

## Faculty Senate Meeting

December 9, 2008

### Minutes

**Members Present:** Anong, Sophia; Arthur, Sean; Bell, Martha Ann; Centeno, Virgilio; Clements, Terry; Duke, John; Easterling, Sam; Ellerbock, Mike; Floyd, John; Fox, Thomas; Freeman, Larry; Glasson, George; Gracanin, Denis; Grange, Robert; Grisso, Bobby; Jarrott, Shannon; Jelesko, John; Jensen, Roderick; Karpanty, Sarah; Klein, Brad; Larson, Timothy; Long, Gary; Mann, Jeff; Martin, Steve; Martin, Tom; Maycock, Michelle; Moyo, Leslie; Nelson, Doug; Odendaal, Hardus; Ott, Walter; Pencek, Bruce; Pfeiffer, Doug; Ponder, Monica; Redican, Kerry; Rinehart, Suzanne; Satterwhite, Emily; Shadle, Brett; Shingles, Rick; Smith, Deborah; Sotelino, Elisa; Surjan, Terry; Teulon, Fabrice; Vance, Eric; Wood, Cynthia.

Guest: Dr. Hal Irwin, Associate Vice President of Human Resources

1. President Hardus Odendaal opened the meeting at 7:00 p.m..
2. Minutes from the November 11 meeting were approved.
3. Dr. Hal Irwin, Associate Vice President introduced a proposed resolution to save money

### **RESOLUTION ON WINTER BREAK CLOSING** (December 3, 2008 DRAFT)

**WHEREAS**, an extended winter break is a recognized sustainability practice in the higher education community, and will result in savings at Virginia Tech that are estimated to be approximately \$20,000 per day; and,

**WHEREAS**, a winter break corresponding more closely to the public school closings is a family-friendly practice; and,

**WHEREAS**, Virginia Tech Policy 4315, Guidelines on Holidays, provides the authorization for individual departments to close during the break between December 24 and January 1 and a number of departments close currently; and

**WHEREAS**, the majority of staff members take leave for the three or four days between December 24 and January 1 for which Virginia Tech is not closed due to a holiday; and,

**WHEREAS**, newly hired university staff members currently receive four days of family leave per year if they begin employment prior to July 9 and two days of family leave if they begin employment after July 9; and,

**WHEREAS**, closing for a winter break might place a hardship on newly hired university staff who have not accumulated the three to four days of leave required and who may be placed on leave without pay status; and

**WHEREAS**, the higher education restructuring act provided level 3 institutions with an opportunity to develop a new human resources system for university staff, the designation of non-faculty employees hired on or after July 1, 2006; and,

**WHEREAS**, the management agreement between the university and the Commonwealth stipulates that the Board approves any major changes to compensation and benefits plans for

those university employees not covered by the Personnel Act before those changes become effective.

**NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT:**

- Virginia Tech will be closed for a winter break period annually between December 25 and January 1 including any additional holidays granted by the Governor, beginning in 2009.
- Exceptions to the winter break closing will be allowed since a very limited number of departments with critical personnel or critical services, such as the power plant or campus police, will need a limited number of employees to work during the winter break to address emergencies, on-going operations, or essential services. Other exceptions include, but are not limited to, employees who are working on research projects that would be negatively impacted if efforts were curtailed during the holiday closing.
- University Policy 4315, Guidelines on Holidays, be amended as follows:

The university is closed between December 24 and January 1 each year. Twelve-month faculty, special research faculty, administrative and professional faculty, and classified and university staff must use annual or other appropriate leave balances to cover the days that have not been designated as official holidays under the university's Holiday Policy or additional days designated as holidays by the Governor. Salaried employees who do not work and have insufficient leave balances to cover the winter break will be placed in a leave-without-pay status in accordance with state and university leave policies.

Certain departments are required to remain open due to the nature of the work; in some cases, minimal or full staffing may be necessary. Each department head has the authority to designate the employees required to work during the winter break to support necessary university or departmental operations or functions. Normal holiday compensatory leave policies will apply **only** when employees work on one of the officially designated holidays.

- Newly hired university staff members will receive four days of family personal leave on their date of hire for use during their first year. Family personal days will be reset on January 10, according to policy.

**RECOMMENDATIONS:**

- That Policy 4315, Guidelines on Holidays, and the Campus Leave Manual be revised in accordance with this resolution, effective April, 2009.

Dr. Irvin answered numerous questions regarding implementation issues of the proposed policy. The issues focused on 12-month employees and mandatory leave and the real cost savings. As a result of the Senate, Dr. Irvin was going to fine-tune the resolution and forward to the Faculty Senate at a later date.

4. Susanna Rinehart presented the following resolution regarding sexual orientation and nondiscrimination to the Faculty Senate:

**Faculty Senate of Virginia Tech Resolution 2008-2009A**

**Whereas**, a diverse and inclusive learning environment which respects and enhances the potential of all members of our community is crucially important to Virginia Tech's mission of achieving excellence in teaching, research and service, and

**Whereas**, lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender faculty, students, administrators and staff make outstanding contributions to Virginia Tech's mission of research, service and teaching, and

**Whereas**, in the increasingly competitive and diverse workforce and economy, recruiting and retaining the best faculty, students, administrators and staff require Virginia Tech to be as attractive an opportunity as possible, and

**Whereas**, one hundred and thirteen (113) of the one hundred and twenty (120) top colleges ranked by US News and World Report include sexual orientation in their nondiscrimination policies, and

**Whereas**, sixty-one of sixty-two top-ranked research universities who are members of the Association of American Universities (AAU) include sexual orientation in their nondiscrimination policies, and

**Whereas**, Virginia institutions including George Mason University, Hampden-Sydney College, Hampton University, Hollins University, James Madison University, Longwood University, Norfolk State University, Old Dominion University, Radford University, Randolph-Macon College, the University of Richmond, the University of Mary Washington, the University of Virginia, Virginia Commonwealth University, Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, and Washington and Lee University include sexual orientation in their nondiscrimination policies, and

**Whereas**, there is no federal law protecting Virginia Techs gay, lesbian, bisexual or transgender employees from such workplace discrimination, and

**Whereas**, there is currently no state law in Virginia prohibiting discrimination against employees of state or local government, including employees of Virginia's public colleges and universities, based on race, color, religion, national origin, sex, pregnancy, childbirth or related medical conditions, age, marital status, disability, sexual orientation, or status as a special disabled veteran or other veteran covered by the Vietnam Era Veterans Readjustment Act of 1974, as amended, and

**Whereas**, all employees of the Commonwealth or its political subdivisions or agencies deserve statutory protection against employment discrimination based on any of the above non-merit based factors, and

**Whereas**, recent survey research by the Equality Virginia Education Fund shows that more than 90% of Virginians support the right of gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender citizens to work for the government without discrimination,

**Now, therefore, be it resolved** that the Faculty Senate of Virginia Tech calls upon the Virginia General Assembly to pass legislation codifying the basic human right of all public employees to be free from discrimination in the workplace based on race, color, religion, national origin, sex, pregnancy, childbirth or related medical conditions, age, marital status, disability, status as a special disabled veteran or other veteran covered by the Vietnam Era Veterans Readjustment Act of 1974, as amended, sexual orientation, and gender identity.

The Senate unanimously approved the resolution.

4. Meeting adjourned at 9:00 p.m.