

Minutes
Commission on Graduate Studies & Policies
December 5, 2001
206 Sandy Hall

Present: Mr. Edward Boone, Dr. Stephen Boyle, Dr. Klaus Elgert, Dr. Peter Graham, Ms. Theresa Kanter, Mr. Jay Khare, Dr. Kent Murrmann, Dr. Rakesh Kapania, Dr. John Ney, Dr. Joseph Scarpaci, Ms. Mary Schaeffer, Ms. Miya Simpson, Ms. Tracey Slotta, Mr. Greg Touchton

Absent with Notification: Dr. Roger Avery, Dr. David de Wolf, Dr. John Eaton, Ms. Patricia Foutz, Dr. Eileen Hitchingham, Dr. Joseph Merola, Ms. Margaret Merrill, Dr. David M. Moore, Dr. Martha Reifsnider, Mr. Jaan van Aardt

Absent without Notice: Dr. Ruth Alscher, Dr. Greg Brown, Dr. Ron Daniel

Invited Guests: Mr. Marvin Foushee, Ms. Nancy Feuerbach, Dr. Elaine Scott, Dr. Thomas Tillar, Ms. Angela Webb

Dr. Stephen Boyle, Chair, called the meeting to order.

Announcements: Dr. Boyle introduced a new member of CGS&P, Dr. Rakesh Kapania, appointed by the Faculty Senate.

Approval of the agenda: Approved, with the addition of one item. Dr. Boyle introduced Dr. Tom Tillar from Alumni Relations who had asked to make a short presentation on university regalia. Dr. Boyle requested that his presentation take place after the approval of the minutes.

Approval of minutes from November 7, 2001: The minutes were approved.

Presentation, University Regalia: Dr. Tom Tillar presented the design, and concept behind the design, for standardized Virginia Tech regalia. Dr. Tillar stated that it was popular for graduates to purchase items that clearly represented the tradition of the institution. He noted that the Alumni Association would not make a profit from the sale of university regalia. Dr. Tillar has already presented the concept and design to the Commencement Committee. He plans to meet and seek input from the Commission on Faculty Affairs, and the Faculty Senate, and eventually the University Council. The gown presented by Dr. Tillar was a basic black gown with maroon velvet in traditional areas with the center of the Virginia Tech shield embroidered on the front panels of the gown. A velvet tam would be available in the same maroon color. Gowns cost from six to eight hundred dollars depending on the quality of the fabric and generally are not available in rental wear. Currently, black gowns may be purchased at approximately the same price; rental gowns cost forty to fifty dollars. Dr. Boyle stated that there were no official guidelines restricting or facilitating the design of university regalia. Dr. Tillar stated that the gown design he was presenting was an option for a doctoral gown. Dr. Boyle expressed interest in the possibility of a university regalia design competition open to students at Virginia Tech. Ms. Mary Schaeffer moved that the commission endorse the concept of standardized regalia for doctoral candidates, while acknowledging that the actual design could be modified with additional input from various university populations. The motion passed.

Committee Reports

Graduate Curriculum Committee: Marvin Foushee presented the report which was revised from the electronic copy distributed to commission members. Three courses were approved, one course tabled, and one course needed minor corrections. The report was approved as submitted by Mr. Foushee.

Graduate Student Appeals (GSR): There were no active appeals reported.

Graduate Student Relations: Mr. Jay Khare reported that at the previous meeting there was no business pending. His understanding is that the parking issue was resolved outside of the Graduate Student Relations Committee. There was some discussion about salaries and benefits for graduate students. The GSR committee felt that any discussion of salaries and benefits should include health insurance. Dr. Boyle suggested to the student representatives that it was probably best for the parties with the vested interest, i.e., the students, to pursue this issue and noted that a more attractive benefits packages would increase the competitiveness of Virginia Tech in recruiting graduate students. Ms. Angie Webb suggested to Mr. Khare that he speak with Dr. Eaton and Dr. Merola to see what has already been done and what planning is currently underway. Mr. Khare will discuss the issue further with the GSR committee at the next meeting. The Graduate Student Relations report was approved by the commission.

DRSCAP: Dr. Klaus Elgert discussed the three letters drafted by the DRSCAP members. The first letter would be sent to Virginia Tech deans to get their input on the certificate programs in their colleges. The second letter would be sent to Virginia Tech deans and the third letter to the top twenty-one to thirty research institutions soliciting information on how programs are evaluated. Dr. Elgert stated that DRSCAP would provide Ms. Feuerbach with the addresses and she could send the letters out on the graduate school letterhead. The commission approved the letters as drafted by DRSCAP.

Other Reports

Graduate Student Assembly (GSA): Ms. Tracey Slotta presented the report. Ms. Slotta reported on GSA's continued involvement with the northern Virginia Campus. Mr. Gunnar Lucko and Mr. Ryan Hartman have drafted a new policy allowing for increased student activities. This policy has been accepted by the Commission on Student Affairs and could now be presented to the University Council. Ms. Slotta reported on planning for the Graduate Student Appreciation Week scheduled for April 2002. The commission approved the report.

Graduate Honor System (GHS): Mr. Jay Khare reported GHS had held a judicial council for a case left over from the summer session. Two students were found guilty of cheating on a final exam. They were given a zero and a notation on their transcripts that they were on honor system probation. GSA held an investigative board for another case from the summer. Three new cases came in. One investigator was called to active duty and Brian Johnson will replace this investigator. Mr. Khare stated that he is officially concerned with the amount of honor violation cases involving international students. Last year, of the fifteen cases in which students were found guilty, thirteen of those cases involved international students. This semester, all the cases have involved international students. Many cases come from northern Virginia, and most of those cases involve international students. Mr. Khare suggested that Virginia Tech adopt a required activity for all students which would address the honor system at Virginia Tech. Based on his experience, Mr. Khare feels that most of the cheating among the students comes from a lack of information and understanding of what constitutes cheating. Mr. Khare said typical cases involve collaboration on homework or tests and plagiarism. Dr. Boyle suggested the commission address this issue at a future meeting. To facilitate future discussion, Mr. Khare will send an article to Ms. Feuerbach that he wrote which addresses many of these issues, and Ms. Feuerbach will distribute the article to the commission.

New Business: Dr. Boyle asked that an item under new business be considered at this time. He asked that the commission consider awarding a posthumous degree to Mr. Robert France. Dr. Edward Fox, Mr. France's advisor, and the dean of the college recommended that this degree be awarded. Posthumous degree award requests occur once or twice a year. Dr. Boyle asked that at some point the commission consider adopting guidelines for awarding posthumous degrees. The commission approved the awarding

of the posthumous degree. Dr. Boyle suggested that DRSCAP investigate creating guidelines for future awards.

Dr. Elaine Scott: A Proposal to Establish the Virginia Tech — Wake Forest University School of Biomedical Engineering and Sciences Dr. Boyle introduced Dr. Elaine Scott, Professor, Mechanical Engineering, and Director of the Center for Biomedical Engineering. Dr. Scott presented an overview of the proposal to establish a school of biomedical engineering jointly with Wake Forest University. Dr. Scott described the university procedures in place for the establishment of a school which require a two-prong process: (1) a requirement to seek approval for the establishment of the school and (2) a requirement to seek approval for the specific degree programs. If the first requirement is met, Dr. Scott will return to the commission to present the specific degree programs. The university policy that Dr. Scott has followed is number 6150, which was written at the request of the Board of Visitors. Dr. Scott reviewed the history and pre-proposal process. Dr. Scott then presented the proposal to the commission, including interdisciplinary organization, collaborative efforts with Wake Forest University, funding/budget, phased-in staffing, educational and research priorities, projected enrollment, degree programs, and evaluative procedures. Dr. Scott invited questions and discussion. Due to time constraints, Dr. Boyle invited Dr. Scott to attend the January meeting in order to address questions from the commission and discuss the proposal in more detail.

University Library Committee: Report tabled, will be presented at January meeting.

Old Business: Old business tabled, will be presented at January meeting.

Adjournment: The meeting was adjourned at 5:05 PM.

Respectfully submitted:

Joseph S. Merola, Acting Dean of the Graduate School