

Minutes

Commission on Graduate Studies & Policies

February 17, 2010

3:30 pm – 5:00 pm

Graduate School Conference Room

Present: Mr. Reghu Anguswamy, Dr. Don Leo for Dr. Richard Benson, Ms. Betsy Brucker, Ms. Kimberly Carlson, Dr. Carolyn Copenheaver, Dr. Paul Deck, Dr. Karen DePauw, Mr. Jonathan Duggins, Dr. François Elvinger, Dr. Joe Eska, Mr. Jeff Feaga, Dr. Tom Grizzard via videoconference, Mr. Mark Halsey, Dr. Kumar Mallikarjunan, Dr. Tom Martin, Ms. Michelle McLeese, Dr. Patrick Miller, Dr. Suzanne Murrmann, Dr. Cliff Shaffer, Ms. Penny McCallum for Dr. Susan Short, Dr. Aaron Purcell, Ms. Hannah Swiger, Dr. Robin Panneton for Dr. Daniel Wubah

Absent with Notification: Dr. Eileen Hitchingham, Dr. Kerry Redican

Absent without Notification:

Visitors and Invited Guests: Dr. Elizabeth Fine, Dr. Bailey Van Hook, Ms. Laura Freeman, Ms. Rebecca French, Ms. Monika Gibson, Ms. Ennis McCrery, Dean Paul Winistorfer

Dr. Patrick Miller, Chair, called the meeting to order.

Approval of the agenda: Dr. Miller asked that resolution regarding the name change from the College of Natural Resources and the new degree proposal, Culture and Public Humanities, be moved earlier in the agenda so that guests would not have to attend the entire meeting. The commission voted to adjust the agenda to move the items to an earlier time. Dr. Paul Deck moved that the new degree proposal, Culture and Public Humanities, be moved to the March 3 agenda to allow commission members time to review it. Four commission members voted to keep the new degree proposal on the February 17 agenda, one member voted to postpone the first reading, the rest of the commission abstained.

Approval of the minutes from February 3, 2010: Approved.

New Business:

Resolution: Name change of the *College of Natural Resources* to the *College of Natural Resources and Environment*. Dr. Paul Winistorfer, Dean, College of Natural Resources, presented the resolution for a first reading. The most recent version of the resolution was distributed at the meeting and will be posted electronically on the Scholar site for commission members. The resolution will be on the March 3rd meeting agenda for a second reading and vote. The resolution has already been presented to, and approved by, the Commission on Undergraduate Studies and Policies for a first reading.

New degree proposal: *M.A. in Material Culture and Public Humanities*

Dr. Elizabeth Fine and Dr. Dr. Bailey Van Hook presented the new degree proposal. The new degree comes from two colleges, “Material Culture” from the College of Architecture and Urban Studies, and “Public Humanities” from the College of Liberal Arts and Human Sciences. The degree proposal will be on the March 3rd meeting agenda for a second reading and vote.

Committee Reports

Graduate Curriculum Committee (GCC): The minutes from February 11, 2010 were approved.

Graduate Student Appeals: No report.

Graduate Student Relations: Ms. Kim Carlson, Chief Justice, has agreed to be a student representative on this committee. Dr. DePauw would like a faculty member from the commission to serve on the committee. She has suggestions for non-commission member appointees.

Degree Requirement Standards Criteria and Academic Policy (DRSCAP):

Ph.D. Residency Requirements

Dr. Kumar Mallikarjunan reported that the committee had reviewed and discussed in depth the current Ph.D. residency requirements. The DRSCAP committee is in agreement with the current policy. Students who encounter challenges meeting the current residency requirement can consult with the Graduate School. Possible exceptions to current policy will be handled on a case-by-case basis. The committee is currently working on a “guidance” document which will be presented to the commission at a future meeting.

Additional Employment for Graduate Students Receiving Assistantships

The committee proposed the following:

Assistantships (GRA, GTA, GA) are provided to graduate students to assist them financially and academically as they pursue graduate studies at Virginia Tech. Graduate students who are receiving a full-time assistantship are expected to work an average of 20 hours a week on the assigned assistantship duties, to be enrolled for 12 credits and to demonstrate satisfactory academic progress and the fulfillment of the requirements of the assistantship.

Given individual circumstances, graduate students may, at times, wish to pursue additional employment. Unless specified otherwise in the assistantship agreement, graduate students receiving full-time assistantships are not prohibited from seeking additional employment. In the interest of the student's professional development and academic progress, students seeking additional employment are expected to consult with their academic advisor, and when appropriate the assistantship provider, regarding the fulfillment of their responsibilities and maintenance of satisfactory academic progress. The Graduate School should be notified of additional employment agreements. If disagreements arise, the Graduate School should be consulted to assist with the resolution of any conflicts.

Dr. Martin suggested changing the “shoulds” to “musts”, e.g., “must consult”, “must notify”. Dr. Mallikarjunan will invite Dr. Hyer and Dr. Tom Inzana to an upcoming meeting to talk about policy 6200 and whether or not it would impact students’ employment. She can also address possible conflict of interest issues that might occur when a graduate student is asked to work for a faculty member’s private company.

Other Reports

Graduate Student Assembly (GSA):

Ms. McCleese reviewed recent activities of the GSA.

- The next GSA meeting is February 25th.
- Executive board elections are coming up.
- The Board of Visitors has closed the nominations for new representatives. There are 4 graduate students nominated.
- The GSA has been working with Hokie United on Haiti relief efforts.
- The GSA welcomed new members, having lost some to transition/graduation.
- Kim Carlton spoke about the online Public Knowledge Journal.
- They are still recruiting for some open positions on university committee rosters.
- The Research Symposium on March 24th has a Nobel Laureate, Dr. Andrew Weaver, as the keynote speaker.
- The Travel Fund and Graduate Research Development programs are open for their spring cycle.
- The Hokie Passport for graduate students is on hold.

- The GSA is currently working on two major resolutions: (1) CPT and (2) membership on the commission

Mr. Duggins introduced GSA's resolution requesting an additional voting seat for a representative from the GSA for a first reading. He encouraged commission members to review the resolution which is posted on the Scholar site.

Ms. Laura Freeman introduced the Curriculum Practical Training resolution for discussion. Ms. Monika Gibson gave a history and overview of some of the issues. The resolution will be on the March 3 agenda.

SACS Update

Dr. Robin Panneton, who has been representing Dr. Wubah on the commission, gave an update on SACS review, including the timeline and standards areas, and areas of compliance and non-compliance. Focus reports have just been submitted. She thanked Dr. DePauw for being Virginia Tech's representative to SACS off-site visit to Alexandria, Egypt. Reviewers will also visit the Danville site before they visit the Blacksburg campus in March.

Dr. Panneton encouraged commission members to visit the SACS website, <http://www.sacs.vt.edu/>, for current information, and posted documents including the Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP).

Graduate School Ethics Course: Tabled

Graduate Honor System (GHS): Tabled.

University Library Committee (ULC): No report.

University Council: Tabled.

Graduate School Update: Tabled.

Old Business: None

Announcements:

The GSA still has tickets available for the Galileo Players.

Adjournment: The meeting was adjourned at 5:02 pm.

Respectfully submitted:

Ms. Nancy B. Feuerbach, on behalf of
Dr. Karen P. DePauw, Vice President and Dean for Graduate Education