

Remarks made during the BOV Meeting  
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President, Faculty Senate of Virginia Tech  
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Thank you Mr. Rector. Good afternoon ladies and gentlemen.

It is an honor to represent the best and brightest scholars in the world. The faculty appreciate the privilege of allowing the President of the Faculty Senate of Virginia Tech to serve as a faculty representative to the Board of Visitors.

I'd like to take a few minutes and focus my remarks in four areas: (1) acknowledgments: (2) the work of the Faculty Senate; (3) *Inventing the Future* and (4) the 2006-2007 Faculty Senate agenda.

#### Acknowledgments

We recognize the tremendous difficulties in trying to balance competing interests in a large organization such as Virginia Tech. In the midst of these challenges the BOV has successfully addressed issues important to faculty quality of life. The faculty thank you for your diligence in supporting important policies such as the extension of the tenure clock and modified duties. In addition, we thank you for your commitment to shared governance. Finally, we appreciate your efforts to increase salaries to the 60th percentile of our peer institutions.

#### Faculty Senate - Structure and Function

The Faculty Senate is comprised of seventy members, one member elected from every Department in the University. Faculty Senators are appointed to every University Commission and Committee. This structure allows faculty to have input into literally every decision made in this institution. Even the strategic plan included significant faculty input. The outcomes may not always be what faculty want, but the opportunities to be heard are there.

We meet as a full Senate each month. We have three committees that are overseen by the Faculty Senate: Faculty Reconciliation Committee, Committee on Faculty Ethics, and the Faculty Review Committee. The Faculty Reconciliation Committee is focused on resolving conflicts between faculty or between faculty and supervisors. The Faculty Review Committee is responsible for providing faculty review of faculty grievances and in limited instances considers appeals in the promotion and tenure process. Finally, the Committee on Faculty Ethics is focused on promoting knowledge of and adherence to ethical principles. These committees are effective in both "policing our own" and providing important input with respect to procedural violations.

#### Invent the Future and Teamwork

We believe that the leadership of Virginia Tech has read the environment well in the effort to *Invent the Future*. The future for Virginia Tech looks bright. We have a strategic plan and a motivated faculty to implement the plan. However, we all know the competition is keen. Our peer institutions and others are not standing by waiting to see what we do. Our "competitors" are doing everything they can to be where we want to be and at times have been successful in recruiting some of our faculty. The implication is clear: we must continue to work closely together to achieve our goals. We have successfully shifted from the Board of Visitors, University and College Administration, and faculty functioning in different, yet overlapping universes to functioning as a team in reaching our goals.

#### Faculty Senate Agenda - 2006/2007

This year the Faculty Senate will focus significant effort on examining the faculty review system, probationary periods for faculty, and the feasibility of a Faculty/University Club.

*Faculty Review System:* We utilize a faculty activity reporting system that has worked well, but faculty feel the process needs some modification. As you know each year every faculty member

submits a faculty activity report or FAR. This report includes past year's accomplishments in teaching, research, and service. The report is reviewed at the department and college levels. However, there is some variation as to how this is done and who is involved in the review process. The Commission on Faculty Affairs and the Faculty Senate will be working on proposing acceptable changes in this process so that it is a fairer and more objective system for all faculty.

*Probationary Periods for Faculty:* We have operated under a system where a faculty member is hired and undergoes a 2 year review, 4 year review and during the 6th year review, a tenure decision is made. Given where we want to be as a university, this 2, 4, 6, in (tenure) or out (separation from Virginia Tech) *may* need to be changed. It may require more than 6 years for a scholar to establish the pedigree to successfully compete for high level funding. It's time to reexamine the practicality of our current policy and, if necessary, propose changes.

*Faculty/University Club:* Faculty have expressed the need for a dedicated space to meet and network with colleagues from across campus. Virginia Tech is a city in itself and it is difficult for faculty in different disciplines to interact. A dedicated space for all faculty (teaching, research, administrative and professional) will promote the "connectedness" faculty desire.

The policy issues I mentioned and the feasibility of Faculty/University Club will be discussed in many forums this next year. Because we do operate under such a strong shared-governance model with checks and balances, we may not reach closure on these issues this year. But we will work hard at it.

I'm looking forward to a productive year and again, I appreciate the opportunity to share the faculty-related issues and concerns.

Thank you Mr. Rector.