

Faculty Senate Agenda & Minutes

February 7, 2020, 2:30-4:30pm

Location: NCB 160 (or [via Zoom](#) for those outside Blacksburg)

Present: Monty Abbas, Biko Agozino, Diane Agud, Robin Allnutt, Michael Borowski, Charles Calderwood, Leandro Castello, Virgilio Centeno, Benjamin Corl, Matthew Gabriele, William Galloway, Ellen Gilliland, Nicolin Girmes-Grieco, James Hawdon, Dana Hawley, Eunju Hwang, Christine Kaestle, Eric Kaufman, Bradley Klein, Jake Lahne, Paul Marek, Amy Nelson, Marie Paretti, R. Scott Pleasant, Hans Robinson, Ashley Shew, Richard Shryock, Eric Smith, Ryan Speer, Jay Teets, Tess Thompson, Jim Tokuhisa, Diego Troya, Mark Van Dyke, Layne Watson, Robert Weiss, Anthony Wright de Hernandez, Liqing Zhang,

Guests: Ellen Plummer (Provost's Office), Coogan Thompson (GSA)

Approval of Agenda

John Ferris noted that Bob Hicok is unable to be present due to illness. Accordingly, the previously shared agenda was amended, delaying discussion of Faculty Handbook edits to a future meeting. The new agenda was approved by unanimous consent.

Approval of Minutes

Minutes of January 24th meeting were approved.

Announcements

- Eric Kaufman highlighted the need for more faculty to serve on Graduate Honor System (GHS) panels. Additional information is available on the GHS website: <https://graduateschool.vt.edu/academics/expectations/graduate-honor-system.html>
- Eric Kaufman encouraged senators to provide input on the library's presence with the Innovation Campus. Eric is serving as the Faculty Senate representative to the Library Committee, and that committee is gathering input to prepare a statement about what is needed for library services at the Innovation Campus.
- John Ferris requested input on milestones and metrics for measuring faculty/university impact. The issue is that measures of Virginia Tech's strategic priorities are being considered that may not align with faculty views. He requested measures (i.e., numbers and equations) that could be shared at the Presidential Council Retreat on February 11th. John noted that President Sands seems to prefer figures of merit that present a ratio of two data points. John also shared correspondence from Provost Clarke about Times Higher Education (THE) impact ratings, including recent alignment with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals. (See <https://www.timeshighereducation.com/world-university-rankings/university-impact-rankings-faqs>.) Some of the strategic priority milestones that have already been presented to the Board of Visitors are posted at https://governance.vt.edu/assets/cnl_uacsbp_11-21-2019.pdf
- John Ferris shared an update related to the College of Architecture and Urban Studies:
 - The Provost met with A+D faculty in Blacksburg and is scheduled to meet with WAAC faculty in Alexandria. During the meeting, the Provost reviewed faculty concerns that were shared directly with him and through the Faculty Senate and updated attendees on actions related to each. Reese Ramos, VT ombuds, also

attended the meeting and has offered to facilitate conversations between faculty and Dean Blythe, which the Provost has strongly encouraged.

Topic 1: Sesquicentennial Celebration

- Rosemary Blieszner provided an update related to Virginia Tech's Sesquicentennial celebration (Appendix A). This is a significant milestone, and the celebration is intended to be complementary to the Beyond Boundaries initiatives.
- There are already faculty representatives on the planning committee. Broad involvement is desired. The committee is working to develop materials that allow individual units to hold related activities.
- There may be an opportunity for the Faculty Senate to highlight both the history and vision for governance at Virginia Tech.
- Rosemary provided her contact information (rmb@vt.edu), as well as her co-chair, Anne Khademian (akhademi@vt.edu).

Topic 2: Undergraduate Enrollment

- John Ferris provided an update related to admissions and undergraduate enrollment forecasting. The individuals working on this have been forthcoming with the data, as well as yield models. While many changes were made last year, very little has changed for this year, which allows more confidence in the forecasts. One change is a small adjustment in the proposed yield rate for the College of Engineering. In other areas, there is less than a 1% difference in the numbers.
- Virginia Tech's target number of acceptances this year is 6,675. John estimates the actual yield will be about 2% below this estimate, but this is acceptable in the ebb and flow of enrollment from year to year.
- One policy change this year is that early-decision students are no longer obligated to stick with their decision (they can be poached from other universities). Also, shifting relations with China could slightly reduce international enrollment. In contrast, an increase in campus visits could slightly boost enrollment.
- In sum, John believes there is no reason to be alarmed.

Other Business/Discussion

- The Engineering Faculty Organization (EFO) recently conducted a survey, following up on concerns raised by the Faculty Senate's Report on Research Assessment and Salary. The Engineering faculty's participation in the report was initially minimal, so the EFO sought additional input from College of Engineering (COE) faculty. A senator noted some of the phrasing was odd, but appreciated the EFO's efforts to gain input. An EFO representative (Ashley Johnson) encouraged more input and feedback, allowing the EFO to better represent a broad range of faculty within COE. This aligns with some of Faculty Senate's efforts to strengthen college faculty associations.
- No other business was presented.

Adjourn

The meeting formally adjourned at 3:07pm.

Respectfully submitted by Eric Kaufman, Faculty Senate Secretary.



Sesquicentennial Steering Committee

Co-chairs

Rosemary Blieszner, Ph.D. (rmb@vt.edu)

Anne Khademian, Ph.D. (akhademi@vt.edu)

**Virginia Tech’s Sesquicentennial:
Reaching Beyond Boundaries for the Next 150 Years**

When Planning begins now, monthly celebration activities from Fall, 2021 through Fall, 2022
Signature university events in Spring 2022

Why Celebrations to highlight events, activities, initiatives, and strategic priorities that honor the university’s history, celebrate the present, and propel our strengths forward to take Virginia Tech Beyond Boundaries into the next 150 years

What Where Who Events, projects, and products involving VT campuses and Commonwealth Campus Centers, historical sites, ARECs, Cooperative Extension, and international sites; the 9 colleges, Graduate School, Library, and Honors College; Student Affairs and student associations; Council on Virginia Tech History; Faculty and Staff Senates; the President’s Executive Team and Leadership Council; Graduate Student Assembly and Student Government Association; Corps of Cadets; Athletic Department; Women’s Center; Moss Arts Center; Smithfield; Transdisciplinary Communities; alumni, corporate, nonprofit, and government partners, donors, and the communities within which Virginia Tech campuses reside; and other VT units

How	Steering Committee manages overall strategy and timeline, ensures broad engagement
	Academic Work Group strategizes academic content and the engagement of faculty, staff, and students across campuses; fosters interdisciplinary, cross-colleges foci integrative of Beyond Boundaries and Transdisciplinary Communities thinking; encourages involvement of all academic and research units in Virginia and globally. Co-chairs: Navid Ghaffarzadegan, David Hicks, & Laura Hungerford
	Communications Work Group raises visibility of Sesquicentennial to broad public and extended internal audiences; develops brand, messaging, and products for Sesquicentennial marketing. Chair: Heather Ducote, Director of Marketing, University Relations
	Engagement Work Group identifies and engages targeted internal and external audiences. Chair: Debbie Day, Associate Vice President for Alumni Relations
	Operations and Events Work Group supports implementation of key Sesquicentennial milestone events and logistics. Chair: Ciji Good, Director of Special Events
	Projects and Products Work Group advises other work groups and partnering units across VT on the design, execution, and presentation of projects and products representing VT history, present accomplishments, and future aspirations related to the Sesquicentennial. Chair: Peter Potter, Director of Publishing Services