

Minutes

Commission on Graduate Studies & Policies

February 2, 2005

3:30 pm – 5:00 pm

206 Sandy Hall

Present: Mr. Chris Bassler, Dr. Scott Case, Dr. Kevin Davy, Dr. Karen DePauw, Dr. Klaus Elgert, Dr. François Elvinger, Professor Bill Galloway, Dr. Eileen Hitchingham, Dr. Rakesh Kapania, Mr. Greg Lemmond, Ms. Margaret Merrill, Dr. John Moore, Dr. Sue Murrmann, Dr. Jerry Niles, Dr. Tom Ollendick, Dr. Don Orth, Dr. Carolyn Rude, Dr. Susan Short, Ms. Chris Thomas

Absent with Notification: Dr. Ron Daniel, Ms. Lauren Good, Professor Ron Kagawa, Ms. Yvette Quintela, Mr. Terrell Strayhorn,

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

Approval of the agenda: Approved.

Approval of minutes from January 19, 2005: Approved with one change: The statement “Dr. DePauw said she would like the commission to discuss how to involve more departments and faculty in mentoring and advising graduate students or junior colleagues” should read “Dr. DePauw said she would like the commission to discuss how to involve more departments and faculty in mentoring and advising graduate students as junior colleagues”.

Committee Reports

Graduate Curriculum Committee (GCC): The revised minutes from December 9th, 2004 and the January 27th, 2005 were approved.

Graduate Student Appeals: No report.

Graduate Student Relations: No report.

Degree Requirement Standards Criteria and Academic Policy (DRSCAP): Following discussion, the commission approved two changes in policy.

(1) The policy on probation was changed from:

Probation

The Graduate School does not adhere to a rigid academic eligibility schedule. However, students whose cumulative GPA falls below a "B" (3.00) average are usually placed on probation.

Enrollment for one semester of probation is normally permitted to remedy an unsatisfactory GPA. If, in the judgment of the faculty and the dean of the Graduate School, the student is incapable of making satisfactory progress, permission to continue in the graduate program will be denied, and the student will be dismissed from the university.

to:

Probation and Dismissal

A student whose cumulative GPA falls below a "B" (3.00) average will be placed on probation by the Graduate School.

Enrollment for one semester of probation is normally permitted to remedy an unsatisfactory GPA. If, in the judgment of the faculty and the dean of the Graduate School, the student does not make

satisfactory progress, permission to continue in the graduate program will be denied, and the student will be dismissed from the university.

The commission endorsed Dr. Avery's proposal to request the university registrar's office to implement changes in Banner, which would more accurately record a student's enrollment status.

(2) The policy on eligibility of faculty/staff for graduate degrees was changed from:

Eligibility of Faculty/Staff for Graduate Degrees

Faculty members of the rank of assistant professor or above shall not become candidates for degree or be awarded degrees at this university. The provost's office may be requested to waive this policy for an individual following successful appeal to the Commission on Faculty Affairs.

to:

Eligibility of Faculty/Staff for Graduate Degrees

Teaching and research faculty members of the rank of assistant professor or above shall not become candidates for degree or be awarded degrees at this university. The provost's office may be requested to waive this policy for an individual following successful appeal to the Commission on Faculty Affairs.

Staff and administrative/professional faculty may become candidates for degrees with approval from the academic program, the university employer, and the graduate school. To receive approval, candidates should address conflicts of interest, time, and commitment. Supervisors of these candidates should abstain from chairing and/or serving on the candidates' graduate committees to avoid potential conflicts of interest.

Other Reports

Graduate Student Assembly (GSA): Submitted electronically and approved.

Graduate Honor System (GHS): Mr. Greg Lemmond reported that there are no outstanding cases. The GHS is starting to investigate three new cases. Mr. Lemmond will be stepping down as chief justice at the end of this semester. He encouraged commission members to forward names of potential candidates for this position to him.

University Library Committee (ULC): Dr. Hitchingham reviewed two issues that the library committee is working on.

(1) University Library Committee membership and reporting mechanism

The committee will be forwarding [electronically] a statement that explains an increase in the membership of the ULC and the solidification of its reporting lines to the Commission on Research and CGS&P.

(2) Overall recommendation regarding the borrowing period for faculty

Dr. Hitchingham believes the library commission will recommend a more generous period of loan and renewal for faculty.

Dr. Hitchingham stated that the library has completed its analysis of the spring survey and will be sending results to graduate students, CGS&P, and to deans, directors, and departments heads. Dr. Hitchingham observed that Virginia Tech overall "comes out a little better than average" when compared to other associations of research library members who are bigger and better funded. According to Dr. Hitchingham, "we are doing very well with what we have."

Graduate Program Review: Dr. Sherri Turner

Dr. Sherri Turner presented a short briefing on the current status of graduate program review. She explained the reason and need for program review, or the “what and why”, as follows:

*Virginia Tech strives for continued enhancement of the **quality** of academic programs and the vitality of the academic enterprise.*

Graduate program review provides evidence of the quality of our degree programs, recommendations for program continuation and enhancement, and pertinent documentation for strategic academic planning.

Dr. Turner and the program review committee composed of associate deans from each college outlined the goals of program review and drafted a working document, which included identification of the purpose, value, and conduct of an academic program review. Dr. Turner asked the commission to review the document and give the program review committee their ideas and/or concerns.

Dr. Turner reviewed a draft of the program review process cycle. Dr. Turner stated that a partnership with Institutional Research is important to the system infrastructure in order to help support data analyses through a set of templates currently being designed.

Dr. Turner also presented a sample timeline for the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences. The college is participating in a program review as a pilot group to test the process. The official ten-year plan will be launched fall 2005.

Dr. DePauw stated that the efforts of Institutional Research would allow departments ready access to data, thus allowing them to focus on the program review narrative. Data would be housed on the Graduate School server for convenience. Internal and external reviewers could then access documents and data electronically. Dr. DePauw asked the commission to consider what role, if any, the commission would like to play in the individual program reviews. For now, Dr. DePauw asked the commission for help in refining the process. Dr. Turner will work with colleges and departments on the scheduling aspect of the process so that internal and external reviews are a complimentary process as opposed to duplicative or contradictory.

Dr. DePauw observed that the institutional plan for graduate degrees looks at the future of graduate degrees. The graduate program review process looks at what we’ve done, and how we might change. This allows us to be proactive, rather than reactive, to graduate education as it changes and evolves.

Dr. DePauw asked that the commission to submit their feedback in writing to the program review committee. She would like the committee work and commission review finalized by April 2005.

Old Business: None

New Business:

Dr. Kevin Davy raised the issue of graduate students participating [as subjects] in research projects. Currently there is a restriction on graduate students on teaching assistantships. Dr. DePauw suggested a presentation and discussion could be placed on the agenda for an upcoming commission meeting.

Virginia Tech ADVANCE and the Office of Research, the provost’s office, and the Graduate School, have started a “first Friday’s lunch” for post doctorates. Dr. DePauw encouraged the commission to share this information. Dr. DePauw will send details to commission members.

Adjournment: The meeting was adjourned at 4:43 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