

Faculty Senate Meeting Minutes December 4, 2020

Senators Present: Diane Agud, Robin Allnutt, Susan Anderson, Masoud Agah, Sarah Arena, Richard Ashley, Paul Avey, Azziza Bankole, Arthur Ball, Joseph Baker, Sarah Barrett, Michael Borowski, Hilary Bryon, Charles Calderwood, Leandro Castello, Benjamin Corl, George Davis, Harry Dorn, Robert Dunay, Matthew Eick, John Ferris, Carla Finkielstein, Nicolin Girmes-Grieco, Dave Gregory, Roy Hauser, James Hawdon, Bob Hicok, Daniel Hindman, Ran Jin, Eric Kaufman, Bradley Klein, Jacob Lahne, Eduardo Lara-Torre, Evan Lavender-Smith, Justin Lemkul, Douglas Lind, Jonathan Maher, Paul Marek, Frances McCarty, Polly Middleton, Cayce Myers, Amy Nelson, Aaron Noble, Chris Pierce, Nicole Pitterson, Scott Pleasant, Robin Queen, Susanna Rinehart, Todd Schenk, Peter Schmitthener, Ashley Shew, Richard Shryock, Eric Stanley, Steve Thompson, Jim Tokuhisa, Diego Troya, Kowk Tsui, A.K. Ward, Layne Watson, Robert Weiss, Cindy Wood, Anthony Wright de Hernandez, David Xie

Guests Present: Esther Bauer, Cameron Donaldson, Holli Drewry, Steve Holbrook, Maruf Hoque, Laura Hungerford, Rachel Miles, April Myers, Camellia Pastore, Ellen Plummer, Mary Potter, Adil Sageer, Tamarah Smith, Coogan Thompson

Call to Order & Guiding Questions

Faculty Senate President, Eric Kaufman, called the meeting to order at 2:30pm and shared the following guiding questions for the meeting:

1. How can we best advance the vision for shared governance at Virginia Tech?
2. What are key considerations for faculty ownership and control of research data, results and related materials (Policy 13015)?

Consent Agenda

- There was unanimous approval of November 13, 2020 meeting minutes.

Brief Updates and Announcements

- Spring semester meetings: 1/22, ~~2/5~~, 2/19, 3/5, 3/19, 4/2, 4/16, 4/30
 - Eric Kaufman announced that President Sands and Provost Clarke are scheduled for Faculty Senate meetings in the spring.
 - Eric Kaufman is looking, in consultation with the Cabinet, for ideas for some of the topics to address for the spring.
 - Eric Kaufman noted that 2/5 is crossed out because that is a spring break distribution date.
 - Question: Eric Kaufman asked if the Faculty Senate wanted to use a Zoom meeting for the Senate that requires authentication? If the Senate makes that change, that may require a different meeting room.
 - Response: No one advocated for the use of a Senate Zoom meeting requiring authentication.
 - Eric Kaufman said he consulted with university legal counsel as to whether the Faculty Senate is an open meeting. Eric Kaufman noted that only BOV meetings are required to be open meetings.
- Others?
 - Eric Kaufman and Cayce Myers highlighted the [COVID Crushers Food Drive](#), noting Laura Hungerford may be available to discuss this later in the meeting.

Constituent Group Reports

Constituent groups gave reports about their governance groups and initiatives. Each group's presentation was made by the constituent group's president or officer.

- Staff Senate: The Staff Senate President, Tamarah Smith, gave a report on initiatives. Because she is on the committee for shared governance, the Staff Senate is evaluating bylaws. The Staff Senate has a policy and issues committee that determines more current policy matters. The Staff Senate is addressing communication with staff associations. The Staff Senate also has brought more speakers in to discuss campus-wide events, such as the VT sesquicentennial.
 - A senator commented that staff sometimes cannot participate in shared governance, and he would like the Faculty Senate to make a statement of support for staff participation on committees and the Staff Senate.
 - Response: Tamarah Smith noted that the Staff Senate meets at noon-1p.m., but during the year staff have to cover the noon desk, which can cause some problems with attendance.
- Student Government Association (SGA): The SGA President, Adil Sageer, gave a report. He said there are meetings focusing on students and COVID-19 measures. There was a SGA committee discussing COVID-19 that met with Frank Shushok about COVID policies, and student impact. There is also an initiative to look at governance documents and the upcoming Student Senate creation. SGA is also looking to work with fundraising initiatives that reach out to alumni.
- Graduate Student Assembly (GSA): The GSA President, Maruf Hoque, presented slides for GSA. He said that there was a consolidation of GSA concerns for the next year. External and internal concerns were compiled by GSA. The major issues identified are: graduate student pay, student services, diversity and inclusion, affordable housing and parking, and green initiatives. There was also a constitution and bylaws initiative to condense the constitution and bylaws for GSA. The GSA has overarching concerns with shared governance concerns academic issues. These concerns are not always academic and include things outside of the academic realm. They would like to use shared governance to improve shared governance.
 - A senator noted that there are academic issues within VT, but there are a lot of issues that affect academic life outside of academics.
 - Eric Kaufman noted that academics fall into a lot of categories of university life, and supported greater communication between constituency groups.
 - Maruf Hoque noted that the cost of living has changed for the Blacksburg community. He noted there were ancillary costs associated with academics such as internet service and cell phone bills.
- A/P Faculty (CAPFA): Holli Drewry, who is the chair of CAFPA, gave a report. She stated the CAPFA is working on forming the AP Faculty Senate. The formulation of the AP Faculty Senate was approved last year, and now the work is to create the Constitution and Bylaws proposal for that senate.
 - Question: Eric Kaufman asked if there were challenges with AP faculty participating in the governance of the university.
 - Response: Drewry noted that there are issues with AP faculty participation depending on the unit where the faculty member works.

Modifications on Policy 13015

Robin Queen provided an overview of the modifications to Policy 13015. She stated that the general idea of the policy resolution is to bring clarity to the current policy on data ownership, source, and management. There are very few wholesale changes, but the modifications for Policy 13015 are really more clarification on the faculty PI's role, and the responsibilities of VT as stewards of data (particularly for faculty moving to other universities). The policy reiterates standard issues on ownership, data transfer, and stewardship of data.

Shared Governance Update

Bob Hicok gave an update on the CFA Resolution on 2020-21C and 2020-22D. Hicok noted these resolutions on shared governance were on the agenda for the last Faculty Senate meeting. Draft comments are due 12/7. Bob Hicok provided an update on these resolutions. The basic proposal has not changed since last year. He asked for questions given it had a first reading in CFA.

- Susanna Rinehardt commented that there was a second reading for CSA (Commission on Student Affairs). There are some concerns with students regarding the process going forward. Specifically, will change of governance structure change the perceived power of commissions.
- Bob Hicok noted that the new revisions are designed to make individuals go directly to the constituency group rather than consulting constituency groups through a few individuals serving on commissions.
- Question: A senator asked why students don't attend in-person courses.
- Answer: The Faculty Senate's student worker said that the reason students do not come to in-person courses is rooted in the perceived lack of added-value for optional in-person courses. There is an issue with one face-to-face course being the outlier on a schedule where all other courses are on Zoom. She also noted that online courses are also more appealing because they allow for student mobility, especially for those staying at home.

Proposed Structural Changes for Faculty Senate

John Ferris gave a presentation on the proposed structural changes for the Faculty Senate. Ferris noted a wholesale revamping of the responsibilities of officers and cabinet members in the Faculty Senate. Specifically, he wants to work on spreading responsibilities out to officers and cabinet members, utilizing the past-presidents in a more active role, and changing the secretary-treasurer position to an operations officer position. This new structure allows for a greater sharing of work within Faculty Senate leadership. The plan would also restructure Faculty Senate meetings for more deliberative functions and voting instead of presentations.

- Richard Ashley commented that he was unsure what was meant by the restructuring of the committees. He also noted that listening to presentations in the Senate was valuable.
- Eric Kaufman noted there are issues with service loads, but also issues with the greater role of the Faculty Senate in governance and its impact on Senate efficiency.
- Bob Hicok said that these changes are necessary given the new governance structure of the university. However, he stated that making this new structure takes long-term commitment.
- The SGA representative said that there are some over-representation of certain student voices and underrepresented voices that are not heard in shared governance.

Other Business

- Updates or inquiries from college caucuses?
- Richard Shyrock asked should the Faculty Senate discuss whether departments should not evaluate faculty for the 2020 calendar year.
 - One senator said that evaluations are needed for constructive feedback and are important for new hires.
 - A senator noted there is a difference between feedback and evaluation.
 - A senator noted there is an issue with evaluation that may have COVID impacts for years.

Action Items, Including Anticipated Follow-up Communication

- Laura Hungerfold provided an update on COVID outreach. She provided some information about outreach beyond the Faculty Senate including the [COVID Crushers Food Drive](#). She wanted to bring up some areas there is community need:

- Food insecurity homebound adults New River Valley Agency on Aging
- Medical Reserve Corps in Virginia volunteer
- Working with vaccination programs to handle records
- Question: A senator asked if COVID vaccinations can be required of students.
 - Answer: The answer is yes, but for employees it is legally difficult to require vaccinations.
- Reminder announcements
 - Please send any updates for spring Senate representatives to mcmyers@vt.edu.

Adjourn

The meeting adjourned at 4:14 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by Cayce Myers, Secretary