

## **Minutes**

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

**October 16, 2002**

**3:30 — 5:00**

**206 Sandy Hall**

Present: Dr. Karen DePauw, Dr. David de Wolf, Dr. Klaus Elgert, Ms. Patricia Foutz, Dr. Ruth Grene, Dr. Rakesh Kapania, Ms. Margaret Merrill, Dr. Mike Moore, Dr. Kent Murrmann, Dr. John Ney, Dr. Mehdi Setareh, Dr. Andy Swiger

Absent with Notification: Mr. Nick Amico, Dr. Roger Avery, Dr. Stephen Boyle, Dr. Ron Daniel, Dr. Eileen Hitchingham, Mr. Brian Johnson, Ms. Miya Simpson, Ms. Angie Webb, Dr. Brenda Winkel

Absent without Notice: Ms. Mary Schaeffer

Invited Guests: Mr. Marvin Foushee, Ms. Nancy Feuerbach

Dr. Ruth Grene called the meeting to order.

Approval of the agenda: Approved.

Approval of minutes from October 2, 2002: Approved.

## **Committee Reports**

Graduate Curriculum Committee: Mr. Marvin Foushee presented the GCC minutes from the October 10 meeting. Dr. de Wolf asked Mr. Foushee to explain the function of the guest [Robert Broadwater] who was present at the meeting. Mr. Foushee stated that the guest presented the two courses under the item, Approved with Minor Corrections Needed ECE 5575 and 5576. Mr. Foushee explained that ECE 5575 & 5576 will be heavily offered in northern Virginia. The minutes were approved.

Graduate Student Appeals: No report.

Graduate Student Relations: No report.

Degree Requirement Standards Criteria and Academic Policy (DRSCAP): Ms. Feuerbach or Dr. Avery will schedule the first meeting.

## **Other Reports**

Graduate Student Assembly (GSA): No report.

Graduate Honor System (GHS): No report.

University Library Committee: No report.

Old Business:

Dr. Grene reported that Dr. Winkel would be unable to serve as the Vice Chair of CGS&P due to a schedule conflict. Dr. Grene invited Dr. Kapania to serve in this position, and he accepted. The vice chair of CGS&P also serves as the chair of the Graduate Curriculum Committee. Dr. Kapania asked to be excused from serving on the Graduate Student Relations Committee.

The Graduate Student Appeals and Graduate Student Relations committee still has openings for students. Dr. Grene stated that when the GSA appoints representatives to CGS&P, these students would be asked to fill vacant committee positions.

Doctoral residency request: Dr. DePauw reported that there was a request from the College of Engineering. Dr. DePauw asked for clarification on Policy 200, Residency for Doctoral Candidates. This policy indicates that the graduate school dean should make the residency (non-Blacksburg) decisions. Dr. DePauw asked the commission if they would like to see the requests. Dr. de Wolf clarified that residency requests were for doctoral programs. Individual residency requests were handled as exceptions. Ms. Foutz noted that there was a doctoral program in Richmond in educational leadership and suggested that the Richmond Center would be very interested in the possibility of being able to complete their program without having to spend summers in Blacksburg. Dr. DePauw stated she would be comfortable bringing requests to the commission. Dr. DePauw will bring the College of Engineering request to the next CGS&P meeting for review and discussion.

New degree proposal review process: Dr. DePauw reported that SCHEV has modified its process for reviewing new degree proposals. Dr. Pat Hyer brought this up at the University Council meeting. Dr. DePauw stated that she felt it was important for DRSCAP to review the existing university processes for reviewing and approving new degrees and examine what currently exists in light of what SCHEV has modified so that the university requirements were compatible with SCHEV requirements. Currently Virginia Tech requirements are more extensive than SCHEV, in particular when there is an extension of an existing degree, from one location to another. Dr. DePauw stated that she felt it would be helpful to faculty proposing new degrees to understand the entire process. Dr. DePauw and Dr. Avery will provide the DRSCAP committee with the new SCHEV modifications as well as a description of Virginia Tech existing process for degree proposal review.

Letter to Dr. Grene & CGS&P members: Dr. DePauw reviewed the letter she sent to Dr. Grene and CGS&P members. Dr. DePauw stated that the items discussed in the letter would be addressed in DRSCAP committee discussions. Dr. DePauw offered to meet with the committee or communicate through Dr. Avery in order to explain the rationale behind the topics covered in the letter.

Ms. Foutz asked Dr. DePauw to explain the rationale behind item (3), Redefine full-time enrollment for graduate students as 12-18 credits per semester. Dr. DePauw clarified that she was particularly interested in graduate students on assistantship. Dr. DePauw explained that the state defines full time equivalency (FTE) as 12, and Virginia Tech defines FTE as 9, so Virginia Tech reported numbers are not truly representative of their full time enrollment. Dr. DePauw stated that she was interested in looking at a range, 12 to 18. This would eliminate the need for the Graduate School to grant exceptions to students who would like to enroll for more than 12 hours. Dr. DePauw would prefer that students and faculty determine the course load. Dr. Moore asked about the plans of study, which are currently designed around the 9 hour definition of FTE. Dr. DePauw said these plans of study would be honored. This new definition of FTE status would not take effect until next year.

Dr. de Wolf expressed some concern over item (2), Update and expand the Procedures for Evaluation of the Progress of Graduate Students. Particularly for large departments, this process could prove burdensome. Dr. Ney suggested that the major advisor and graduate committee could assume this responsibility. This is already being done in many departments. Dr. DePauw acknowledged that while initially the process might seem onerous in larger departments who have not institutionalized this process, an evaluation process was necessary and the 1977 policy should be discussed and updated. Dr. Grene observed that the evaluation served as a protection for students. Ms. Foutz reminded the commission that extended campus students should not be overlooked; these students are not graduating on the same timeline as students who are enrolled full time. Dr. Kapania expressed an interest in assigning a grade value to a student's progress.

New Business: Dr. Grene reported that the chairs of the commissions were called to a meeting with the president and provost. At the meeting, the provost stated that he would like to reduce by fifty percent the amount of time faculty spend in meetings. Dr. Grene had discussed this with Dr. DePauw, and it was Dr. DePauw's opinion that the volume of work facing the commission was too great to reduce meeting times for this semester. However, Dr. Grene will suggest meeting only once a month during the spring semester. Dr. DePauw commented that it would be important for the subcommittees to continue to meet in the spring in order to schedule discussion and agenda items that must be addressed by the commission. DRSCAP decided to meet briefly immediately following the commission meeting.

Dr. Grene reported that the chairs of each commission have been asked to submit their goals for the year. Dr. Grene reviewed a handout which listed a summary of Dr. DePauw's goals as well as the additional goal of seeking out means for identifying and/or creating more teaching opportunities for Tech graduate [Ph.D.] students.

Dr. DePauw asked how research hours are assigned to faculty members and if faculty are credited for research hours. Dr. DePauw stated that it was important to acknowledge faculty effort in research hours and not undercount the additional faculty workload that is assumed when working with graduate students. Dr. DePauw also stated that as we acknowledge the significance of the research component, we should be giving faculty more credit for that kind of work and allowing fewer graded graduate courses to be required on a plan of study. This could allow a greater flexibility in the plan of study so that the very time-consuming research hours and independent study hours can be put into perspective. Dr. DePauw would like to re-examine the contribution of the research hours to the faculty workload and look at how it is reported to the state. Dr. DePauw also encouraged the commission to review item (4) in her letter, to review existing graduate degree requirements for masters and doctoral degrees . . .

Announcements: Dr. Kapania reported that NSF is starting a postdoctoral fellowship program for new Ph.D. Graduates to work in a university performing both research and teaching.

Adjournment: The meeting was adjourned at 4:30 PM.

*Respectfully submitted:*

*Ms. Nancy B. Feuerbach, on behalf of*

*Dr. Karen P. DePauw, Vice Provost for Graduate Studies and Dean of the Graduate School*