

Faculty Senate Meeting Minutes

October 16, 2020, @ 2:30pm

Via Zoom: <https://virginiatech.zoom.us/j/96824189627>

Senators Present: Masoud Agah, Biko Agozino, Diane Agud, Susan Anderson, Sara Arena, Richard Ashley, Paul Avey, Joseph Baker, Kemi Bankole, Arthur Ball, Sarah Barrett, Michael Borowski, Hilary Bryon, Charles Calderwood, Leandro Castello, Cathryn Copper, Benjamin Corl, Harry Dorn, Robert Dunay, John Ferris, Carla Finkelstein, John Galbraith, Nicolin Girmes-Grieco, Al Hagy, James Hawdon, Roie Hauser, Bob Hicok, Daniel Hindman, Ran Jin, Eric Kaufman, Bradley Klein, Jacob Lahne, Evan Lavender-Smith, Roberto Leon, Justin Lemkul, Jonathan Maher, Paul Marek, Frances McCarty, Thomas Mills, Cayce Myers, Amy Nelson, Aaron Noble, Nicole Pitterson, Robin Queen, Hans Robinson, Todd Schenk, Richard Shryock, Cornel Sultan, Jay Teets, Tess Thompson, Jim Tokuhisa, Diego Troya, Kwok Tsui, A.K. Ward, Layne Watson, Robert Weiss, Cindy Wood, Anthony Wright de Hernandez

Guests: Esther Bauer, Cameron Donaldson, Rachel Miles, April Myers, Vicki Pitstick, Ellen Plummer, Tom Sanchez, Donna Sedgwick, Coogan Thompson, Fidel Valea

Call to Order & Guiding Questions

1. What should be in place for faculty to support advancements with experiential learning?
2. How do we ensure appropriate faculty involvement in other aspects of shared governance?

Consent Agenda

[Unless a member requests an item be removed from the Consent Agenda, these items will be approved by unanimous consent.]

- Approve and post [October 2, 2020, meeting minutes](#).
- No objections, approved unanimously

Brief Updates and Announcements

- [Topical schedule for fall meetings](#) (Eric Kaufman)
 - [Questions for Provost Clarke](#). Early next week there will be a Canvas announcement to remind to post questions to Provost Clarke two weeks from today. This is an attempt to collect questions in advance. Be sure to look at your questions and make sure they are not accidentally removed. Questions will be organized thematically. If you have specific issues to address in Senate please contact your Senate cabinet representative.
- [Instructional Grant Proposals, due Nov. 1](#)
- Others?
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Revisions to Shared Governance (Bob Hicok)

- Proposal from President's Committee on Governance. This proposal is currently with President Sands. In the past, the Senate has been more consultative. The new proposal states that the consultative role doesn't really give a voice.
- therBased on these issues a new structure is proposed. Representative bodies would be renamed Senates, and Senates would control various commissions. These senates would pass policy before it got to University Council. Large issues, such as Pathways, aren't managed through governance, but are controlled by committees. In the future these

committees would have members that come from these senates. Committee members would have an obligation to come to these senates and go through governance like resolutions.

- A senator noted that this structure would benefit faculty because there would not be new policies that are brought up for the first time at University Council.
- Here's a post of the current outline of this issue
- https://docs.google.com/presentation/d/1t4f3v4Rneg_Zs_hvwcXd6pmFPMXD_wVT_PwRAI9uCq98/edit?usp=sharing
- Current governance structure:
<https://governance.vt.edu/assets/governance-structure.pdf>

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Experiential Learning (John Ferris) This is a group that has been selected by faculty constituency groups. This group has met with Department Heads last week, and the group is now gathering information from groups for implementation for experiential learning at VT. This faculty advisory board have three dimension to think about experiential learning: content, context.

Content: how is this focused in terms of subject matter and specific curriculum. This is important for framing career bridge experiential learning, which is what the QEP is about.

Context: how is this content delivered? Classroom, laboratory, or other professional environment

Learning Outcomes: some outcomes are explicit. Some outcomes benefit the student. Sometimes this takes the form of academic credit, and curricular process for the degree. The faculty role deals with this role explicitly. However, learning outcomes impact extracurricular activities because the experiential learning process is part of these non-credit programs.

A lot of experiential learning is already integrated into VT programming, and those should be continued. Going forward there should be faculty involvement in assessment for academic credit.

- Vicki Pitstick introduced herself as Director of Academy of Experiential Learning
- A senator noted that career preparation disadvantages some disciplines, especially in humanities, that focus on broader training that is not career specific.
- Ferris replied that students must think through what they want to do after graduation. This also involves asking departments what works for them. That doesn't require a blanket approach. Some departments may work on this later once they decide on how to approach this.
- Kim Filer noted that there is a bridge part with experiential learning with post-graduation plans. So the issue is the larger issue of planning for post-graduation. Sometimes this learning isn't necessarily career preparation, but also recognition of learning new things about career path and even personally.
- Hawdon noted that there is a lot of diversity in curricular programs. However, hopefully students are making them more employable. However, it's more about bridge to post-graduation, not bridge to career. Experiences give students various skills that can be applied to a variety of scenarios.
- A senator noted the issues of university education as it relates to vocational training, but also a broad liberal education that includes philosophical and technical training.

- A senator noted there was a subtext that some segments of society change universities to vocational training that ultimately diminishes the role universities play in larger educational goals. The proposal should not leave people with the impression that we are exclusively vocational.
- A senator noted that this proposal does seem vocational. He also noted that experiential learning has been an exception, not the rule. Experiential learning to date has grown out of faculty initiatives. This proposal seems to place an infrastructure in place that is purely vocational training.
- A senator noted that experiential learning makes students more well rounded learners. Experiential learning challenges the traditional lecture model, but that is a good thing. Students grow a lot from those experiences.
- A senator noted there are some issues with requiring internships when many are unpaid, which raises some ethical issues.
- A senator noted that his program had great results in experiential learning, but he doesn't know if that's applicable to all units.
- Filer noted that 20 percent of undergraduate degrees have a required experiential learning component. Cluster of engineering departments are coming on this spring. Some departments are small, but some are large. They want diverse departments so they can see where the challenges are in implementation of this type of new program.
- Ferris noted that this is not going to be a requirement for 100 percent of departments automatically, but this is a 10 year process to work through this.
- Filer noted that this is really more of a conversation within departments about their own needs, and what makes sense for their students. There are also questions about equitable access for students. VT would like all students have the same opportunities for experiences, but they don't want students with all the same experiences. Nor does VT want there to be access issues for students.
- A senator noted that experiential learning is so tightly aligned with jobs. She noted that student experiences can be more about taking new opportunities and even risks, which may not be part of traditional pre-career training. She argued that this should be broader language that encompasses a diversity of opportunities.
- Hawdon noted that this is more of skills bridge rather than a career bridge.
- Ferris noted that the feedback provides helpful suggestions about framing experiential before presentation at University Council.
- A senator asked about student projects in time of COVID or philanthropy initiatives counting as experiential learning.
- A senator asked about the trajectory of the program and whether it would create more university bureaucracy as a result of having the new program.
- Ferris noted that this is a departmental driven initiative that is curated by faculty members with the department. This would hopefully minimize overhead, and would direct resources to academic units for delivery of experiential learning.
- [Working draft of description](#)
- [Presentation](#)

[CFA Resolution 2020-21A](#), Faculty Handbook P&T Guidelines (Bob Hicok)

- Status Update
- Faculty Senate already had the chance to comment on this resolution. This is an update. This was pulled from university council. Its second reading is on Monday next week. A deferral will be asked for and then a vote will be taken in December. Faculty Senate does

not want to rush this through. The revision is extensive enough that the front matter of the resolution has a breakdown of changes.

Other Business

- Leaders of College Faculty Associations met today to discuss strengthening relationship with Senate.

Action Items, Including Anticipated Follow-up Communication

- Reminder announcements (Cayce Myers)

Adjourn

Meeting adjourned at 3.49 p.m

Respectfully submitted by Cayce Myers, Secretary