

VIRGINIA POLYTECHNIC INSTITUTE AND STATE UNIVERSITY

COMMISSION ON GRADUATE STUDIES AND RESEARCH

Minutes

January 27, 1976 3:00 p.m.

President's Board Room, Burruss Hall

Present: Drs. Arndt, Arnold, Flowers, Gilmer, Hewitt, Keller, McDaniels, Parks  
(for Small), Robertson, Wang, Mr. Knausenberger.

Absent: Drs. Bull, Hoepner (ex officio), Lee, Randall, Small, Mr. Mirarchi.

Visitor: Dr. S. P. Bowen

In the absence of Dean Bull, Dean Robertson called the meeting to order at 3:05 p.m.

1. Adoption of Agenda

A request was made to move Item #4, Course Criteria Committee Report to the third item so that Dr. Bowen might represent the Physics courses presented on the Course Criteria Committee report. With this modification, the agenda was approved.

2. Approval of Minutes

Minutes of January 13, 1976.

A motion was made and seconded to correct page #2, item #6 to read as follows:

"A motion was made and seconded that the Commission recommend that the Library bind additional (more than three) copies of thesis and dissertation at the request and the expense of the student. The Commission suggested that this matter be reviewed with the management of the University Book Store. The previous question was called for. Motion passed. Dr. Hoepner asked that the record show his negative vote".

Dr. Hewitt noted that he was listed on the Minutes as (ex officio). This was a typographical error. Mr. Hewitt should have been listed as a member and Dr. Hoepner as (ex officio). With these corrections, the minutes of January 13, 1976, were approved.

3. Course Criteria Committee Report

In the absence of Dr. Randall, Dr. Keller presented the Course Criteria Report. (please see Appendix I). There was some discussion about whether or not the Physics courses were equal to 5000 level courses. Dr. Bowen of the Physics Department spoke for the courses and stated the reasons for making them 5000 level courses. A motion was made and seconded that the report of the Course Criteria Committee be approved as presented. Motion passed.

6. Areas Under Consideration by the Graduate Programs Committee of the University Self-Study

Dean Gilmer introduced the paper prepared by the Self-Study Committee which had been distributed previously to the Commission. The Committee had prepared the paper for the guidance of its own members and those meeting with the Committee. The paper listed a number of questions in areas that were believed to represent principal concerns relating to graduate studies.

Dean Gilmer requested that all of the Commission members offer their reflections and discussion, and indicated that these would then be relayed to the Self-Study Committee. The Chairman then led the Commission in its discussion of Areas I and II of the paper.

Area I: Importance of graduate studies and research to Tech as a developing comprehensive university.

The Commission members agreed that a comprehensive graduate program of good (or better yet excellent) quality was very important to the University. The graduate programs and the research efforts were seen to be linked and to a large degree mutually supportive, although some Commission members believed that research was now accorded a somewhat secondary position. Others saw the graduate program as being strengthened by an expanding research program as, for example, in the College of Engineering. Externally sponsored research grants and contracts typically support graduate students, and although research can proceed without the participation of graduate students, it was noted that there are not many places where that happens.

The projection of 4000 full-time equivalent graduate students by 1980 was noted. It was pointed out that this was made originally for on-campus students, and that off-campus students did not figure in the projection. The members agreed that in the "numbers game," quality should come first and quantity second. At least one member suggested that perhaps a maximum should be placed on off-campus enrollment. It was emphasized that in the case of on-campus programs there are areas now in which many very good students are being turned away because of lack of space. In other areas many students are turning Tech down to go to larger or more prestigious universities, or to those with more financial support in scholarships, fellowships, or assistantships.

Area II: Academic Climate at Tech for graduate studies and research.

The Commission members remarked on several of the present policies and practices which might be changed in order to further encourage and support graduate studies and graduate students. The continuing lack of graduate student housing, certain policies of the Student Health Service, and the requirement of a minimum of

six students in graduate courses were all viewed as detrimental to the graduate programs of the University. Improvements were also recommended in financial aid to graduate students, access to classes for student from other colleges, and parking regulations for graduate students.

Suggestions of a somewhat more general nature were made at the close of the discussion. These included a recommendation for the increased use of visiting committees in program evaluation, the creation of a designated graduate faculty, and the devotion of a larger proportion of the time of the Commission on Graduate Studies and Research to basic policy matters.

7. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 5:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Lillian Janey  
Recording Secretary