

Remarks made during the BOV Meeting
Kerry J. Redican
President, Faculty Senate of Virginia Tech
March 25, 2007

Thank you Mr. Rector, members of the Board of Visitors, Ladies and Gentlemen

A little over three months has passed since the November BOV meetings. During that time the Faculty Senate has met five times, discussed and taken action on a variety of issues. At the August BOV meeting, I spoke about reaching the 60th salary percentile of peer institutions and a dedicated space for a Faculty Club as the two priorities for the 2006-2007 Faculty Senate.

Peer Institutions and the 60th Percentile: Once again, we want to thank you for your work on moving faculty closer toward the 60th salary percentile. We realize reaching this goal it is a complex issue. Dwight Shelton visited the Faculty Senate in November and did an excellent job of educating the faculty on the numerous issues and forces affecting determination of percentage of increases in salaries and that reaching the 60th percentile will not occur overnight. Faculty know that this is a high priority for the BOV and we are most appreciative.

Faculty Club: Nineteen of our 24 peer institutions have faculty clubs. In addition, six of the 12 ACC schools have faculty clubs and in Virginia, both University of Virginia and James Madison University have faculty clubs. This will be a challenge but there are possible locations that would work. President Steger funded weekly Spring semester "coffee breaks" for faculty in the Torgersen Museum. The receptions have been well-received and faculty appreciate the opportunity to network. The success of these coffee breaks demonstrates not only faculty interest in networking but also in the need for a place to network. We are looking forward to seeing this become a reality at Virginia Tech in the next few years.

The Commission on Faculty Affairs has brought several resolutions to the Faculty Senate. These include Composition of Committees for Promotion and Tenure Evaluation, Annual and Pre-tenure Faculty Evaluations, Professors of Practice, and Part-Time Appoints for Tenure-Track and Tenured Faculty, and Career Ladder for Instructors. The rationales for these resolutions are rather lengthy, but just to briefly summarize:

Composition of Committees for Promotion and Tenure Evaluation: The rationale behind this resolution is that faculty members should chair both the departmental and college committees and each level of review should be as independent as possible from the others. Some colleges would need to adopt new procedures during 2008-2009 and giving college governance bodies adequate time to revise their college guidelines and procedures.

Annual and Pre-tenure Faculty Evaluations: Departmental practices differ on the extent and nature of the feedback that is given to faculty members annually and to untenured faculty during their probationary period, including the criteria to be used in determining merit adjustments. Departments are strongly urged to develop and disseminate statements of policies and practices concerning expectations for performance and the process that will be used for annual and pre-tenure evaluations. The end result will be more consistency and transparency in this important process.

Part-Time Appointments for Tenure Track and Tenured Faculty: This new faculty category was developed by the AdvanceVT Policy Work Group in conjunction with the Commission on Faculty Affairs. The context for such a policy is to enhance the ability to recruit and retain excellent faculty and in some instances balancing work and family needs, such as the arrival or care of a child, elder care, care of a partner, or personal health circumstances make full time employment difficult. This option would be open to both tenured-track and tenured faculty.

Career Ladder for Instructors: Non-tenure track faculty members fill important roles in departments and as such they are intended to complement the efforts of the tenure track faculty. We feel that as

valuable contributors to departmental and institutional missions they should receive recognition for their accomplishments, more specifically, a career ladder with defined reviews and opportunity for promotion.

Collectively, if the resolutions become a reality, they do represent some significant changes in the culture of the university. We feel that this change is necessary and will help us to reach our mutual goals.

Finally, it is clear that the faculty work environment is an important issue to each of you. Once again on behalf of the Faculty I'd like to extend our appreciation for your hard, dedicated work on improving the quality of life for faculty. Your actions are noticed by faculty and faculty are very appreciative. Thank you.