

## **Minutes**

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

**October 15, 2003**

**3:30 p.m. — 4:30 p.m.**

**206 Sandy Hall**

Present: Dr. Scott Case, Dr. Don Creamer, Dr. Karen DePauw, Dr. Klaus Elgert, Dr. Jerry Gibson, Dr. Eileen Hitchingham, Dr. Rakesh Kapania, Mr. Greg Lemmond, Ms. Meagan Elwood Madden, Ms. Margaret Merrill, Dr. Kent Murrmann, Dr. John Ney, Ms. Tina Peterson, Dr. Dvadjad Salehi, Ms. Mary Schaeffer, Mr. Terrell Strayhorn, Dr. Sherri Turner

Absent with Notification: Dr. Stephen Boyle, Ms. Yvette Quintela, Dr. Mehdi Setareh

Absent without Notice: Dr. Ron Daniel, Dr. Sharron Quisenberry

Invited Guests: Dr. Roger Avery, Mr. Marvin Foushee, Ms. Nancy Feuerbach, Mr. Pankaj Gupta  
Ms. Angie Webb

Conference Call In: Ms. Laura Fornash

Approval of the agenda: Dr. Kapania asked that agenda items (7) Old Business and (8) New Business be moved to items (5) and (6). The commission approved the agenda with the requested change.

Approval of minutes from October 1, 2003: Approved with one amendment. Dr. Kapania asked that the minutes reflect that Dr. Jerry Gibson agreed to serve as chair of the 2003 — 2004 Graduate Curriculum Committee

Dr. Kapania welcomed Dr. Don Creamer to the commission.

## **Committee Reports**

Graduate Curriculum Committee: minutes from October 9, 2003 were approved

Graduate Student Appeals: No report

Graduate Student Relations: Mr. Pankaj Gupta asked the commission to review the changes to the Rights and Responsibilities document. Further comments from the commission should be forwarded to Ms. Margaret Merrill. Dr. Kapania will forward the document to the Commission on Research for their review.

Degree Requirement Standards Criteria and Academic Policy (DRSCAP): No report.

Old Business. The commission agreed to submit the GSA resolution, Support for CGS&P resolution for the Evaluation of The Progress of Graduate Students (Update of Presidential Policy Memorandum No.1) and resubmit the CGS&P resolution, Evaluation of The Progress of Graduate Students (Update of Presidential Policy Memorandum No.1) to University Council.

New Business: Dr. Karen DePauw reviewed her October 2<sup>nd</sup> letter to commission members, reviewing some agenda items and priorities for the 2003-2004 term. In addition to general discussion of graduate education, some items for consideration by CGS&P include the following:

- Rights and responsibilities for graduate education (document already under discussion)
- Annual progress review resolution

- Graduate admissions guidelines (in keeping with Supreme Court ruling)
- Graduate certificates and posting on the official transcript
- Institutional plan for graduate education
- Review and approval of new and extended graduate degrees
- Graduate Program Review
- Policy and procedures review including
  - Residency requirements for doctoral degrees
  - Size of doctoral committees
  - Total number of credits required for PhD
  - Pass/fail for research hours
  - GRE requirement for international students
  - Quality assessment for graduate courses delivered on-line
  - Visiting graduate students and limit of credits
  - Summer credit loads
  - VT undergraduates taking graduate courses — dual degree programs, B/M degree programs, etc.
  - Withdraw and drop policies
  - Enrollment and assistantship appointment
  - Eliminating untaught courses from catalog

In addition, Dr. DePauw suggested that topics for discussion could also include:

- Who should be teaching graduate courses? Dr. Creamer noted that [Presidential Policy Memorandum No. 14](#) does, in part, address this issue.
- Allowing students to enroll [themselves] for independent study, with departments managing the process
- Can the Graduate School set a minimum for masters requirement?
- Developing a formalized process for coursework only masters.

Dr. Kapania encouraged commission members to send other/new agenda items to him.

Dr. DePauw asked commission members to review the graduate admissions guidelines she was asked to develop. The guidelines (below) must meet the requirements of the law, and the interpretation within the Commonwealth of Virginia, while providing enough flexibility for departments.

Admission to graduate study is based upon a review by the faculty in the degree-granting unit and is focused on the best fit of the applicant's ability and interests with the department's academic programs and faculty. Factors used in the decision-making process can include the following: baccalaureate degree from an accredited institution, undergraduate GPA, undergraduate major, letters of recommendation, academic interest area and match with departmental offerings, availability of faculty advisor, availability of graduate assistantships or fellowships, TOEFL scores for non-native English speakers, GRE or other standardized test scores, relevant previous experiences and social-cultural diversity.

The commission reviewed, discussed, and endorsed the guidelines.

Dr. Roger Avery presented a draft of a resolution entitled, "Awarding of a Graduate Certificate". Graduate certificates are awarded following the completion of a collection of courses; the recipient is then certified as having some expertise in an area of study. There are some certificates that have been formally approved by the university. The certificate approval process is the same as the degree approval process; however, certificate approval does not need to go through SCHEV. Virginia Tech currently does not have any guidelines to assist faculty when they develop a graduate certificate program. Also, graduate

certificates do not currently appear on transcripts; hence the university provides no formal certificate and some academic departments give out certificates of their own design. Virginia Tech currently does not distinguish between the certificates approved by the university and the informal certificates developed by departments. The proposed resolution allows the name of the certificate to be posted on the university transcript [Spring 2004] and a formal university certificate will also be awarded. Individual departments would determine timelines for completion. Following discussion, the commission voted to approve this resolution, which would formalize the certificate process. Dr. DePauw noted that, if University Council approves the resolution, certificates would then be listed in the commencement bulletin.

## **Other Reports**

Graduate Student Assembly (GSA): No report

Graduate Honor System (GHS): Tabled.

University Library Committee: Tabled.

Announcements:

Adjournment: The meeting was adjourned at 4:32 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*