

Faculty Senate Meeting Minutes

December 10, 2021, @ 2:30pm

Via Zoom or Pamplin 30

Check-In

Senators Present:

Montasir Abbas, Diane Agud, Susan Anderson, Richard Ashley, Paul Avey, Joseph Baker, Arthur Ball, Azziza Bankole, A.K. Bartlett, Andrew Binks, Hilary Bryon, Virginia Buechner-Maxwell, Tanyel Bulbul, Scott Case, Guopeng Cheng, Ashley Dayer, Crystal Lane, Stuart Feigenbaum, John Ferris, Becky Funk, James Hawdon, Ashley Heflin, David Hicks, Bob Hicok, Daniel Hindman, Ran Jin, Brett Jones, Eric Kaufman, Nathan King, Alex Kinnaman (Alternate for Rachel Miles), Bradley Klein, Vivica Kraak, Leigh Krometis, Evan Lavender-Smith, Justin Lemkul, Alexander Leonessa, Jonathan Maher, Caitlin Martinkus, Frances McCarty, Joe Merola (Alternate for Diego Troya), Michael Nappier, Amy Nelson, Aaron Noble, Gregory Novack, Thomas O'Donnell, Bruce Pencek, Christopher Pierce, Thomas Pingel, Patrick Pithua, Nicole Pitterson, Robin Queen, Steven Rideout, Susanna Rinehart, Nicholas Robbins, Todd Schenk, Charles Schleupner, Richard Shryock, Ryan Stewart, Laura Strawn, Cornel Sultan, Jay Teets, James Tokuhisa, Kwok Tsui, Layne Watson, Robert Weiss, Yan Xu, Liqing Zhang (67)

Guest: Mike Mulhare

(62 attended via Zoom and 6 attended in person)

Call to Order by Senate President Robert Weiss at 2:35pm

1. Approval of Agenda and Minutes (Robert Weiss)

- Approval of the Faculty Senate Agenda for December 10, 2021.
- Approval and posting of the Faculty Senate meeting minutes for November 12, 2021 ([Link](#))

The consent agenda was presented and a motion to approve the consent agenda was made, seconded, and passed by unanimous consent.

- Statement on Targeted Harassment and Updated Faculty Senate Agenda

Robert Weiss asked for a motion to approve the content of the statement and publish the statement on the Faculty Senate website by unanimous consent. A motion to approve the content of the statement was made and seconded. Some senators raised a number of questions and requested editorial changes. Due to the number of questions during the meeting, Robert Weiss moved the statement to a discussion item and updated the agenda. A motion to approve the updated agenda was made, seconded (by James Hawdon).

2. Brief Updates

- Task Force Software Procurement (R. Weiss)

Robert Weiss proposed to create a task force to work on the software procurement in early January. Robert will reach out to the leadership of the Staff and AP Faculty Senates to inquire if they are interested in a joint task force as this issue might not only be pertinent to faculty represented by the Faculty Senate.

- Commission and Committee Reports (R. Weiss)

Starting on Jan. 21, the operations officer will email the Senators serving as representatives in Commissions and Committees asking each to provide a short paragraph as an update. This will be completed for each subsequent Faculty Senate Meeting and will be included at the end of the agenda for all Senators to review. The request will come every other Friday and Senators will be asked to provide these updates by the following Tuesday by noon, before the agenda of the Faculty Senate meeting is finalized.

- Faculty Registrations for Graduate Committees (CFA - R. Queen)

The Faculty Senate has heard many concerns about the Faculty Registration policy. The Graduate School Dean will be attending the first CFA meeting in the Spring (January 21) to discuss this policy. Any specific questions for the Dean should be sent to Robin Queen (rmqueen@vt.edu) by January 14.

- Update on Faculty Reconciliation Committee (CFA - R. Queen)

The Faculty Reconciliation Committee has been inactive for a few years. The university has the Ombudsman office to serve the same function for faculty members. Robin Queen gave an updated plan to discontinue the Faculty Reconciliation Committee. Monty Abbas shared the historical perspectives and there were some elements of this role that lead the Faculty Senate kept the Committee in the past and should be considered before a final decision is made.

- Work on SPOT Evaluation - best practices (CFA - R. Queen)

CFA is working on the best way to perform teaching assessment. In the Spring semester, the CFA will work with the Council of the College Deans and discuss how the SPOT is used for

P&T and annual performance evaluations with the goal of developing some best practices for the use of SPOT scores.

3. Covid Mitigation (Mike Mulhare)

Mike Mulhare gave an Covid-19 Update. Overall, the performance is satisfactory for Fall 2021. The total numbers of tests and positive cases since August 3, 2020 were reviewed. Positive tests for students and employees are summarized over time. In the past few weeks, the number of positive cases remained low.

In the upcoming Spring Semester, Virginia Tech may require all eligible students and employees to get a booster. Virginia Tech will provide on campus clinics to provide boosters to students and employees in Jan. 2022. Virginia Tech will test all residential non-vaccinated students upon return to campus, and there is a plan to increase the surveillance testing program for vaccinated students and employees. To determine the masking strategy, Virginia Tech will look at the transmission rate as the primary metric.

The faculty senators asked a few questions related to the data, distancing and masking policy, and requirement for booster.

4. Discussion of the Faculty Senate Statement of the Targeted Harassment

Robert Weiss asked if there are content changes and any thoughts about the prepared document. If the revisions are simply editorial changes, the Senators can directly revise the document using tracked changes.

After some discussion, Robert Weiss suggested Senators directly add revisions to the document and that the authors of the statement review those prior to the next Faculty Senate meeting. The statement will be reviewed and voted on during the first Faculty Senate meeting in the Spring (January 14, 2022).

5. Resolution Process (Robin Queen and Bob Hicok)

A new resolution process has been proposed as the Faculty Senate is moving towards to the new governance model. More votes will be required in Faculty Senate meeting going forward. All comments from senators must be provided within 30 days after receiving a resolution. If this deadline is not observed, then the comments from the Faculty Senate is automatically waived. The proposed process was reviewed.

There was a discussion of possibly requesting 45 days instead of 30 days for comment. The outline of the new shared governance model has been approved. But more approvals are needed to change the University Council Constitution and Bylaws.

Suggestions have been made that the forthcoming resolutions in Commissions and Committees should be included in the updates that are provided to the Faculty Senate and that if any of these upcoming resolutions may need more conversation they can be discussed before the resolution is formally provided to the Faculty Senate for comment.

6. Open-Floor Discussion (Robin Queen)

A senator suggested putting all documents on FS website so that Faculty can have direct access to shared documents.

A few senators mentioned the new IT policy to limit the administrator access to computers. Robin Queen suggests that there is a procedure to request the administrative privileges. Some departments are giving temporary access to the approved users. Better solutions should be created. It is important for the IT department to ensure cyber security. This policy raised common concerns on daily lab activities as well as ensuring accessibility. One of the problems is that the departments may not have adequate resources. This issue becomes more challenging when faculty need some plug-ins or software during traveling.

Concerns were raised over the moving of the School of Performing Arts (SOPA) to the College of Architecture and Urban Studies given the limited engagement of faculty in the decision making process. It was reported that the College Faculty Association (CFA) in CLAHS was aware of these concerns and has been in discussions with the Dean about the engagement of the faculty.

Robin Queen mentioned a new Zoom Link and the possibility of a face-to-face meeting modality for Faculty Senate meetings in the Spring semester.

7. Adjourn

A motion to adjourn the meeting was made and seconded. The meeting was adjourned at 4:15PM.