

**Faculty Senate Minutes**  
**November 16, 2018**  
**NCB 160, 2:30 - 3:45**

*In attendance*

*Senators:* Monty Abbas, Biko Agozino, Diane Agud, Susan Anderson, Michael Borowski, Charles Calderwood, Kelly Cobourn, Matt Eick, John Ferris, John Galbraith, Ellen Gilliland, Dana Hawley, Bob Hicok, Eric Kaufman, Bradley Klein, Bettina Koch, Jake Lahne, Paul Marek, Margarita McGrath, Marie Paretti, Susanna Rinehart, Hans Robinson, Todd Schenk, Durelle Scott, Brett Shadle, Richard Shryock, Eric Smith, Ryan Speer, David Tegarden, Diego Troya, Layne Watson, Anthony Wright de Hernandez.

*Guests:* Liam Smith and Sophie Campos, Student Government Association; Theresa Mayer, VP for Research and Innovation; Trish Dove, OVPRI; Lisa Lee, Assoc. VP for Scholarly Integrity and Research Compliance

*Absent*

Alan Abrahams, Masoud Agah, Mehdi Ahmadian, Robin Allnutt, Richard Ashley, Osman Balci, Arthur Ball, Brian Britt, Tanyel Bulbul, Robert Bush, Leandro Castello, Virgilio Centeno, Sam Doak, Harry Dorn, Stefan Duma, William Galloway, Nicolin Girmes-Grieco, Sierra Guynn, James Hawdon, Kathy Hosig, Eunju Hwang, Sara Jordan, Christine Kaestle, Roberto Leon, Chang Lu, Zachary Mackey, Shelley Martin, Polly Middleton, Cayce Myers, Mike Nappier, Philip Olson, David Radcliffe, Ford Ramsey, Manisha Singal, Stephen Smith, Jim Spotila, Divya Srinavasan, Cornel Sultan, Jim Tokuhisa, Dwight Viehland, Bruce Vogelaar, Daniel Wodak, Ryan Zimmereman

**1. Approval of Agenda**

The agenda was approved.

**2. Approval of Minutes**

The minutes of the November 2 meeting are not yet available.

**3. Announcements**

*SGA – campus resource sheet*

Liam Smith & Sophie Campos from SGA presented the Mental Health Resource Sheet, with the request that faculty include the sheet in their syllabi or other course materials. SGA has been working with Cook Counseling to develop a listing of readily available resources to reduce stigma around seeking help. Faculty can support that effort by including the resource sheet in their course materials and making students aware of the resources.

Senators suggested creating a web page to house the resource sheet so that it can be linked from syllabi and course web sites.

*Constitution amendment vote: Robert's Rules*

Ferris provided a [Link to Voting Quiz](#) and reminded faculty to vote.

### *Promotion and Tenure*

Hicok provide a link to the current revision as well as a link to the P&T Discussion Board for feedback and comments.

- Current version <https://tinyurl.com/P-and-T-revision>
- Discussion Board: [Link to Promotion and Tenure Discussion Board](#)
- A brief discussion followed.
  - Hicok noted that CFA is continuing to update the draft based on responses from the Senate.
  - Question: Should we include anything regarding “collegiality” as a criterion for tenure?
    - It raises the potential for lawsuits.
    - How can it be measured?
    - Such criteria tend to disadvantage members of underrepresented minorities.
    - We should consider citizenship rather than collegiality. Collegiality isn’t the right criterion; the issue is more about people’s ability and willingness to contribute to the community. Even if it’s not measurable, maybe we do want something included toward that end.
    - The service requirement for junior faculty is now significantly lower than it has been given the research pressure for tenure.
    - The current Faculty Handbook uses the term “ethics.”
    - How would this criterion fit into the current requirements for service? Maybe that is where the discussion of this requirement belongs.
    - There is strong opposition to the idea of collegiality because it is too easily linked to subjective “liking” of someone.
    - Junior faculty should be encouraged to serve and to invest in the institution.
  - Question: Why was the concept of a mandatory review of progress toward full professors introduced into the handbook (Section 3.4.5.3)? (Note that this review is different from post-tenure review.). Senators requested that CFA review this requirement and consider whether it is necessary. Senators recalled that the purpose of the review was to encourage associate professors to go up for promotion.
  - SOVA Senators raised questions about the language around who can serve at the department level for programs with a School Director. Currently, program heads can sit on P&T committees but they are not the individuals who write the unit administrative letter; the School Director provides that letter. The language needs to be revisited so that it is accurate for schools as well as departments.

### *Provost Search (John)*

- The Senate’s meeting with the first provost candidate was yesterday.
- Ferris noted that the reason for the short window is attributed to protecting candidates’ confidentiality. All candidate meetings with the Senate will be at 1 p.m. in the boardroom, Tuesdays and Thursdays. Public presentations will be at 3 p.m. on the same days.
- Senators voiced strong needs to have more advance notice on timing and to have the open forum presentations recorded so that they are accessible to all faculty.

### *Software procurement and licensing compliance*

- [Link to Approved Software List](#) is available for review.
- Senators suggested having Tracy Gallagher here at the Dec. meeting.

### *Equity and Access*

- Marie is the Senate point of contact regarding Equity and Access concerns.

#### **4. IRB and General Research (Vice President of Research and Innovation Theresa Mayer, led by John Ferris)**

Mayer and colleagues are seeking an open discussion with a wide range of stakeholders on the future of the Biocomplexity Institute. They have been conducting a “listening tour” to enable them to hear faculty ideas, questions, and concerns.

Mayer began with some background on the Institute, including details on the role of the Institute in overall university funding. She noted that the data as presented in the *Roanoke Times* may be somewhat misleading, and provided data on both the Institute’s funding and VT’s overall external funding. Across the university, we had record expenditures this year of \$272M, with an increasingly diverse portfolio, including DOD, NSF, NIH, and industry funding. This growth is a direct result of both faculty efforts and the university’s investment institutes. VT is among the fastest growing in the nation for research expenditures, outperforming growth in available funding. The Biocomplexity Institute represented 5% of the overall expenditures (about \$2M of the \$272M), and Mayer noted that only a fraction of that will be leaving VT. Much of the funding remains at VT with VT faculty.

She also noted that of the 99 Institute employees (excluding graduate students and post docs), 44 have left for UVA or industry; 55 are staying, including 5 key Principle Investigators who in leadership positions (i.e., who are actively engaged in leading proposal development and research efforts).

She pointed as well to the complexity and time-consuming nature of transferring grants when investigators leave. The negotiation phase of this process is ending and we’re about to enter the actual transfer phase. This transfer will free up both space and money for strategic investments. So OVPRI and the Institute want to listen and get feedback and help think about what the future looks like and how we can reinvest those resources. She then opened the floor for comments and suggestions. The Biocomplexity Institute (originally VBI) was greatly ahead of its time. So what’s the next big thing? We have this space and money, but how do we hit that next forward-looking space? What has the potential to be transformative, yield ROI, and capture the attention of investors? In addressing these questions, one key boundary condition is the need to develop and maintain deep and longstanding sponsor relationships with non-traditional sources (i.e., beyond NSF and NIH). Senators offered a number of comments and questions.

- Layne Watson was part of the original team that conceptualized VBI, and he provided a brief background. Funding for VBI came from the state tobacco settlement. At the time, there were only a few such centers in the country, so VBI was very successful and competitive at first. Now we are just another player. The niche we had is gone because everyone else has caught up. Watson also noted that VBI was initiated in conjunction with substantial available funding for bioinformatics, and CS was able to bring in top experts from all over the country to get advice. They brought in leading thinkers to help identify where we should go.
- How can we make the Institute a truly transdisciplinary, translational space? In a way, it became a disciplinary space. How can we make it, by design, a truly problem-oriented space

in which people can come together in time-bound teams to solve the big problems across disciplines?

- Can the Institute function more as an investment institute? The reputation is that these big institutes don't play well with traditional tenure-track/tenured faculty. How can they partner with faculty rather than serve as competitors to faculty?
- VBI was originally established as a commonwealth institute and the model was focused within the Institute. Much of what was happening there was not well publicized. Mayer noted, however, the Institute now includes 25 projects across 5 colleges.
- Why are we ignoring the DAs and SGAs? It seems like these are places where we already have direction and don't have resources for research. Can we use the space and the money to support the current directions there? One example would be money to recruit outstanding graduate students.
- We should look at the big sponsors and see where they are heading.
- Why not merge it with one of the existing centers? Fralin, ICTAS, and others are all doing well. VBI/BI has been very top-down, not easy to collaborate with, and very inefficient with its heavy administration. We need to make sure it's framed as an investment center (like Fralin and ICTAS).
- Is it a space for small incubator ideas rather than trying to hit the one big thing? Can we leverage the new Link platform to work with the industry partners we already have to see what problems they are facing?
- We have tremendous strengths in human services. What about dedicated space for all the outreach services we have (adult day centers, marriage and family services, childcare)? Could this be a center for all of our outreach?
- VT has significant challenges recruiting and retaining top-notch faculty from underrepresented groups. Could that be an area of focus for who we bring in and who is there?
- Rural health is one potentially galvanizing area; it is on a lot of people's radar and fits our land grant mission.
- The future of work is another big idea that is receiving significant attention nationally.
- How do we create spaces for faculty to come together across spaces? Can we facilitate short term movement of faculty through different kinds of spaces in the BI space?
- Mayer notes that the vast majority of the BI building is wet lab space. There is limited general purpose space, so we may also need to consider not only the BI building, but other buildings.
- There is a growing need for more proposal development and program development support.
- An ERC planning grant funded the Occoquan water resources center. How do we facilitate teams coming together around these kinds of large, innovative projects focused on state needs?
- Mayer noted that as an institution, VT has been quite successful at the single investigator/small team proposals, but less successful at the larger center models. Some of that work has been done within the investment institutes, but how can we better support these larger center efforts?
- Can we leverage the IGEP/IGERT/NRTs that VT has and provide interdisciplinary spaces for these innovative graduate programs?
- We need to consider shared user laboratory spaces.

- Can we think about the investment institutes as shared spaces? How can we make interdisciplinary spaces work more effectively?
- Mayer noted that research buildings pose a definite financial challenge. The maximum funding from the state for a research building is 15%, so the university is carrying a fairly heavy debt load with respect to our new buildings. We expected to recover that money through facilities costs (overhead).
- All of this needs to be sorted out as a community.
- When we look at funding the research enterprise as a whole, how do we make sure we have the infrastructure to support it well? It is expensive to run it, and the federal budget to support the running of the engine is not growing.
- Mayer noted that the federal F&A rate is decreasing. We just completed our 3-year negotiation, and there will be a 0.5% point decrease this year and next year. We are dropping slightly as our peers are rising, so we are getting more competitive.
- Mayer will also be happy to come talk to the Senate about infrastructure issues.
- Ferris will send out an announcement through Canvas to help us identify the next steps.
- Mayer also encouraged senators to talk with their Associate Deans for research, and noted that this group is talking regularly about things like shared research spaces and the need to have ongoing conversations.

## **5. Other business**

- CAUS is still required to use EFARs and the Senate would like an update on the EFAR system. College committees are currently meeting with Peggy Layne on the system, and Ferris will provide an update soon.

## **6. Adjourn**

The Senate adjourned at 3:55 p.m.