Minutes
Commission on Graduate Studies & Policies
November 7, 2012
3:30 pm – 5:00 pm
Graduate School Conference Room

Present: Ms. Shaimaa Abdallah, Mr. Mehmet Altin, Ms. Janice Austin, Dr. Chad Bolding, Mr. Marc Brodsky, Dr. Karen DePauw, Dr. Karen Hult, Dr. Patrick Miller, Dr. Wayne Neu, Dr. Mayuresh Patil, Mr. Greg Purdy, Dr. Stephen Smith, Dr. Victoria Soghomonian, Dr. Dan Thorp

Absent with Notification: Dr. Joe Eifert, Dr. Jennifer Hodgson

Absent without Notification: Dr. Kay Dunkley, Dr. Alireza Haghighat, Mr. Jalali Mohammad (videoconference failed), Dr. Gene Seago, Dr. Tyler Walters

Visitors and Invited Guests: Dr. Rosemary Blieszner, Ms. Ennis McCrery, Dr. Janet Rankin

Dr. Mayuresh Patil, Chair, called the meeting to order.

Approval of the agenda: Approved

Approval of the minutes from October 17, 2012: Approved with a minor correction.

Committee Reports

Graduate Curriculum Committee (GCC):   The commission approved minutes from October 11th and October 25th.

Graduate Student Appeals: The committee reported that one appeal is drafted and awaiting signature and another appeal is in the process of being drafted.

Graduate Student Relations (GSR): No report.

Degree Requirements, Standards, Criteria, and Academic Progress (DRSCAP): The committee made three recommendations:
- Foreign Language Requirement: The committee felt that individual departments or degree programs should be responsible for deciding if a foreign language should be required.
- GRE's Personal Potential Index (PPI): The committee suggested that the Graduate School be technically able to accept the reports. They could envision departments using language like, "the GRE is required, the PPI is highly recommended." Dr. DePauw assured the commission that there would be workshops developed to educate the departments on using the PPI. Dr. Soghomonian will write up the various options discussed by the commission and distribute to the commission for input.
- Academic and Professional Integrity: The committee recommended that graduate students, within their first two semesters, engage in a training that would include but not be limited to:
    a. The Graduate School's Expectations for Graduate Study
    b. The Virginia Tech Principles of Community
    c. Expectations with regard to plagiarism and other violations of the Graduate Honor Code
    d. Appropriate lab procedures and maintenance of lab notebooks and other research documentation
    e. Acknowledgement of fair use of equipment, publications, and software
    f. Appropriate research protocols involving human and animal subjects; IRB and/or IACUC certification

g. Guidelines for maintenance of confidentiality (and, where relevant, anonymity) in research
h. Appropriate citing of existing research, accurate reporting of findings, and acknowledgement of contributions to the research
i. Guidelines for determination of authorship
j. Appropriate grant and contract management, including appropriately asserting personal or program capacities and competencies when applying for grants and contracts
k. Mentoring on the ethics of teaching, engagement and professional service
l. Understanding and avoidance of conflicts of interest, including in future professional activities and in current relationships between students and faculty
m. Understanding available avenues for reporting alleged misconduct while in graduate school and later in one's profession
n. Discipline- or field-specific professional ethics

A record of the student's completed training would appear in the student's Plan of Study. If departments already have a training in place, this can be noted on the Plan of Study.

Graduate Student Assembly Report (GSA): No report.

Graduate Honor System (GHS): No report.

University Library Committee (ULC): No report.

University Council: No report.

Graduate School: No report.

Old Business: None

New Business:
Individual Interdisciplinary Doctoral degree (ID PhD): The commission discussed this new degree proposal which will be presented at the next Graduate Curriculum Committee (GCC). The degree program would allow students to design their own PhD conceptual area. In their design, students would have to identify the faculty, courses, and a research topic, before being allowed into the program. No departments or individual faculty would be required to participate. Administratively, the Graduate School would operate as a home for the degree, but academically the faculty would be the home. Dr. DePauw will be discussing this proposal with the GCC at their upcoming meeting. The commission will review this proposal at their December 5th meeting.

Two items were tabled until December 5th: VTIP Audit and the Progress Report

Announcements: None.

Adjournment: The meeting was adjourned at 5:00 pm

Respectfully submitted:

Ms. Nancy Feuerbach, on behalf of
Dr. Karen P. DePauw, Vice President and Dean for Graduate Education