

Faculty Senate Minutes
February 8, 2019
NCB 160, 2:30 - 3:45

Senators in attendance

Monty Abbas, Biko Agozino, Robin Allnutt, Susan Anderson, Richard Ashley, Michael Borowski, Tanyel Bulbul, Charles Calderwood, Leandro Castello, Sam Doak, Matt Eick, John Ferris, Ellen Gilliland, Nicolin Girmes-Grieco, James Hawdon, Kathy Hosig, Eunju Hwang, Eric Kaufman, Lisa Kennedy, Bradley Klein, Bettina Koch, Jake Lahne, Roberto Leon, Zachary Mackey, Paul Marek, Cayce Myers, Mike Nappier, Marie Paretti, David Radcliffe, Susanna Rinehart, Hans Robinson, Todd Schenk, Richard Shryock, Stephen Smith, Eric Smith, Ryan Speer, Jim Spotila, David Tegarden, Jim Tokuhisa, Diego Troya, Bruce Vogelaar, Layne Watson, Anthony Wright de Hernandez.

Guest

Sharon Stidham, Graduate Student Association

1. Approval of Agenda

- The agenda was approved.
- Minutes of the January 25 meeting are delayed until Feb. 22.

2. Announcements (5 minutes)

Alan Abrahams has recently resigned from the Senate. As a result, there is a vacant position in the Cabinet and CGS&P. Gail McMillan is currently replacing Jacob Barney and has agreed to continue to fill out his term. Mehdi Ahmadian has been nominated to replace Abrahams. The appointment was approved by the Senate.

3: Request for Support: Virginia Tech's 35th Annual Graduate Student Association Research Symposium (Sharon Stidham,)

- The goal of the GSA Research Symposium is to help students develop as professionals.
- The symposium needs faculty help as judges and mentors and attendees.
- Faculty incentives: Why help?
 - Appreciation
 - A chance to educate all participating students
 - Free food, refreshments, t-shirt
 - FAR data
- Get involved
 - Contact Sharon sharon62@vt.edu or Kisha Greer kiwi@vt.edu.
 - Encourage colleagues to attend.
 - Encourage students to attend.
 - Share ideas on how to improve the whole process (rubrics, ways to provide better feedback).

4. Update on Governance (led by John Ferris)

- Discussions with the administration are ongoing.
- Ferris, Hicok, Finney, and Cyril met to strategize on how best to expand the group in order to brainstorm potential new structures that will support increases in shared governance.

The expanded group will include students, faculty, staff, and administrators. Once the group is established, they will begin brainstorming and sharing ideas more broadly.

- The change effort is definitely moving forward.
- Hicok continues to meet with a core group that includes faculty, deans, department heads; there are “good eyes” on the process for forming an effective working group that can put forward an actionable proposal.
- Ferris wants to make sure we are not obligated to things that are poor uses of our time.
- Right now, the group does not have a specific idea in place; they want to open it up more widely than has been considered in the past year and reconsider not only the role of Faculty Senate but the whole governance structure, starting with the “principles of engagement.” Ferris noted that one possibility is that not all constituent groups have the same voice in all matters – i.e., given that different constituent groups have different areas of expertise and interests, a new governance structure could better leverage and attend to those differences.
- Last year’s group had a skeletal proposal; that is still “on the table” but the group does not want to talk about structure yet.
- One key goal is to have fewer lines directly reporting to the president.
- The process may seem slower than we like, but it had to wait until we got a permanent provost. With Clarke’s appointment in January we are now actively moving forward.

5. Amendments to Constitution and Bylaws

First Consideration: Amendment the Faculty Senate Bylaws regarding re-election

- Please comment in the document: <https://tinyurl.com/FS-term-limits>

Ferris introduced the amendment, explaining the issues and concerns motivating the change. The current proposal includes allowing senators to exceed the term limit with a supermajority (2/3 vote) by the department.

Comments

- Term limits will likely leave us with some departments having no senators or senators who really do not want to be there.
- We currently have term limits in the Constitution; senators are limited to two successive terms. Not all departments adhere to that.
- The value of term limits is that they provide a way to engage more faculty and prevent one person in a department from “having” to serve repeatedly.
- We could have term limits within Senate for Cabinet positions, but eliminate them at the department level.
- Active changes were made to the Google doc during the discussion.
- The decision-making should favor department-level control.
- After much discussion, the senators were split between several options, as defined in the current Google doc.

Second Consideration: Faculty Senate Resolution FS 2018-19B, Resolution to Amend the Faculty Senate Constitution, Article V, Section 1 and Article III, Section 5, regarding term limits

- Link to document: <https://tinyurl.com/FS-2018-19B>

- This was the second reading; there was no discussion. In the absence of a sufficient number of senators to sustain the vote, a straw poll was held and the amendment was supported unanimously. A formal vote will be taken through the Senate Canvas Site.

Second Consideration: Faculty Senate Resolution FS 2018-19C, Resolution to Amend the Faculty Senate Constitution, Article VIII, Section 1, regarding Amendments to the Faculty Senate Constitution

- Link to document: <https://tinyurl.com/FS-2018-19C>
- This was the second reading.
- There was some discussion about why approval of the president was still considered necessary. Ferris noted that we are following the Staff Senate in this regard, and one key issue is timing; we do still value input and support from the administration, and the President can sign things as they cross his desk, whereas the BOV must wait until their next meeting.
- In the absence of a sufficient number of senators to sustain the vote, a straw poll was held and the amendment was supported unanimously. A formal vote will be taken through the Senate Canvas Site.

Second Consideration: Faculty Senate Resolution FS 2018-19D, Resolution to Amend the Faculty Senate Constitution, Article II, regarding function of Faculty Senate as faculty voice

- Link to document: <https://tinyurl.com/FS-2018-19D>
- This was the second reading.
- *Question:* Is “voice” the right word? This section of the Constitution is really about us stating our opinion. The key issue here is the scope of our responsibilities – this clause enables us to comment on any issue we find relevant/important, rather than limiting us to working through the FSVA only on matters of concern to faculty in the Commonwealth.
- Senators debated whether the suggested change is sufficient. Given that discussions about structural changes to governance are underway, the proposed change seems a useful step for the Senate now, even as we recognize that more substantive changes regarding the role of the Senate are in process.
- CFA approved the constitutional changes today.
- In the absence of a sufficient number of senators to sustain the vote, a straw poll was held and the amendment was supported unanimously. A formal vote will be taken through the Senate Canvas Site.

6. Other business

- The Committee on Faculty Efficiency/Priorities: Ferris will organize this committee.
- OSP Contract Delays (Abbas)
 - People are losing contracts because OSP is taking too long in contract negotiations. There have been at least 3 contracts lost in the CEE Department over the last year or so as a result of delays.
 - We need to bring OSP in to try to understand what is happening and why.
 - The Hume Center brought the issue to Teresa Mayer and nothing is happening yet.
 - Sands believes Mayer is handling it.
 - Abbas will gather stories and identify appropriate people to bring to the Senate.

- Software Licensing Delays
 - Paretto reported on the Senate Cabinet meeting with Heidebreter and Midkiff, noting that there are legal issues in terms of the conditions of end-user license agreements and compliance issues in terms of storage of “sensitive” data.
 - Abbas and Speer will be at the upcoming Commission on University Support meeting that will address this issue.
- Themes for the Senate’s spring meeting with the President and Provost
 - Accountability
 - Research
 - OSP
 - Reviewing progress on last year’s issues
- Quizlet.com
 - A concern was raised about the use of flashcards on Quizlet.com for all IRB CITI training. Students are skipping through training and using Quizlet to cheat on the quiz.

7. Adjourn

The Senate adjourned at 4:05 p.m.