

Minutes

Commission on Graduate Studies & Policies

April 2, 2008

3:30 pm – 5:00 pm

Graduate School, GLC, Conference Room

Present: Ms. Linsey Barker, Dr. Paul Deck, Dr. Karen DePauw, Dr. François Elvinger, Dr. Joe Eska, Mr. James Freeman, Mr. Thomas Gorman, Mr. John Kane, Ms. Penny McCallum, Ms. Gail McMillan, Ms. Margaret Merrill, Dr. Patrick Miller, Ms. Evelyn Richardson, Dr. Glenda Scales, Dr. Cliff Shaffer, Ms. Chris Thomas

Absent with Notification: Dr. Jim Collier, Dr. Ron Daniel, Dr. Eileen Hitchingham, Dr. Kumar Mallikarjunan, Dr. Suzanne Murrmann, Dr. Gerhardt Schurig

Absent without Notification: Ms. Margo Eggeling

Videoconference: Dr. Rosary Lalik

Visitors and Invited Guests: Mr. Marvin Foushee, Ms. Ennis McCrery, Ms. Jacqueline Nottingham, Ms. Ennis McCrery, Mr. Joe McFadden

Dr. Cliff Shaffer, Vice-Chair, called the meeting to order.

Approval of the agenda: The agenda was approved. Discussion of the student fees resolution will be part of the Graduate Student Assembly report.

Approval of minutes from March 19, 2008. Approved. Dr. DePauw clarified that the SACS online dates in the minutes were intended to encourage commission members to remind departments and colleges about Student Learning Outcomes for the graduate level. Language describing the student life policies discussion was modified.

Committee Reports

Graduate Curriculum Committee (GCC): The minutes from March 11, 2008 were approved. Dr. Shaffer announced that the guide for creating a proposal is now on the GCC website.

Graduate Student Appeals: No report.

Graduate Student Relations: An online survey was sent to faculty and graduate students to determine the level of awareness that faculty and graduate students have about the Graduate Honor System.

Degree Requirement Standards Criteria and Academic Policy (DRSCAP): DRSCAP's [two] items for discussion will be addressed under "Old Business". Dr. Shaffer noted that he had received a number of e-mails expressing concern that 4000 level courses could not be used on Plans of Study. He cautioned commission members to accurately communicate the purpose and status of these discussions. There is no official communication about 4000 level courses, as it has not been presented to University Council.

Other Reports

Graduate Student Assembly (GSA):

Mr. Joe McFadden reported that GSA has "wrapped up" the Travel Fund and Research Fund for the spring cycle. Interviews are underway to select a new Program Chair for next year. The "Big Event" is this Saturday. Over forty graduate students on a Blacksburg team, and at least fifty people on the NCR and Georgetown team will participate. The Big Event will occur simultaneously in both locations. To-

date, the GSA Relay for Life Team has accumulated over \$8,500. The GSA hopes to be on the field with SGA on the day of the event. Ms. Toni Stroter, Vice President for Membership, is working on a CPR class for graduate students. GSA will help subsidize the cost of the class. The GSA summer project will be to tally all of the department GSAs. Departments who do not have a GSA will be encouraged to start one.

Mr. Joe McFadden introduced the GSA resolution addressing student comprehensive fees. The resolution was passed by the GSA on March 20, after two readings.

***Student Comprehensive Fees Resolution
Graduate Student Assembly
Resolution Number 2008-01***

WHEREAS, the student comprehensive fees have been increasing at an alarming rate in comparison to our peer institutions over the past several years and graduate student assistantships have not increased accordingly; and

WHEREAS, the University Bursar charges an additional \$45 fee to students on assistantship who wish to pay those fees over the course of the semester through the Budget Tuition Plan; and

WHEREAS, the burden associated with fees puts our institution at a competitive disadvantage in attracting high potential graduate students because assistantships do not pay fees associated with services underutilized by graduate students;

***THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED,** that it is the sense of the Graduate Student Assembly that the Graduate School, the University Bursar, the Commission on Graduate Studies and Policies and all other interested parties should seek methods of reducing the burden of fees associated with graduate study. It is also the sense of the Graduate Student Assembly that the \$45 fee for graduate students using the Budget Tuition Plan to pay solely for comprehensive fees should be immediately suspended.*

***AND, BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED,** that the Graduate Student Assembly directs the Secretary to forward copies of this resolution to the editor of the Collegiate Times, the graduate Board of Visitors representative, the chairperson and graduate representatives of the Commission on Graduate Studies and Policies, the chairperson and graduate representative of the University Advisory Council on Strategic Budgeting and Planning, the Vice President for Budget and Financial Management, the Dean of the Graduate School, and the University Bursar within one week of passage. The Graduate Student Assembly also directs the Webmaster to post this resolution on the Graduate Student Assembly web page within one week of passage.*

Dr. DePauw broke down the resolution requests into two parts: (1) seeking methods of reducing fees and (2) waiving the \$45 comprehensive fee for students using the Budget Tuition Plan. She also noted that some progress has been made on the request to institute a payroll deduction option for the collection of graduate fees. Should a payroll deduction option be available, the request for a waiver of the \$45 will not be needed.

Following discussion, the commission voted to acknowledge and support the resolution as written. The commission also asked for more information on the purpose of the \$45 comprehensive fee.

Graduate Honor System (GHS): Mr. John Kane reported the there are six cases before the Graduate Honor System.

University Library Committee (ULC): No report.

University Council: At the meeting on Monday, agenda items will include: (1) the resolution for the 4000 level courses and (2) the Master of Information Security Assurance proposal [first reading]. Ms.

Feuerbach will forward University Council agenda items to Dr. Shaffer who will be representing the commission at the upcoming council meeting.

Old Business:

Student Life Policies

Following discussion, the commission voted to ask that the Council of Student Affairs to form an ad hoc committee which would include, the Commission on Undergraduate Studies and Policies, and Commission on Graduate Studies and Policies, and other commissions as might be deemed necessary, in order to undertake a study of judicial policies and procedures relative to graduate students, particularly concerning off-campus conduct and equity across locations as well as the role of the Graduate School in the judicial process.

Admissions Categories

Ms. Margaret Merrill presented the revised “Admissions Categories”.

Students are admitted or classified in one of the following categories:

Types of Admission:

Regular Admission.

An applicant whose grade point average (GPA) meets or exceeds the 3.0 required by the Graduate School for the last half of the credits earned for their undergraduate degree, and whose academic background meets the requirements of the admitting academic unit, is eligible for “regular admission.” A graduate degree, or at least 12 credits of graduate coursework taken post-baccalaureate, will supersede the undergraduate record in evaluating credentials for admission.

Provisional Admission. (Master’s only).

An applicant whose GPA is below the 3.0 required by the Graduate School, but generally not lower than 2.75, and who has other experience or qualifications that demonstrate their potential to undertake graduate study, may be granted “provisional admission” at the request of the admitting academic unit. After attempting 12 graduate credits and earning at least a 3.0 GPA, a student is changed to Regular status by the Graduate School. If a 3.0 GPA is not earned in the first 12 credit hours attempted, the Graduate School will consult with the academic unit to determine whether the student should be allowed to continue. Per U. S. Department of State regulations, an international student with F1 or J1 visa status is not eligible for provisional admission.

Conditional Admission.

An applicant whose academic background is deficient in some aspect, but who otherwise meets minimum qualifications for admission may be granted “conditional admission.” The admitting academic unit specifies and informs the conditions of admission to the applicant and the Graduate School. The academic unit notifies the Graduate School when the conditions have been met.

Following discussion, the commission voted to approve the revised admissions categories.

Note: The above language will replace the first three categories of admission in the current graduate catalog.

Bachelor’s/Master’s

Dr. Glenda Scales gave an overview of the current programs [“Open” and “Honors”] at Virginia Tech and covered purpose, policy, and procedures.

Key issues identified by Dr. Scales are:

- Number of courses you can “double-count” if you were pursuing a MS program.
- How overlapping courses might be counted for a PhD program (as a recruiting tool)
- If starting in one department, can you transfer to another department (for MS)?

Departments must have an approved BS/MS program in order for students to cross disciplines in pursuit of a BS/MS. Dr. Scales will incorporate some of the commission’s recommendations and concerns and the revised program will appear on an upcoming meeting agenda. Dr. Scales was encouraged to circulate the revised document prior to the next meeting so that the commission could address some concerns prior to the next meeting date.

New Business:

Master of Fine Arts in Creative Technologies

The commission will review the proposal and prepare questions for Dr. Truman Capone. Dr. Capone will be invited to an upcoming meeting to address questions and concerns.

The commission will meet on April 16 with the understanding that commission members may be absent due to events scheduled for April 16. The university is open, but classes are cancelled. The earliest a meeting could be rescheduled is April 30, or after 5:00 p.m. It was agreed that a commission meeting will be held on April 16th as planned.

The wording on the defense scheduling form will be an item on the next commission meeting agenda.

Announcements:

Dr. DePauw announced that Ms. Linsey Barker is the 2008-2009 Graduate Student Representative to the Board of Visitors. Ms. Barker will begin serving as the representative in July. The commission voted unanimously to commend the Board of Visitors on their decision.

Adjournment: The commission adjourned at 5:15 p.m.