

Remarks made during the BOV Meeting  
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Thank you Mr. Rector, members of the Board of Visitors, Ladies and Gentlemen.

As I reviewed the BOV agenda and reflect back on conversations I have had with many of you in different university venues, it is clear that the faculty work environment is an important issue to each of you. On behalf of the faculty I'd like to extend our appreciation for your hard work on improving the quality of life for faculty.

During the past two months, the Faculty Senate has met three times and a variety of issues have been discussed. In my remarks I will highlight points from our discussions regarding *student evaluations of instruction, voting in the promotion and tenure process, promotional ladder for instructors, and the Faculty Club*.

*Student Evaluation of Instruction:* High quality teaching is a core value for Virginia Tech faculty. Documenting teaching effectiveness is a component of both annual reviews and promotion and tenure dossiers. Further, students have the majority of input regarding evaluating teaching effectiveness. Most faculty use the Student Perceptions of Instruction (SPOI) questionnaire at the end of a course. This questionnaire contains 15 questions on student perceptions of the instructor's apparent knowledge of subject matter, success in communicating content, degree to which subject matter was made stimulating or relevant, concern and respect for students as individuals, administration of the class, organization of class materials, adequacy of the textbook and other study materials, and fairness in grading. While this questionnaire is easy to use, faculty do not feel that it is complete enough to accurately evaluate teaching.

The Commission on Faculty Affairs is working with the Center for Excellence in Undergraduate Teaching to develop a better instrument and system that will provide both formative and summative evaluations. Some of the key faculty involved in this important effort include Professor Osman Balci (Computer Science), Professor Richard Shingles (Political Science), and Professor Terry Wildman (Center of Excellence in Undergraduate Teaching/School of Education).

*Changes in the Promotion and Tenure Process:* With our current Promotion and Tenure review system there is the potential for one person (Promotion and Tenure Committee members, Department Chair/Head, Dean) to influence the process by voting more than once. Faculty feel that any one involved in the promotion and tenure review process be allowed to vote on a candidate only one time. The Commission on Faculty Affairs is working on a policy that, if approved, will result in those involved in the process to be able to vote only once.

*Promotional Ladder for Instructors:* Promotion in rank is not a requirement of continuous employment for instructors. We have many talented and dedicated faculty who serve at the instructor rank and they may do so their entire career. Many of our peer institutions have created an instructor career path that distinguishes between instructor ranks, using such titles as instructor, advanced instructor, and senior instructor. This is done to encourage and reward excellence in contributions to the instructional programs. Responsibilities, contract lengths, and salaries would all vary depending on the rank. The Commission on Faculty Affairs developed a draft document describing a potential promotional ladder for instructors. Professor Valerie Hardcastle, Vice-President of the Faculty Senate and Chair of the Commission on Faculty Affairs presented the document to the Faculty Senate and the Senate was very enthusiastic about this potential opportunity.

*Faculty Club:* As I mentioned in August, Faculty would like to see a centrally located, dedicated space where faculty, staff, administrators, alumni and special friends of the university can interact. Professor Robert Denton (Communications) is heading a workgroup that has four tasks: to conduct an informal survey of faculty clubs across the nation and with peer institutions to obtain general information as to facilities, membership, services, and costs; second, to review the various possibilities for such a facility at Virginia Tech; third, to develop an official proposal; and fourth, to conduct a survey among

faculty to ascertain level of support and potential participation. The workgroup report will be presented in December or January and I will share the findings with you at the March meeting.

In summary, the year has gotten off to a great start and we have an ambitious upcoming agenda. Once again, thank you for your support and the opportunity to present issues of interest and concern to faculty.