

Minutes
Commission on Graduate Studies & Policies
December 5, 2007
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, Dr. Eileen Hitchingham, Mr. John Kane, Dr. Kumar Mallikarjunan, Ms. Penny McCallum, Ms. Gail McMillan, Ms. Margaret Merrill, Dr. Patrick Miller, Dr. Suzanne Murrmann, Ms. Evelyn Richardson, Dr. Glenda Scales, Dr. Cliff Shaffer, Ms. Chris Thomas

Absent with Notification: Dr. Ron Daniel, Dr. Rosary Lalik, Dr. Gerhardt Schurig

Absent without Notification: Dr. Jim Collier, Ms. Margo Eggeling,

Visitors and Invited Guests: Mr. Marvin Foushee, Ms. Ennis McCrery, Dr. Brian Mihalik, Ms. Jacqueline Nottingham, Mr. Brennan Shephard.

Dr. Kumar Mallikarjunan, Chair, called the meeting to order.

Approval of the agenda: Approved.

Approval of minutes from November 7, 2007: The minutes were approved.

Committee Reports

Graduate Curriculum Committee (GCC): The minutes from November 8, 2007 were approved.

Graduate Student Appeals: The committee is currently working on an appeal.

Graduate Student Relations: Dr. DePauw recommended that the commission appoint two faculty members and two graduate students to the committee. She would like the committee to review some larger issues as well as assisting Mr. Kane with a review of the constitution of the Graduate Honor System.

The commission members appointed to the committee are:

Mr. John Kane (graduate student)
Ms. Linsey Barker (graduate student)
Dr. Glenda Scales (faculty)
Ms. Gail McMillan (faculty)

Ms. Monika Gibson, Director of Graduate School Student Services, will serve as an advisor to the committee.

Degree Requirement Standards Criteria and Academic Policy (DRSCAP):

The committee met with Dr. DePauw recently, and she assigned additional tasks including (1) examining how graduate credit is assigned in the BS/MS program; and (2) how graduate credit is determined in 4000 level courses.

Other Reports

Graduate Student Assembly (GSA):

Ms. Linsey Barker reported on the most recent GSA meeting. They are working on (1) revisiting the Rights & Responsibilities document, and (2) fund-raising for the Karen P. DePauw foundation account.

Graduate Honor System (GHS):

Mr. John Kane thanked everyone who assisted with recruiting faculty members to serve as a panelist this year. The GHS has heard three cases this semester.

University Library Committee (ULC): The minutes from October 4, 2007 were circulated to the commission for review.

University Council: No report.

Old Business:

Dr. Patrick Miller reviewed the most recent draft of the “foundational” learning outcomes document developed by the DRSCAP committee. The committee hopes that the learning outcomes will help facilitate the program review process for departments in general, and for SACS reaffirmation of accreditation, in particular. Dr. Ray Van Dyke, Director, Academic Assessment program, was available to answer questions about the development and purpose of the document. He commended the DRSCAP committee for the work they had done on creating foundational learning outcomes. Following discussion, the commission voted to approve the document. Dr. DePauw will send an e-mail to deans and department heads introducing the most recent version of the document. Dr. Ray Van Dyke will be available for questions / concerns and his contact information will be included. Commission members may alert their colleges that the document is forthcoming.

New Business:

Student Life Policies: Dr. DePauw introduced a discussion the current student life policies that she thought would be pertinent for discussion by the commission. It is her understanding that Student Life Policies apply to all graduate students and all locations. The handout provided to the commission described the jurisdiction; the full policies are posted on the web. In particular, Section III.A. [Jurisdiction] covered off-campus behavior that is reported to our judicial system. Through a joint agreement, off-campus incidents are reported to our judicial system by the Blacksburg police department. The judicial system then takes may take disciplinary action “separate from action taken by civil authorities”. Probation, suspension, and dismissal are the three actions that may be taken by the judicial system. Students who were enrolled as undergraduates, and then graduates, may have the records follow them. Ms. McCrery has done a preliminary review of judicial systems at other universities. It appears that other schools either have a separate or modified procedure for graduate students, or at least will involve the graduate school before any final action is taken. Currently, Dr. DePauw receives a copy of the letter sent to the graduate student which describes the finding and the disciplinary action taken. Dr. DePauw encouraged the commission to review the current policies as they impact graduate students. Another area of concern is that behavior off-campus is treated the same as behavior on-campus. Ms. Monika Gibson, Director of Graduate School Student Services, will be a member of a committee reviewing existing Student Life Policies. Last year, Ms. Linsey Barker met with Ms. Frances Keene, Director of Judicial Affairs to better understand the rationale behind the decisions which result in disciplinary actions for graduate students. Ms. Keene said the most decisions were based on precedent. There is little precedent for graduate students, since they have fewer offenses.

The commission will review and share concerns with Ms. Gibson so that she can take them to the Student Life Policy Review the policies and share them with the committee.

The commission expressed an interest in meeting the Commission on Undergraduate Studies and Policies. Ms. Feuerbach will work with the commission to schedule to find a meeting date. Dr. DePauw suggested

that the information gathered by various sources (e.g., Ms. Gibson, Ms. McCrery, and Dr. DePauw) be pooled in order to present to the joint meeting. Dr. Ron Daniel, who serves on both commissions, believes there to be overlapping issues which affect both undergraduate and graduate students.

Announcements: None

Adjournment: The meeting was adjourned at 4:48 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