Minutes  
Commission on Graduate Studies & Policies  
December 7, 2011  
3:30 pm – 5:00 pm  
Graduate School Conference Room  

Present: Ms. Shaimaa Abdallah, Ms. Janice Austin, Mr. Marc Brodsky, Dr. Carolyn Copenheaver, Ms. Natalie Cruise, Dr. Mark Halsey, Dr. Bernice Hausman, Dr. Jennifer Hodgson, Dr. Karen Hult, Dr. Kumar Mallikarjunan, Ms. Akiko Nakamura, Dr. Robin Panneton, Dr. Mayuressh Patil, Ms. Tara Frank for Ms. Katelyn Shugart-Schmidt, Dr. Victoria Soghomonian, Mr. Leighton Vila, Dr. Jim Yardley  

Absent with Notification: Dr. Karen DePauw, Mr. Mohammed Jalili, Dr. Susan Short  

Absent without Notification: Dr. Patrick Miller, Dr. Tyler Walters  

Visitors and Invited Guests: Dr. Pat Hyer, Dr. Paul Knox, Dr. Janet Rankin, Dr. Sherwood Wilson, Mr. Ioannis Kokkinidis  

Dr. Victoria Soghomonian, Chair, called the meeting to order.  

Approval of the agenda: Approved.  

Approval of the minutes from November 16: Approved.  

Committee Reports  

Graduate Curriculum Committee (GCC): The minutes from November 10th were approved.  

Graduate Student Appeals: No report.  

Graduate Student Relations (GSR): No report.  

Degree Requirements, Standards, Criteria, and Academic Progress (DRSCAP):  

Dr. Pat Hyer, co-chair of the committee re-writing the Conflict of Interest (COI) policy, discussed the first draft of the replacement sections for the revised policy 13010 (dated 10.28.11). In particular, the commission discussed the sentence in section 2.2 from the Graduate School catalog, “Graduate School policies prohibit faculty members from serving as an advisor or committee member for individuals with whom they have a personal relationship.” There was some concern that the phrase “personal relationship” needed careful and clear definition. Dr. Hyer noted that the entire COI policy had a definition section. She suggested that better terms to describe relationships would be “family” and “partner”, because the law supporting this policy defines “family”. The document the commission was reviewing contained excerpts from the main document that pertained directly to Graduate School policy.  

The commission supported the transparency a signed agreement would afford a student, but some commission members expressed concern that students with limited funding options could feel pressured into signing an agreement if no other funding options were available. The agreement would be signed either prior to the start of the assistantship, or soon thereafter.
It was decided that final word-smithing would be best settled out of committee and several CGS&P members volunteered to work with Dr. Hyer to reach the best phrasing for this policy.

Dr. Copenheaver asked commission members to e-mail comments and suggestions to Dr. Hyer.


Graduate Honor System (GHS): Ms. Tara Frank announced one new case. She anticipates that this case will be resolved via facilitated discussion.

University Library Committee (ULC): The library will be initiating new services:
- 24/5 hours will begin on January 17, 2012. The library will open Sunday, 9:00 am to Friday 8:00 pm, Saturday, 9:00 am to 8:00 pm.
- Full service retrieval begins on January 9, 2012
- Book delivery service begins January 9, 2012 (faculty only)
- Electronic device checkout will be available in January, 2012
- New printer/scanner service, machines arriving this month

University Council: The resolution for renaming the Department of Wood Science and Forest Products to the Department of Sustainable Biomaterials was approved.

Dr. Paul Knox, Virginia Tech’s Long Range Plan: Dr. Knox summarized the work of the task force assigned to work on Virginia Tech’s long range plan and answered questions from the commission.

Multi-Modal Transit Facility: Dr. Sherwood Wilson described the plans for a multi-modal transit facility including timeline, site selection, and project status.

Old Business: None

New Business: None

Announcements: None

Adjournment: The meeting was adjourned at 4:40 pm.

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