Mark Halsey, Dr. Bernice Hausman, Dr. Jennifer Hodgson, Dr. Karen Hult, Dr. Kumar Mallikarjunan, Ms. Akiko Nakamura, Dr. Robin Panneton, Dr. Mayuresh Patil, Ms. Tara Frank for Ms. Katelyn Shugart-Schmidt, Dr. Victoria Soghomonian, Mr. Leighton Vila, Dr. Jim Yardley

Absent with Notification: Dr. Karen DePauw, Mr. Mohammed Jalili, Dr. Susan Short

Absent without Notification: Dr. Patrick Miller, Dr. Tyler Walters

Visitors and Invited Guests: Dr. Pat Hyer, Dr. Paul Knox, Dr. Janet Rankin, Dr. Sherwood Wilson, Mr. Ioannis Kokkinidis

Dr. Victoria Soghomonian, Chair, called the meeting to order.

**Approval of the agenda:** Approved.

**Approval of the minutes from November 16:** Approved.

**Committee Reports**

Graduate Curriculum Committee (GCC): The minutes from November 10<sup>th</sup> were approved.

Graduate Student Appeals: No report.

Graduate Student Relations (GSR): No report.

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

Dr. Pat Hyer, co-chair of the committee re-writing the Conflict of Interest (COI) policy, discussed the first draft of the replacement sections for the revised policy 13010 (dated 10.28.11). In particular, the commission discussed the sentence in section 2.2 from the Graduate School catalog, “Graduate School policies prohibit faculty members from serving as an advisor or committee member for individuals with whom they have a personal relationship.” There was some concern that the phrase “personal relationship” needed careful and clear definition. Dr. Hyer noted that the entire COI policy had a definition section. She suggested that better terms to describe relationships would be “family” and “partner”, because the law supporting this policy defines “family”. The document the commission was reviewing contained excerpts from the main document that pertained directly to Graduate School policy.

The commission supported the transparency a signed agreement would afford a student, but some commission members expressed concern that students with limited funding options could feel pressured into signing an agreement if no other funding options were available. The agreement would be signed either prior to the start of the assistantship, or soon thereafter.

It was decided that final word-smithing would be best settled out of committee and several CGS&P members volunteered to work with Dr. Hyer to reach the best phrasing for this policy.

Dr. Copenheaver asked commission members to e-mail comments and suggestions to Dr. Hyer.

Graduate Student Assembly Report (GSA): Ms. Shaimaa Abdallah distributed flyers for the Research Symposium scheduled for March 28<sup>th</sup>, 2012. Abstract submissions are accepted from December 1st to December 8th, 2011.

Graduate Honor System (GHS): Ms. Tara Frank announced one new case. She anticipates that this case will be resolved via facilitated discussion.

University Library Committee (ULC): The library will be initiating new services:

- 24/5 hours will begin on January 17, 2012. The library will open Sunday, 9:00 am to Friday 8:00 pm, Saturday, 9:00 am to 8:00 pm.
- Full service retrieval begins on January 9, 2012
- Book delivery service begins January 9, 2012 (faculty only)
- Electronic device checkout will be available in January, 2012
- New printer/scanner service, machines arriving this month

University Council: The resolution for renaming the Department of Wood Science and Forest Products to the Department of Sustainable Biomaterials was approved.

Dr. Paul Knox, Virginia Tech's Long Range Plan: Dr. Knox summarized the work of the task force assigned to work on Virginia Tech's long range plan and answered questions from the commission.

Multi-Modal Transit Facility: Dr. Sherwood Wilson described the plans for a multi-modal transit facility including timeline, site selection, and project status.

**Old Business:** None

**New Business:** None

**Announcements:** None

**Adjournment:** The meeting was adjourned at 4:40 pm.

*Respectfully submitted:*

Ms. Nancy Feuerbach, on behalf of  
Dr. Karen P. DePauw, Vice President and Dean for Graduate Education