

## **Minutes**

### **Commission on Graduate Studies & Policies**

**November 16, 2005**

**3:30 pm – 5:00 pm**

**Room 206, Sandy Hall**

Present: Mr. Chris Bassler, Dr. Scott Case, Dr. Kevin Davy, Dr. Karen DePauw, Dr. François Elvinger, Dr. Eileen Hitchingham, Professor Bill Galloway, Ms. Nicole James, Mr. Greg Lemmond, Dr. Gail McMillan, Ms. Margaret Merrill, Dr. Brian Mihalik, Dr. Sue Murrmann, Dr. Jerry Niles, Dr. Don Orth, Dr. Carolyn Rude

Absent with Notification: Dr. Ron Daniel, Ms. Pat Donovan, Mr. Osama Marsouk, Dr. John Moore, Dr. Tom Ollendick, Mr. Brian Whitaker

Absent without Notification: Mr. Sumeet Bagai

Conference call: B. Allen, S. Short

Invited Guests: Ms. Nancy Feuerbach, Mr. Marvin Foushee, Dr. Sherri Turner, Ms. Angie Webb

**Approval of the agenda:** Approved.

**Approval of minutes from November 2:** Approved.

### **Committee Reports**

Graduate Curriculum Committee (GCC): The minutes from October 27<sup>th</sup> were approved. Dr. Case commended members of the committee on their outstanding efforts.

Graduate Student Appeals: No report.

Graduate Student Relations: No report.

Degree Requirement Standards Criteria and Academic Policy (DRSCAP): Dr. Carolyn Rude reviewed recommendations from the Committee on Degree Requirements, Standards, Criteria, and Academic Policies for policy changes regarding grades on transcripts.

Principles that govern policy were outlined: (1) The transcript is the official record of the graduate student's work at Virginia Tech. The transcript should report an accurate history. (2) Students should take responsibility for their progress. Students should have agency. (Automatic processes diminish student agency. Slowing down the automatic processes gives students time to act.) (3) Procedures should be efficient in order to minimize time spent on procedures rather than on the substance of education.

Recommendations were as follows.

#### (1) Incomplete Grades

An incomplete ("I") may be given when the requirements of a course have not been completed because of illness or extenuating circumstances.

Grades of "I" remain on the transcript until they are replaced with a letter grade when the student has completed course requirements. A student may not graduate with an "I" in a course on the Plan of Study. Grades of "I" that remain on the transcript may indicate failure to make satisfactory academic progress and may affect eligibility for assistantships and continuation in a degree program.

Grades of "X" are assigned initially to course work that extends over more than one semester.

(2) New section on withdrawal from courses. (This section would follow the section on incomplete grades.)

#### Withdrawal from Courses

Until the drop deadline, students may withdraw from courses, but they must adhere to the terms of assistantships or other requirements about the minimum number of hours of enrollment, and they may need to add other courses as substitutes to meet the minimum. *After the drop date*, students may withdraw from courses with the approval of their advisor and the Graduate School. The course will remain on the transcript with the grade of W. If a student withdraws from all the courses in a semester, a notation on the transcript will indicate the date of withdrawal, but the course names will not appear.

(3) Grades of W on transcripts; repeated courses and NG, NR in GPA calculation

Grades of W will appear and remain on the official transcript. A statement about the transcript record will be added to the [policy] section on grading systems.

In addition to the above grades, the following grades may be issued: I (incomplete), P (taught on a Pass/Fail basis only), X (continuing courses), W (withdrawal after the add-drop period), NR (not reported), NG (no grade), and EQ (review or equivalent credit for research credit). Grades of NR, NG, and W are not calculated in computing the GPA, but they remain on the transcript. When courses are repeated, both course enrollments remain on the transcript, but only the second grade counts in the GPA. A notation on the transcript indicates that the first grade is not counted.

The commission voted to accept the proposed changes. In item (2), exact language regarding dates will be incorporated into changes. Language in the undergraduate policy will be used as a model for language in the graduate policy.

#### Other Reports

Graduate Student Assembly (GSA): No report.

Graduate Honor System (GHS): No report.

University Library Committee (ULC): No report.

**Old Business:** The commission approved the proposal for the new School of Construction.

**New Business:** The commission agreed that it was in the interest of the university for the commission to actively participate in a review process for new dual degree programs offered in Memorandums of Understanding (MOUs). The commission asked the dean bring items to their attention at her discretion.

**Announcements:** The Resolution for Establishment of a Doctoral Degree (Ph.D.) in Geospatial and Environmental Analysis in the College of Natural Resources will be presented to the University Council on December 5<sup>th</sup> for a second reading.

Future reports on University Council meetings will appear under “Committee Reports” on the commission meeting agenda.

**Adjournment:** The meeting was adjourned at 4:30 p.m.

*Respectfully submitted:*

*Ms. Nancy B. Feuerbach, on behalf of*

*Dr. Karen P. DePauw, Vice Provost for Graduate Studies and Dean of the Graduate School*