

Minutes

Commission on Graduate Studies & Policies

October 4, 2006

3:30 pm – 5:00 pm

Graduate Life Center at Donaldson Brown

Present: Mr. Sherif Agha, Ms. Linsey Barker, Dr. Karen DePauw, Dr. François Elvinger, Professor Bill Galloway, Mr. Greg Lemmond, Dr. Tim Mack, Dr. Kumar Mallikarjunan, Ms. Penny McCallum, Ms. Gail McMillan, Ms. Margaret Merrill, Dr. Brian Mihalik for Dr. Suzanne Murrmann, Dr. Tom Ollendick, Dr. Carolyn Rude, Mr. Brian Whitaker,

Conference call: Rosary Lalick

Absent with Notification: Dr. Scott Case, Dr. Ron Daniel, Dr. Eileen Hitchingham, Dr. Pat Donovan, Dr. Gerhardt Schurig, Dr. Audrey Zinc-Sharp

Absent without Notification: Mr. Maryann Norman, Dr. Jim Collier,

Invited Guests: Ms. Nancy Feuerbach, Mr. Marvin Foushee, Ms. Ennis McCrery, Ms. Jacqueline Nottingham, Ms. Jory Ruscio

Approval of the agenda: Approved.

Approval of minutes from September 20, 2006: Approved.

Committee Reports

Graduate Curriculum Committee (GCC): The GCC approved the new degree program for (1) PhD in Engineering Education, (2) Master of Arts in Foreign Languages, Cultures and Literatures, and (3) a simultaneous degree program for the existing Master of Public and International Affairs and the Master of Urban and Regional Planning.

Dr. Karen DePauw reviewed the procedure for course, certificate, and degree approval. Courses and certificates are considered “approved” when the commission approves GCC minutes. GCC will bring new degree programs to the commission for a first and second reading. If the commission has questions, proposal authors will be invited to a meeting to address concerns. Following commission approval, the new degree is presented to University Council. Degree proposals are presented in SCHEV format.

Graduate Student Appeals: No report.

Graduate Student Relations: No report.

Degree Requirement Standards Criteria and Academic Policy (DRSCAP): The DRSCAP committee is scheduled to meet immediately following the commission meeting. Two new members are Dr. Carolyn Rude and Dr. Tom Ollendick. A graduate student representative is still needed.

Other Reports

Graduate Student Assembly (GSA): Ms. Jory Ruscio, the president of the Graduate Student Assembly, reported on items discussed at two past meetings: (1) athletic event seating and (2) student organization fee allocation. Also, GSA has formed a committee to study health insurance. Proposals [specific, actionable items] developed by the GSA come before the commission and Student Affairs. The GSA has also had a social and a fund-raising event.

Graduate Honor System (GHS): Mr. Brian Whitaker, chief justice of the honor system, gave an update on GHS activities. Of the three reported cases last semester, one is completed, one is going to panel, and one is still under investigation. There are no reported cases to-date for the current semester. Thirty-two new graduate student panelists have been trained. There is a shortage of faculty members. Ideally, there should be a pool of thirty to forty active faculty representatives. One hour of training is required for panelists.

Dr. Lalick will send an e-mail to extended campus faculty inviting them to serve as a panelist.

University Library Committee (ULC): No report.

University Council: Dr. Elvinger reported on the October 2nd council meeting. Several resolutions were brought forward, including the three resolutions for changes to university policies for student life discussed at the September 20th commission meeting. Two resolutions passed, (1) *Reciprocity Statement for Jurisdiction of Off-Campus Misconduct* and (2) *Withholding Academic Degrees for Serious Misconduct*. The third resolution, *Sharing Information with the Undergraduate and Graduate Honor Systems*, generated a lot of discussion. Dr. Steger proposed that this resolution be examined further before taking action in order to clarify some of the language, and investigate potential repercussions. Council members expressed concern that the policies did not (or should not) apply to graduate students. Ms. Keene will speak with university legal counsel to determine what the ramifications of allowing the undergraduate honor system to differ from the graduate honor system would be.

Mr. Greg Lemmond, former chief justice, reiterated the concern, discussed in the 2005-2006 academic year, that sharing information would be disrespectful of the privacy of both the accused and accuser. He noted that he has not yet heard reasons which would suggest that sharing of information between undergraduate and graduate honor systems would be beneficial.

The resolution will be presented to the council in six weeks for a vote.

Old Business: Ms. Linsay Barker reminded the commission that the resolutions [above] reflected a larger issue. Graduate students and undergraduate students are not viewed separately, but rather as one entity, the university student population. Ms. Barker will form a task force to address this issue, bringing forward “hot spots” to the commission for discussion.

New Business:

The role of research in graduate education at Virginia Tech: Dr. DePauw asked the question, “What should be the role of research in graduate education?” At the graduate level, there are coursework only graduate degrees, thesis and non-thesis graduate degrees, as well as professional degrees. Dr. DePauw pointed out that there is an increasing trend to include research as a component of undergraduate education. The student transcript does not indicate if a degree is thesis or non-thesis. Mr. Marvin Foushee stated there was no policy which would disallow the transcript from thesis or non-thesis options. The commission will discuss the issue at an upcoming meeting with additional data provided by Dr. DePauw.

Reduction in credit hours for doctoral program in PPWS: The commission will invite Dr. Elizabeth Grabau to meet with the commission to present the request and address concerns.

Working Session / Retreat: The commission expressed an interest in a session on graduate education. This will be scheduled in the late fall or early spring.

VTIP representation on the board: Ms. Gail McMillan volunteered to represent the commission; she already serves as the Faculty Senate representative to the board. Dr. Elvinger will notify the board that Ms. McMillan will represent the commission, as well.

Announcements: Dr. DePauw invited the commission to tour the GLC.

Adjournment: The meeting was adjourned at 5:00 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