

MINUTES

Commission on Undergraduate Studies and Policies
October 27th, 2025
3:00 PM
Via Zoom

Present – J. Tokuhisa (presiding); M. Acosta; E. Austin; A. Ball; J. Bedore; S. Clements; S. Dip; R. Gaines; K. Goyne; M. Kimbrell; C. Middleton; S. Over; M. Pleimling; R. Poff; L. Ricci; S. Rinehart; M. Seref; J. Sible; R. Sparks; S. Sumner; K. Thompson; D. Thorp

Absent with Notice: N. Akers

Absent: Z. Altizer; M. Caddick; K. Edgar; C. Ruktanonchai; J. Russell

Guests: J. Leech; E. Moon; V. Nguyen; R. Pitcher; L. Rose; N. Smith; Z. Tucker

J. Tokuhisa called the meeting to order at 3:02. A quorum was present.

1. Adoption of Agenda

A motion was made and seconded to adopt the agenda. Motion carried.

2. Approval or Announcement of approval and posting of minutes of October 13th, 2025.

J. Tokuhisa noted that the October 13th, 2025, minutes have been voted on electronically and can be publicly accessed on the Office of the University Registrar's website:

<http://www.registrar.vt.edu/governance.html>

3. Unfinished Business

CUSP 2025-2026B – Resolution Updating the Foreign Language Requirement (Update to Resolution)

J. Tokuhisa shared that the resolution did not pass Faculty Senate. R. Gaines explained that Faculty Senate felt the proposal lacked sufficient consultation. D. Thorp noted concerns from the History Department senator about potential negative effects on enrollment. J. Tokuhisa clarified that the resolution would affect very few students. M. Pleimling referenced a prior presentation detailing language-specific impacts and suggested the Senate may need similar data. He also speculated that broader concerns within the Liberal Arts community contributed to the rejection. R. Gaines added that some faculty feared the elimination of classes if the resolution was passed and expressed interest in replacing Pathways 7 with a foreign language requirement. L. Ricci emphasized that undergraduate students in language programs are pursuing degrees, not just fulfilling the two year language requirement. D. Thorp questioned whether the Faculty Senate understood the resolution only modified admissions criteria, not program requirements. R. Gaines believed clearer data could improve Senate receptiveness, though J. Tokuhisa confirmed such data had already been shared with the Senate. J. Sible noted longstanding faculty interest in strengthening foreign language requirements, which may have complicated the resolution's reception.

4. New Business

Discussion – Midterm Grade Policy PPM 107

R. Sparks invited discussion regarding midterm grades to see if there was sufficient consensus to draft a resolution. Current policy uses S/U grades for first time in college and transfer students only. Transitioning to baseline Banner will require midterm grades to match the course's final grade mode (A–F or Pass/Fail). Because of this change, R. Sparks proposed two options: (1) require midterm grades follow A-F or P/F final grade format, or (2) extend midterm grading to all students. M. Pleimling raised concerns about faculty mistakenly entering S/U as final grades, which could affect prerequisites while K. Thompson questioned whether S/U provides meaningful feedback for students. S. Rinehart suggested it would be helpful to discuss current gradebook practices with faculty as some may use "C" for all students to appear as an "S" grade at midterms. R. Sparks noted training would be needed to prevent this. Through the discussion, it was noted that Banner will allow grade entry directly from Canvas and the Office of the University Registrar could generate reports identifying students that need midterm grades. D. Thorp highlighted that the change would increase workload for faculty. J. Sible said TLOS could assist and saw an opportunity to train faculty on Canvas integration. A. Ball endorsed Canvas as the best tool for managing grades. R. Gaines noted that midterm grades for all students are required at many other institutions. J. Tokuhisa asked about the rationale behind VT's use of S/U. J. Sible and S. Rinehart expressed concern that specific grades (e.g., B) might prompt pre-med students to drop courses, though most students overall prefer detailed feedback. L. Ricci added that students rely on Canvas and are largely unfamiliar with S/U grading. K. Thompson emphasized that S/U grades are used by advisors to guide outreach. R. Gaines recommended a survey or presentation to Faculty Senate. J. Tokuhisa offered to notify the Senate of any upcoming resolution. R. Sparks noted that additional information from undergraduate student representatives would be helpful and that a resolution would be drafted.

Charge – Academic Support Committee: Two Day Fall Break

J. Tokuhisa presented a resolution proposal to the University Council Cabinet to extend Fall Break from one day (Friday) to a four-day weekend, adding either Thursday or Monday. J. Tokuhisa emphasized the benefit for students, particularly those traveling home, and the importance of collecting feedback on the several options with all stakeholders, faculty, instructors, staff, in-state, out-of-state and international students while clarifying that per bylaws, the resolution will next proceed to the Academic Support Committee. R. Sparks noted similar discussions in relation to the academic calendar have been discussed at the commission before being sent to the Academic Support Committee. R. Gaines supported the extra day, citing its value for recovery after travel. A. Ball recommended Thursday to minimize scheduling disruptions, a concern echoed by R. Sparks from past feedback. D. Thorp asked if the added day would require trading with another break, such as Spring Break. R. Sparks said he would take a look at the number of instructional days in both the fall and spring semester to make sure they were the required number of days. S. Clements raised concerns for students taking Tuesday/Thursday courses due to the existing Thursday Reading Day. K. Thompson remarked the impact of an added break day compared to ongoing Friday parking issues may be minimal. The charge to explore the resolution further was approved.

5. Reports

- Academic Support Committee – Vacant: No report.
- Academic Policies Committee – M. Pleimling: No report.
- Athletics Committee – D. Thorp: The committee expressed concern about the number of commitments student athletes now have.

- Commencement Committee – M. Kimbrell: Their most recent meeting focused on Spring Commencement. The request for volunteers has gone out to colleges. The Spring commencement schedule is now live.
- Honor Council – Z. Altizer: No report.
- Library Committee – S. Over: No report.
- University Curriculum Committee for General Education – K. Tran: The committee has not met since the last CUSP meeting, but a subcommittee is reviewing the suspension of Pathways 7. In the absence of a full committee meeting, they do not wish to make a statement regarding their findings yet.
- Constituent Reports – Administrative & Professional Faculty Senate – N. Akers: No report.
- Constituent Reports – Staff Senate – M. Acosta: No report.
- Constituent Reports – Faculty Senate – R. Gaines: CGPSP Resolution to update the withdrawal policy in the graduate catalog did not pass. CGPSP had extensive discussions on the exigent circumstances action. Dean Surprenant spoke at the senate meeting and faculty discussed the current administration's impact on higher education.
- Constituent Reports – Undergraduate Student Senate – L. Ricci: C. Middleton introduced himself.
- Constituent Reports: Graduate and Professional Student Senate – S. Dip: Most of the focus of the meeting was a forum examining student-advisor relationships and surveys reviewing transportation resources. Climate Case Committee also presented information.

6. Other Items

- Nomination/Review of CUSP Sub-Committee Chair and Representatives for Academic Year 2025-2026. J. Tokuhisa sought nominations for the position.
- S. Clements nominated himself for the position. A motion was made and seconded by the Commission to nominate S. Clements as the Chair of the Academic Support Committee. The vote passed unanimously without objections or abstentions.

7. Adjournment

There being no further business, a motion was made to adjourn the meeting at 4:06.