

## **Remarks made during the BOV Meeting**

Hardus Odendaal  
President, Faculty Senate of Virginia Tech

Aug 25, 2008

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

This is my first appearance as a member of the board and I'd like to express on behalf of the faculty our appreciation for these opportunities to participate in this level of the governance process and your responsiveness to faculty issues.

The purpose of the Faculty Senate is to create an effective Faculty organization, which can enter into partnership for shared responsibility and cooperative action between the Faculty, Administration, Staff, and Students in order to promote the general welfare of the University. Faculty members are elected to serve as senators by departments and the number of seats of a given department is proportional to the number of faculty in that department. The Faculty senate has its own standing committees and work groups, and the senate elects members to fill seats on the University Council and the University Commissions. The FS meet once a month for about 2 hours and on a given day we'd have roughly 60-70 senators in attendance.

I wish to express special thanks to Kerry Redican for serving two successive terms as President of the Faculty Senate and for doing a fantastic job. Kerry has been an inspiration and I am fully aware of the size of the shoes I'm about to fill!

Let me touch on just two themes:

### **SALARY BENCHMARKING**

Before the first budget reductions last year we were hoping to see salaries increase to get more on par with the 60th percentile compared to our peer institutions. Then we heard of budget cuts and then our peers also changed, which brings us to around the 43<sup>rd</sup> percentile compared to our peers, so I'm sure those discussions will also continue at some point in the future. We recognize that other institutions are also experiencing budget pressures. But first we have to overcome the budget reductions in our immediate future.

### **FACULTY CLUB**

As you already know there is a need for a dedicated space that could serve as a faculty club. I would like to elaborate on this just a little. Greater emphasis on interdisciplinary research has created a need for a dedicated space, of a hub, where faculty from different disciplines and different departments can meet and network with one another. Such a space will also contribute to a healthier Campus Climate and help us to attract and retain new faculty. For over a year now, President Steger has generously been providing funding for refreshments at a weekly "faculty mixer" as precursor to an official Faculty Club. These Tuesday afternoon weekly socials were well attended and appreciated.

Faculty are still eager to have a dedicated space, where they can meet and network.

I'd also like to thank President Steger and Provost McNamee for their efforts in supporting a healthy climate for shared governance and for taking time out of their schedules for regular meetings with the Officers of the Faculty Senate.

I look forward to working with you and representing my colleagues this year. That concludes my report.

Thank you.