

CGPSA – Commission on Graduate and Professional Student Affairs

October 9th, 2024

Zoom link: <https://virginiatech.zoom.us/j/88634742589>

Present: Janice Austin, Camille Block, Jiayuan Dong, Barbara Hoopes, Alex Kinnaman, Lee Learman, Faizan Sabir, Rohsaan Settle, Sally Shupe, Brenda Stanfill, Lauren Surface, Aimée Surprenant, Rachel Maizel, Gonzalo Ortiz

Absent with Notice:

Absent: Mark Sikes, Tyler Walters, Neha Taneja

Guests: Laura Gil, April Myers, Lauren Oliver, Lori Rose

Rachel called the meeting to order at 3:34pm. A quorum was established.

1. Adoption of Agenda – Rachel Maizel

A motion was made to adopt the agenda.

2. Adoption of Minutes from September 11th, 2024

A motion was made to approve the September 11th, 2024, minutes.

3. New Business

4. Member Reports

a. Graduate School Updates – Dean Surprenant

- Last year's Compensation Task Force report has been updated to include eight recommendations that can be found here:
https://docs.google.com/document/d/1Ccwcr69gZi5zLePFWp4nTu6x36QRrFhX/edit?usp=s_haring&oid=109552231983841154847&rtpof=true&sd=true
- Two years ago, the BOV approved the action of raising the minimum stipend from \$1,763 to \$2,420 per month for full time appointments. In 2024 that minimum was raised again to \$2,682. A public-facing dashboard is now available to track funding by department.
<https://graduateschool.vt.edu/numbers/dataindex.html>. The data can be filtered by college and department.
- The Graduate School is piloting a program with community colleges to get adjunct teaching appointments for graduate students. The mechanism is through COOP, so those students will be eligible.
- CGPS&P put forth a resolution to propose a university-wide Policy to combat unprofessional behaviors towards graduate and professional students. (CGPSP 2024-25A)
- CFA put forth a resolution that will update the faculty handbook regarding ethics of intimate relationships involving faculty. (CFA 2024-25D)

b. Senate Updates

- **GPSS – Rachel Maizel**

GPSS Climate and Culture – Discussions/Common Themes:

1. Racial and/or nationality motivated mistreatment
 2. LGBTQ+ motivated mistreatment
 3. General academic abuse and/or bullying
 4. Ableism motivated mistreatment
 5. Sexual and/or gender motivated mistreatment
 6. Student perception of mistreatment not being handled effectively
 7. Funding related concerns
- Goal: to enact systematic changes to make Virginia Tech a more comfortable, welcoming and safe learning and working environment for people in the long run.

Subcommittees:

1. Graduate Committee Interactions and Structure
2. Graduate (Professional) Students Navigating
3. Supporting Advisors
4. Establishing Norms More Generally
5. International Student Specific Concerns
6. Data Tracking System

- **Faculty Senate – Alex Kinnaman**

- Discussed CFA's resolution on Ethics of Intimate Relationships (CFA 2024-25D) in Faculty Senate cabinet last week and will have some additional, but slight, language changes at it goes to Faculty Senate this week for 1st reading.

- **Administrative and Professional Senate**

- Nothing to report

- **Staff Senate**

- Nothing to report

- **USS**

- Nothing to report

5. General Orders/Discussion Topics -

Lauren Oliver, Director for Cranwell International Center, joined to share the International Student Experience as well as Cranwell's function, focus, and more about their team:

- Cranwell takes action with the U.S. Government on behalf of the student's record. Students are prepared with pre-arrival webinars and additional layers of processing.
- Cranwell cannot offer immigration advice for those who have transferred in, or those who do not yet have a student record.
- Conducted a Student Experience survey in February, '24, and 668 students responded.

- Cranwell experienced a great deal of turnover in staff in the past few years, which led to some instability and variability in the amount and timing of support for our international students. Lauren Oliver presented to CGPSA outlined efforts she has made to stabilize the unit. She now has a full complement of staff who are trained to help on both the immigration side and the student support side. They have instituted in-person (and zoom) appointments as well as walk-in hours. They publish the wait times for forms processing and have been able to reduce those times as much as possible. As Lauren noted, the more complicated the form, the longer it takes to process. Speed is important but accuracy is critical.

6. Announcements -

Nothing to report

7. Adjournment -

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 4:43pm.