



## Faculty Senate

Virginia Tech

Blacksburg, Virginia 24061

<https://www.facultysenate.vt.edu/>

# Faculty Senate Meeting Minutes

## September 8, 2023 @ 2:30pm

### Torgersen 1050 or Via Zoom

#### Check-In:

**Present:** Joe Merola (presiding), Luke Achenie, Diane Agud, Barbara Allen (alternate for James Hawdon), Richard Ashley, Jonathan Auguste, Paul Avey, Azziza Bankole, Scott Case, Guopeng Cheng, Joshua Clemons, Carolyn Commer, Nick Copeland, Kristy Daniels, Jonathan Everett, Stuart Feigenbaum, Carla Finkielstein, Zhuo Fu, Rebecca Funk, Rodney Gaines, Howard Gartner, Dave Gregory, Wesley Gwaltney, David Hicks, Daniel Hindman, Mantu Hudait, Scott Huxtable, Eli Jamison (alternate for Karen Schnatterly), Ran Jin, Bryan Katz (alternate for vacancy in CEE), Holly Kindsvater (alternate for Ashley Dayer), Alex Kinnaman, Leigh Anne Krometis, Evan Lavender-Smith, Renee LeClair, Justin Lemkul, Charles Lowery, G.Q. Lu, Jason Malone, Majid Manteghi (alternate for Ali Mehrizi-Sani), Eric Martin, Luca Massa, Michelle Maycock, Gonzalo Montero, Zhange Ni, Erin 'Nikki' Worthington, Greg Novack, Yuchin Pan, Robin Panneton, Nicole Pitterson, Susanna Rinehart, Nazila Roofigari-Esfahan, Cori Ruktanonchai, Adrian Sandu, Charles Schleupner, Richard Shryock, Charles Smith, Stephanie Smith, Keith Stephenson, Laura Strawn, Jay Teets, Jim Tokuhisa, Kwokleung Tsui, Alp Tural (alternate for Bill Green), Costin Untaroiu, Bimal Viswanath, Jeffrey Walling, Jerald Walz, Robert Weiss, Rose Wesche, Ashley Wilkinson, Angelica Witcher Walker, Hehuang Xie, Diane Zahm, Lizette Zietsman

**Guests:** Candace Buckner, Aaron Gross, Samantha Harden, Edna Jasso-Hernandez, Tae-Ho Lee, April Myers, Zarah Quinn, Demetria Somervell

**Absent with Notice:** Rachel Miles, Thomas O'Donnell, Robin Panneton, Virginia Buechner-Maxwell; Randy Wynne

**Absent:** Montasir Abbas, Biko Agozino, Mark Coggins, Rebecca Hester, Joseph Hughes, Casey Jim, Young-Teck Kim, Catherine Larochelle, Gary Long, Caitlin Martinkus, David Moore, Sean O'Keefe, Steven Rideout, Nino Ripepi, Nicholas Robbins, Hans Robinson, Eric Stanley, Saied Taheri, Shane Wang, Yan Xu

## **Call to Order by the President Joe Merola at 2:32**

### **Approval of Agenda and Minutes (Joe Merola)**

- Consent agenda was adopted:
  - Minutes for 8-25-2023 ([Link](#))
  - Agenda for 9-8-2023 ([Link](#))

## **Business Agenda**

### **Old Business**

1. Updates & Announcements from Committees, Commissions, University Council

### **New Business**

2. Reminder of Faculty Senate Attendance Policy
  - Senators who will be absent from a Faculty Senate meeting should notify their alternate who should attend in their place. If there is no elected alternate, the senator should provide prior notice of their absence to any Faculty Senate officer. If a department or unit is not represented at two consecutive meetings without providing prior notice, the senator's department or college association will be notified. This process is intended to help departments ensure that they have adequate Faculty Senate representation. Further details can be found in the Faculty Senate Bylaws, Article III. Attendance.
3. Changes to Faculty Handbook
  - Ron Fricker, Vice Provost for Faculty Affairs, distributed a memo regarding changes made to the Faculty Handbook. These changes have been approved by the Board of Visitors.
  - The Vice Provosts' memo will be available on the Faculty Senate SharePoint site. The Faculty Handbook and webpage for the Office of the Executive Vice President and Provost will be updated to reflect the approved changes.
4. Overview and refresher on resolution workflow and process
  - An overview of the resolution workflow process, from planning stages through Board of Visitors review, was provided. Committees and commissions who are considering resolutions with human resources, legal or financial implications are encouraged to obtain HR, legal, and financial review before University Council Cabinet review. Virginia Tech's shared governance system is advisory to the president.
  - Details were provided regarding the Draft Notice process. Per the University Council Constitution, a draft of the resolution is required for University Council Cabinet review. Resolutions can be drafted by senates or committees,

but all resolutions must go through a commission. Additionally, individuals can draft a resolution, but a commission or committee affiliated with the Faculty Senate would need to take on the resolution for it to go through shared governance.

5. Elections were conducted for the remaining university governance vacancies. Results follow.

- Committees
  - Academic Support Committee: Susanna Rinehart (67 votes, 1 Abstain)
  - Employee Benefits Committee: Jeff Walling (66 votes, 1 Abstain)
- Commissions
  - Commission on Staff Policies and Affairs (CSPA): Susanna Rinehart (66 votes, 2 Abstain)
  - Commission on Administrative and Professional Faculty Affairs (CAPFA): Keith Stephenson (67 votes, 1 Abstain)
- University Council
  - College of Liberal Arts and Human Sciences: Charles “Chuck” Lowery (69 votes, 0 Abstain)
- Two members of University Council Cabinet
  - Evan Lavender-Smith (70 votes, 0 Abstain)
  - Robert Weiss (69 votes, 1 Abstain)
- An election for a representative from the College of Arts, Architecture and Design will be conducted at a later date.

6. Virginia Tech President Tim Sands will join the Faculty Senate on September 22.

- Please email any questions for President Sands to Joe Merola by Monday, September 18, so these can be provided to President Sands in advance.
- Provost Cyril Clark and Interim Vice President of Information Technology and Chief Information Officer David Raymond are scheduled to attend Faculty Senate meetings during this academic year. Requests have also been received for representatives from Parking and Transportation and University Legal Counsel Kay Heidbreder to attend.
- If anyone has recommendations or requests for other topics or departments of interest, please email any Faculty Senate officer. Presenters are not restricted to Virginia Tech affiliated groups.

### **Open Floor Discussion**

7. The Faculty Constituent Report to the Virginia Tech Board of Visitors was presented by Joe Merola and provided a global focus on items of concern for Virginia Tech

faculty including the need for transparent communication and concerns regarding compensation.

- Along with the written report, AI was used to generate a faculty constituency report to the Board of Visitors, and portions were read to BOV members. This report reflected many of the same concerns that had been previously presented. This AI-generated report will be available as part of the constituent report on the Faculty Senate web page.
8. United Campus Workers of Virginia Tech. A recent news article reported that there is now an employee union and a graduate student union at Virginia Tech. Main points of discussion follow.
- Employees have a legal right to join a union. However, there are limits to what actions can be taken, such as collective bargaining. Any VT employee, excepting dean level or higher, may join the employee union. The union at Virginia Tech is one chapter of four in the Commonwealth (University of Virginia, William and Mary, and Virginia Commonwealth University have chapters). An interest meeting will be held on September 21. Union dues are required to join the union and are based on salary.

Motion to adjourn and seconded at 4:17 p.m.