

# UNIVERSITY COUNCIL MEETING

December 17, 2012

3:00 p.m.

1045 Pamplin Hall

## AGENDA

1. Adoption of Agenda Dr. Charles Steger
2. Announcement of approval and posting of minutes of December 3, 2012 Dr. Charles Steger  
These minutes have been voted on electronically and will be posted on the University web.
3. New Business Dr. Charles Steger  
  
Commission on Graduate Studies and Policies Dr. Mayuresh Patil  
Resolution 2012-13A  
Resolution to Approve the Individual Interdisciplinary Doctoral Program (ID PhD)
4. Announcement of acceptance and posting of Commission Minutes Dr. Charles Steger  
These minutes have been accepted for filing by electronic vote and will be posted on the University web. Note that the purpose of voting on Commission minutes is to accept them for filing. University Council By-laws require that policy items be brought forward in resolution form for University Council action.  
  
Commission on Equal Opportunity and Diversity  
November 26, 2012  
  
Commission on Graduate Studies and Policies  
November 7, 2012  
  
Commission on Staff Policies and Affairs  
November 27, 2012  
  
Commission on Undergraduate Studies and Policies  
November 12, 2012
5. Adjournment Dr. Charles Steger

**University Council Minutes**  
**December 17, 2012**  
**3:00 PM**  
**1045 Pamplin Hall**

**Present:** Charles Steger (presiding), Glenda Scales for Richard Benson, Lay Nam Chang, Karen DePauw, Elizabeth Flanagan, Edwin Jones for Alan Grant, William Lewis, Mark McNamee, Scott Midkiff, Kim O'Rourke, Tom Ewing for Sue Ott Rowlands, Cynthia Bonner for Patricia Perillo, Laura Rugless, Gerhardt Schurig, Savita Sharma for Dwight Shelton, Kay Hunnings for Richard Sorensen, Tom Tillar, Martin Daniel for Robert Walters, Kayla Smith for Sherwood Wilson, Paul Winistorfer, Daniel Wubah, Mike Akers, Linda Bucy, Christine Fiori, Maxine Lyons, Joe Merola, Mayuresh Patil, Yannis Stivachtis, Diane Zahm, Charlene Eska, William Christiansen for Scott Nelson, Helene Renard, Eugene Brown, Sam Riley, Debra Salvador, Judy Alford, Jen Mirabella, Wyatt Sasser, Karen Poff, Dustin Dorph, Austin Larrowe, Robyn Jones, Sue Teel

**Absent** Jack Davis (with notice), Jerry Niles (with notice), Tyler Walters (with notice), Christopher Atkins, Dan Cook (with notice), Bruce Pencek, Susanna Rinehart (with notice), Deborah Smith (with notice), Mike Denbow, Dave Dugas, William Huckle (with notice), Jane Robertson (with notice), Eric Wiseman, Darla Chudzik (with notice), Teresa Lyons, Melissa Means, Amy Tunison (with notice), Nicole DaDamio (with notice), Lauren Heming, Karisa Moore (with notice), Jacqueline Nottingham (with notice), Patricia Smith, Patrick Tomlin (with notice), Shaimaa Abdallah, Elaine Mathis, Leighton Vila, Luke Hodge, Adam Smith, Anjelica Smith (with notice), Paige Waltz, Sarah Karpanty, Nicholas Onopa,

**Guests:** Rosemary Blieszner, Jack Finney, Natalie Hart, April Myers

Dr. Steger called the meeting to order at 3:00 p.m. A quorum was present.

**1. Adoption of Agenda**

A motion was made and seconded to adopt the agenda. The motion carried.

**2. Announcement of approval and posting of minutes of December 3, 2012**

Dr. Steger noted that these minutes have been voted on electronically and can be publicly accessed on the Governance Information System on the Web (<http://www.governance.vt.edu>).

**3. New Business**

**Commission on Graduate Studies and Policies**

Resolution 2012-13A

Resolution to Approve the Individual Interdisciplinary Doctoral Program (ID PhD)

Dr. Mayuresh Patil presented the resolution for first reading. Dr. Patil indicated that this program will be housed in the Graduate School and not a specific department. The ID PhD is for students whose educational goals do not align with existing programs to enable them to develop an individualized program of study and research. This program will require integration and is based partly on a program Dean DePauw worked on at Washington State University. Dr. Patil indicated that concerns about this program raised during the Commission's deliberations included:

- Loss of disciplinary focus
- Quality control (run by the Graduate School and not a department)
- Student support

Dr. Patil indicated that this program is not for everyone and the student along with his or her advisor will have to work on a proposal in order to apply to the program. There will only be four to five students accepted into the program each year.

Dean DePauw stated that Interdisciplinary and individually designed programs have been around for thirty-plus years at other institutions such as Washington State University, Penn State, Ohio State, and UC Davis. This type of program is not for the masses, but it provides opportunities for graduate students and faculty who want to integrate curriculum faculty research across a number of disciplines. The majority of the time, students getting into this program will be from within the university. The student will have to put together his or her entire plan of study, he or she will have to get the faculty members lined up with departmental acknowledgement, and he or she will have to have the research topic lined up before getting into the program.

Dean DePauw then explained the process, which is not described in the degree proposal. Dean DePauw indicated that a subcommittee selected by the Commission on Graduate Studies and Policies would be the body to review the proposals and read across the disciplines in order to do the quality assurance. The administrative home will be the Graduate School, but the academic home will be the subcommittee.

Funding for students will be from grants, fellowships, Graduate Teaching Assistantships, or the student's own funding. The Graduate School will not use dollars designated for supporting graduate students through various programs. There is no guaranteed funding for this program.

A suggestion was made to find outcomes of graduates from other institutions who have completed similar programs. For example, how are these degrees viewed by an employer when the graduate applies for a job requiring a terminal degree? Dean DePauw indicated that from her experience at Washington State University all received jobs that they wanted and many were in Higher Education. Dean DePauw stated that she will gather this information from schools already offering the degree and provide it to University Council before the second reading. Dr. McNamee suggested that individualized programs are sometimes a precursor to what might then become a new disciplinary degree; if there is enough interest over time, they can become full-fledged PhD programs.

A council member stated that it appears that all the advantages to an Interdisciplinary PhD could be satisfied by a college-based PhD program if there is a well-run advisory committee consisting of specialists in one or two areas providing the kind of guidance necessary. Dean DePauw agreed that a well-structured committee is going to allow the Interdisciplinary PhD to happen, but sometimes the curriculum gets in the way of the various students. Dean DePauw stated that this degree is not for everyone, but it is for those that have the interest in integrating information across disciplines.

#### **4. Announcement of Approval and Posting of Commission Minutes**

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- Commission on Equal Opportunity and Diversity  
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- Commission on Graduate Studies and Policies  
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November 27, 2012
- Commission on Undergraduate Studies and Policies  
November 12, 2012

**5. Adjournment**

There being no further business, a motion was made to adjourn the meeting at 3:20 p.m.