

## Faculty Senate Meeting

October 14, 2008

### Minutes

**Members Present:** Agud, Diane; Anong, Sophia; Arthur, Sean; Bell, Martha Ann; Clements, Terry; Collier, Jim; Dahlgren, Linda; Duke, John; Floyd, John; Freeman, Larry; Glasson, George; Grange, Robert; Grisso, Bobby; Jarrott, Shannon; Jelesko, John; Jones, Jeryl; Klein, Brad; Larson, Timothy; Long, Gary; Mann, Jeff; Martin, Steve; Martin, Tom; Maycock, Michelle; Moseley-Christian, Michelle; Moyo, Leslie; Nachlas, Joel; Nelson, Doug; Odendaal, Hardus; Ott, Walter; Pencek, Bruce; Pfeiffer, Doug; Ponder, Monica; Redican, Kerry; Rinehart, Susanna; Satterwhite, Emily; Shadle, Brett; Shingles, Rick; Shoemaker, Donald; Smith, Deborah; Tabitha, James; Tokuhisa, Jim; Vance, Eric; Wasserman, Lewis

**Guests:** Provost Mark McNamee  
Dr. James Lollar

1. President Hardus Odendaal opened the meeting at 7:00 p.m..
2. Provost Mark McNamee was introduced. Provost McNamee discussed the budget issues facing Virginia Tech and the Commonwealth of Virginia.
  - A. Administration is not planning on good funding for higher education. We must deal with the inability of the state to fund core resources including higher education.
  - B. Budget Reductions: 5% reduction this year (will be permanent). An additional 5% next year (possibly 10% or more depending on national economy). It will take a while to recover.
  - C. Approach to budget cuts: Absorb as much as possible centrally. What can be handled centrally will be announced in a few weeks. Strategic reductions will need to be made to position VT for the future.
  - D. This year reductions will be managed by collecting one-time money from units. Implementing permanent reductions will be done by July 1. In a few weeks this year's plan will be in place. The challenge is planning for next July—this planning will include town hall meetings and other activities designed to gather input from the university community. Budget deficit issues should be clearer after Governor Kaine announces the revised budget forecast in December.
  - E. Salary: Governor Kaine announced salary increases will be postponed until July 2009. Virginia Tech had been making significant progress in increasing salaries.

#### **Questions:**

1. Will there be layoffs? If the budget cuts are in the 15% range layoffs could occur. The job of a tenure track faculty will not be put at risk because of budget problems.
2. Will there be changes in the Strategic plan? The Strategic Plan will be revisited in December when Governor Kaine presents the revised budget. Strategic plan tied into base budget adequacy. Goal is to think strategically and take advantage that many other institutions are not as well as prepared. In times like this investments need to be directed on what Virginia Tech will look like in 5 years. Budget reductions will not be implemented that will weaken newest initiatives.
3. Will there be raises for promotion and/or tenure? There will be the standard promotion and/or tenure raises and they come in July.
4. What is the status of the salary compression plan? College plans have been developed. At the end of 3 years those affected by salary compression should be close to being back to "normal."

5. Will Alternative Severance Option packages be offered? NO. Programs may be impacted and/or cut (however, it is easier to say than do). Virginia Tech will look carefully how we might change things to make sure that nothing we do is wasteful. Questions addressed will be "How can we regroup things, greater efficiencies, programs combined together in a new way for long term savings, parts of programs we can do without and do something that assures us we are saving \$500,000 to 1 million each year." There are plans for institutional-wide conversations to educate Virginia Tech employees of what we do and what it costs.
  
3. Jim Lollar, Professor at Radford University and President of the Faculty Senate of Virginia was introduced and he updated the Faculty Senate on the activities of the Faculty Senate of Virginia (FSVA).
  - A. The purpose of FSVA is to make sure all universities have a faculty voice by providing a forum for discussion of problems and issues and serve as an advocate for faculty. Each institution of higher education sends three faculty to the FSVA meetings.
  - B. Legislative agenda items supported by FSVA include (1) a Bill to offer tuition benefits to dependent children of faculty; (2) allowing faculty to have the opportunity to move from the Optional Retirement System (ORP) to the Virginia Retirement System (VRS). ORP is fine when economy is working well. A major problem for faculty is that when a faculty member is hired he/she has 30 days to decide VRS or ORP. FSVA supports a Bill to provide a one-time transition opportunity to transition from ORP to VRS after 10 years of continuous employment.
  - C. We need champions for legislation. Key stakeholders not informed on higher education issues nor of the value and need for higher education.
  - D. A new organization has been created: Virginia Higher Education Association (VHEA). The purpose of VHEA is to bring together constituent voices. The mission of the Virginia Higher Education Association is to facilitate and provide a forum whereby multiple constituent groups communicate with one voice to advance the quality, access, and affordability of higher education in the commonwealth. The objectives of VHEA are to:
    - understand and be responsive to the concerns and needs of constituent groups that actively participate in and contribute to higher education;
    - acquire and use objective, accurate, and timely information to inform higher education decisions and policy initiatives;
    - develop multiple communication channels to connect with and inform constituent groups about higher education;
    - develop processes, policies, and relationships that result in a continual improvement of higher education in the commonwealth, and
    - conduct all activities with transparency and integrity.
  
4. Susanna Rinehart updated the Faculty Senate on the importance of advising and Virginia Tech's advising mission including the philosophy, statement of university responsibility, statement of student responsibility and statement of advisor responsibility.
  - A. Susanna emphasized that freshmen orientation highlights advising.
  - B. Every fall there is an advising student satisfaction survey sent to every undergraduate.
  - C. An Academic Advising Council was formed and the membership roster was distributed. Ideas and/or concerns related to advising in respective colleges should be forwarded to the Academic Advising Council college representative.
  - D. Currently a departmental survey is being developed that assesses department specific advising structures and procedures. Each of the college representatives will visit departments in their respective colleges and ask the same questions that are on the survey.
  
5. Meeting adjourned at 9:10 p.m.