

## **Minutes**

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

**January 17, 2007**

**3:30 pm – 5:00 pm**

**Graduate Life Center at Donaldson Brown**

Present: Ms. Linsey Barker, Dr. Karen DePauw, Dr. François Elvinger, Dr. Kumar Mallikarjunan, Ms. Penny McCallum, Ms. Gail McMillan, Dr. Suzanne Murrmann, Dr. Carolyn Rude, Ms. Rebecca Slutzky, Ms. Chris Thomas, Mr. Brian Whitaker

Absent with Notification: Dr. Scott Case, Dr. Ron Daniel, Mr. Greg Lemmond, Dr. Tim Mack, Ms. Margaret Merrill, Dr. Tom Ollendick, Dr. Gerhardt Schurig

Absent without Notification: Mr. Sherif Agha, Dr. Jim Collier, Professor Bill Galloway, Dr. Eileen Hitchingham, Ms. Mary Ann Norman, Dr. Audrey Zink-Sharp

Conference call: Dr. Rosary Lalik

Invited Guests: Mr. Marvin Foushee, Dr. Brian Mihalik, Ms. Jacqueline L. Nottingham

**Approval of the agenda:** Approved, with addition of (1) commission chairs meeting update and (2) GHS appeal request for representation for the commission

**Approval of minutes from December 6, 2006:** Approved.

## **Committee Reports**

Graduate Curriculum Committee (GCC): No report

Graduate Student Appeals: No report.

Graduate Student Relations: No report.

Degree Requirement Standards Criteria and Academic Policy (DRSCAP):

Two drafts of policy / procedure revisions were discussed.

(1) Admissions Categories and Graduate Student Classifications

In addition to the [current] regular (3.0 GPA and above) and provisional admissions (GPA based) category, the committee has added the separate category, “conditional” (student meets minimum qualifications, but department has conditions that it wishes to impose).

Suggestions or comments should be sent to Dr. Tim Mack prior to the next commission meeting.

(2) Residency Requirements for the Ph.D.

Further discussion of both items was tabled until the February 7<sup>th</sup> meeting of the commission.

## **Other Reports**

Graduate Student Assembly (GSA): The GSA the commission members to an upcoming social event at the University Club.

Graduate Honor System (GHS) Mr. Brian Whitaker reported that out of six fall semester cases, one has been closed, one is going to panel, and four are under investigation.

The GHS is also recruiting new investigators. Mr. Whitaker encouraged commission members to inform qualified and interested candidates.

Ms. Ennis McCrery will be circulating information on the search for a graduate student representative to the Board of Visitors. Announcements of both graduate student service opportunities will be combined.

Ms. Linsey Barker and Dr. Kumar Mallikarjunan volunteered to serve on an appeal board for an upcoming GHS case appeal.

University Library Committee (ULC): The commission reviewed the ULC minutes from November 16, 2006.

University Council: Dr. Scott Case attended the December 4<sup>th</sup> council meeting and asked Dr. François Elvinger to give an overview of the meeting. Dr. Elvinger reported that the resolution for the “Establishment of a Doctor of Philosophy Degree in STEM Education” was introduced for a first reading. The resolution for the “Establishment of a Master of Arts Degree in Foreign Languages, Cultures and Literature” will be presented to the University Council for a first reading at their next meeting.

Commission chairs met the morning of January 17<sup>th</sup>. Scott Case represented the Graduate School; upcoming degree proposals will be presented at upcoming governance meetings.

Retreat Summary: The retreat summary notes were discussed. Dr. Elvinger asked commission members to edit the summary if they saw areas that needed alteration or clarification.

Recommendations from the retreat included:

1. Create a ‘Quality Advising and Mentoring Program’, designed for incoming faculty and others
2. Shape our own image: create a subcommittee or hold retreat, etc. ,to determine what the graduate program is to do; what is a VT graduate alumnus; how does distance, distance learning, remote campuses affect the image of VT graduate studies programs.
3. Graduate student 2010 – report on status, progress

The commission voted to support the design of an initiative that will create a “Quality Advising and Mentoring Program.”

**Old Business:** None

**New Business:** None

Official transcript processing clarification and fees: Mr. Whitaker asked for an explanation of the \$7.00 fee charged. He has reviewed other universities in the Commonwealth. George Mason, Radford, and James Madison do not charge a fee for processing a transcript. University of Virginia, William and Mary, and Old Dominion charge about \$5.00. He also researched the fees at other U.S. land grant universities, Texas A&M and Wisconsin (Madison) charge a higher fee. Two charged \$7.00, and 11 universities were lower. Mr. Marvin Foushee gave a history of the fees charged by the Registrar’s office.

Dr. DePauw said if there is a desire to have the fee changed, it would be appropriate for GSA to develop a resolution to go through university governance.

Mr. Whitaker also presented his views on the GHS based on his experience as the Chief Justice. Most of the offences are a product of ignorance, i.e., lack of knowledge of Virginia Tech's policies and the graduate honor system and constitution. Part of the application process requires that students, by signing, verify that all components of the application are correct. Also, by signing, students agree to abide by the rules of the honor system. Mr. Whitaker recommended that these two issues be separated in the application process. Additional explanations to the statement(s) could be added as well. Dr. DePauw confirmed that changes could be made when the application form goes through its [periodic] review. In addition, Dr. DePauw would like to explore other ways to educate the graduate student population on these critical issues. Ms. Barker suggested the implementation of an annual required review of ethical issues, policies, and protocols.

**Announcements:** No.

**Adjournment:** The meeting was adjourned at 5:01 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*