

Faculty Senate Agenda & Minutes

March 6, 2020, 2:30-4:30pm

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

Present: Susan Anderson, Richard Ashley, Tanyel Bulbul, Charles Calderwood, Virgilio Centeno, Benjamin Corl, George Davis, John Ferris, Matthew Gabriele, John Galbraith, Ellen Gilliland, Roie Hauser, Bob Hicok, Christine Kaestle, Eric Kaufman, Jake Lahne, Paul Marek, Margarita McGrath, Mike Nappier, Marie Paretti, R. Scott Pleasant, Robin Queen, Ashley Shew, Eric Smith, Jay Teets, Tess Thompson, Jim Tokuhisa, Diego Troya, Mark Van Dyke, Layne Watson, Robert Weiss, and Anthony Wright de Hernandez

Guests: Timothy Farrell (Higher Education), Ellen Plummer (Provost's Office), Coogan Thompson (GSA)

Approval of Agenda

The agenda was approved by unanimous consent.

Approval of Minutes

Minutes of the February 21st meeting were approved.

Announcements

- John Ferris provided an update related to admissions and undergraduate enrollment forecasting. The advisory group has continued to meet and consider an array of models. Measures of student quality suggest applications to Virginia Tech continue to be strong, and the yield rate is high as well. Some in-state offers have been held back in order to avoid over-enrollment. There is an opportunity to go to this wait-list as needed.
- John Ferris highlighted the recent University announcement on [Chosen Names and Personal Pronouns](#). There will be an opportunity for discussion in two weeks.
- Eric Kaufman shared plans for improved technology access with Faculty Senate meetings. He will continue to explore options during the coming weeks and welcomes suggestions from senators.

Topic 1: Services for Students with Disabilities (SSD)

- Director of the Services for Students with Disabilities office, Nikeshia Arthur, shared a brief presentation and responded to questions presented by Faculty Senators.
- About 9% of students at Virginia Tech have documented their disability through SSD, yet this is substantially less than the proportion of the U.S. population that reports a disability (25%). SSD has seen an increase in referrals and accommodation requests in recent years.
- By law, accommodation involves an interactive process to identify reasonable accommodation without undue burden. Nikeshia directed senators to related resources, available at <http://bit.ly/VTSSD2020>
- A senator asked about issues associated with anxiety, and Nikeshia noted that content-associated anxiety would generally not be considered a disability, even though faculty are encouraged to consider such triggers (most often associated with sexual assault).
- The SSD office is over-taxed, with only four people authorizing accommodations in response to about 3,000 requests each year.

- While faculty are generally not consulted in the interactive process, the SSD office is looking at ways to improve communication with faculty. They do try to consult on laboratory sections, as well as with graduate and professional classes.
- Sometimes students are given a single accommodation letter for all classes, even though some of the accommodations listed are relevant for only some of the student's classes. The SSD office trusts the student to discuss such distinctions with faculty.

Topic 2: Revision to Faculty Handbook Policies for Collegiate Faculty and renaming of “Non-tenure-track faculty” as “Term Faculty” (Chapter 5)

- Bob Hicok reported that the Commission on Faculty Affairs will revisit this issue in the year ahead.

Topic 3: Fourth Consideration of Change to Faculty Senate Bylaws Concerning Membership and Elections

- John Ferris provided an update on proposed changes to Faculty Senate Bylaws (Appendix A). The amendment is intended to offer a number of “fixes”: We set the number of senators, all colleges have representation, no college dominates, college faculty associations are integrated into senate, officers remain senators the following year in order to retain experience, the School of Medicine (VTCSOM) has 11 senators for now, timing of selections is spring so that we can populate councils and commissions by end of spring semester. The proposal retains a plan in which departments have at least one representative and small departments can join to share a representative.
- Senators surfaced a number of questions and considerations, especially as the University continues to evolve. Future changes to the Bylaws can be made to further adjust as needed.
- Discussion suggested the Faculty Senate is not yet ready to vote on this, due to some lingering questions. The resolution may be brought forward later this semester.

Topic 4: CUSP Resolution 2019-20N to Establish the Pathways General Education Curriculum Review Committee

- Anthony Wright de Hernandez shared details from [CUSP Resolution 2019-20N](#). Due to the excessive workload with Pathways course proposals, the resolution proposes to include a permanent committee for this purpose.
- Senators asked why the review of pathways proposals does not fall under the University Curriculum Committee for General Education (UCCGE). Others questioned whether it is appropriate to establish a permanent committee at this stage, when there are also other discussions about changes to shared governance.
- The Faculty Senate could take a few more weeks to comment. However, several senators suggested it would be appropriate to waive our right to comment.
- The senate moved and seconded a motion to waive the right to comment on the resolution. The motion passed.

Other Business/Discussion

- A senator asked for follow-up regarding concerns about practices by college administrators that bypass faculty input.
- A senator shared concerns about Virginia Tech's limited attention to the Coronavirus. Dave Guerin may be able to visit with Faculty Senate about this.

Adjourn

The meeting formally adjourned at 4:10pm.

Respectfully submitted by Eric Kaufman, Faculty Senate Secretary.

Appendix A: Draft Resolution to Amend Bylaws

Faculty Senate Membership and Elections

(Draft resolution for bylaws, to take effect August 1, 2020)

Whereas the Faculty Senate Principles of Representation defined in Article III of the Faculty Senate Constitution states that “Insofar as possible, each senator shall represent an equal number of faculty members eligible for Faculty Senate membership.”; and

Whereas Faculty Senate Nominations and Elections are defined in Article III of the Faculty Senate Constitution at the college level, not the department level, specifically “Candidates for the Faculty Senate are nominated and elected by each college or library faculty in the same manner as the officers of its faculty organization.”; and

Whereas the current bylaws delegate the responsibility from the colleges to the departments in the election of senators and this has become the tradition, but this delegation of responsibility is not required or prescribed in the Faculty Senate Constitution; and

Whereas College Faculty Associations (CFA) should be supported and strengthened and, as elected representatives of their college, their voice should be heard in the Faculty Senate; and

Whereas each college has the right to elected representation in the Senate regardless of size; and

Whereas the voice of the Faculty Senate should not be dominated by a small number of large colleges; and

Whereas each department should have at least one representative; and

Whereas the election of senators is critical to the democratic process and should not be circumvented for a more efficient, but less democratic, process; and

Whereas Officers of the Faculty Senate, as elected representatives of the Senate who may have experience and expertise beneficial to the Senate, should be removed from their role as an officer only by a vote of the Senate;

Therefore, let the Faculty Senate Bylaws be amended as follows, where changes are indicated in red and deletions are indicated by strikethrough.

I. Principles of Representation

~~A. The library shall have two senators.~~

A. Membership

1. There will be 100 senators unless an increase is required as defined in section C.
2. Each college will have at least one senator.
3. No college will have more than 20% of the total number of senators.

4. Faculty Senate Officers remain senators, although not necessarily officers, for one year following their service as an officer.
5. Insofar as possible within these bounds, the number of senators from each college will be proportional to the number of faculty members in the college.

B. College Representation

1. The senators from each college will include
 - a. Faculty Senate Officers from that college; and
 - b. One senator elected by the respective College Faculty Association, if not waived; and
 - c. One senator from each department; and
 - d. Insofar as possible within these bounds, the number of senators from each department will be proportional to the number of faculty members in the department.
2. *The School of Medicine will have eleven senators.*

C. Department Representation

1. Two departments with limited faculty resources may join to elect a representative. A simple majority of faculty members in each department must agree to joining and the vote on joining must take place before each senatorial election. These joined departments are then considered a single department for election purposes.
 - a. Departments with limited faculty resources implies departments with so few faculty that when joined with another department the number of faculty would result in no more than one representative.
2. In the unusual case that the allotted number of senators for a college does not permit one senator from each department:
 - a. All departments from that college will have one senator; and
 - b. The total number of senators prescribed in Article I, section A will be increased so that each department in that college will have one senator; and
 - c. The college representatives will be the Officers from that college, the College Faculty Association representative (if not waived under Article II), and those departments not represented by an officer, nor a CFA representative, will have one senator elected by that department.

D. Number of Eligible Faculty Members

1. In January, the Faculty Senate Secretary/Treasurer will
 - a. Request the number of eligible faculty members in each college and department from the Provost's Office and/or contact each department head/chair and provide them with the

Faculty Senate eligibility definitions and request from them the number of eligible faculty members in the department; and

- b. Identify the College Faculty Associations that are required to hold a Faculty Senate election by virtue of having an unfilled position on the senate, and notify those College Faculty Associations of their electoral obligations under the Faculty Senate Bylaws.

2. In February, the Faculty Senate Secretary/Treasurer will

- a. Propose a number of eligible faculty members for each college and department to the Faculty Senate Cabinet who will make the final determination on the number of eligible faculty members; and
- b. Identify the departments that are required to hold a Faculty Senate election by virtue of having an unfilled position on the senate, and notify those departments of the number of available senate seats for the department and their electoral obligations under the Faculty Senate Bylaws

E. Terminology

1. With respect to Membership, and Nomination and Election of Senators, the following applies

- a. University Libraries is to be treated as a college.
- b. Schools that are a subdivision of a college are to be treated as departments. The School of Medicine is to be treated as a college.
- c. The term “department” is understood to mean an academic department in which at least one eligible faculty member resides.
- d. The terms “faculty”, “faculty member”, and “eligible faculty member” are understood to mean faculty members eligible for Faculty Senate membership pursuant to Article III, Section 2 of the Faculty Senate Constitution.
- e. The terms “officer” and “faculty senate officer” are understood to mean the officers of the Faculty Senate pursuant to Article IV of the Faculty Senate Constitution.
- f. The terms “cabinet”, “senate cabinet” and “faculty senate cabinet” are understood to mean the Faculty Senate Cabinet pursuant to Article V, Section 1, of the Faculty Senate Constitution.

2B. The underscored words in article III, section 2 of the constitution of the Faculty Senate are interpreted as follows:

- ~~a1~~. An appointment is considered continuing unless the letter of appointment states otherwise.
- ~~b2~~. The term academic department for the purpose of the Faculty Senate constitution shall apply only to those departments and divisions that are actively involved in the teaching of credit courses or the awarding of degrees in specific academic disciplines. The precise interpretation of this term will be made by the Faculty Senate cabinet.

~~c3.~~ The university level, library, and college level administrators are the president, provost, associate and assistant provosts, vice presidents, associate and assistant vice presidents, the deans, associate and assistant deans and assistant to any of the preceding.

~~d4.~~ A faculty member is considered to be studying for a degree at the university if the faculty member is currently pursuing a program of study that has been filed in the graduate school office.

~~3c.~~ An eligible faculty member who is not affiliated by appointment with an academic department is assigned by the Faculty Senate Cabinet to the department the cabinet considers most appropriate.

~~D.—Determining the representation for each department—the Faculty Senate shall be composed of membership as follows:~~

~~1. The University Libraries shall have two senators:~~

~~2. Faculty in each academic department will elect representative(s) to the Faculty Senate for a term of three years, using the following formula and based upon the total number of FTEs in the department on February 1 of each academic year as reported by the Office of the Provost:~~

~~a) Department with fewer than 30 faculty will elect one representative:~~

~~b) Departments with 30 or more faculty, but fewer than 60 faculty, will elect two representatives:~~

~~c) Departments with 60 or more faculty will elect three representatives:~~

~~d) A department with limited faculty resources may join with another department of its choosing to elect a representative:~~

~~e) Terms will be staggered with one-third of the senators elected each year. (Initial membership is found in the Faculty Senate minutes of April 20, 2004.) Faculty serving on the Faculty Senate during the 2003-2004 academic year will continue to represent their respective departments until the expiration of their terms:~~

~~f) For purposes of nomination, voting, and election, "faculty" includes any person eligible to serve in the Faculty Senate as defined in article III, section 2 of the Faculty Senate constitution:~~

II. Nomination and Election of Senators

A. College Faculty Association (CFA) Elections

In February, those College Faculty Associations that are required to hold an election (under Article I, Section D.2.c) will

1. Generate a slate of faculty nominees; and
2. Hold an election; and
3. Report to the Faculty Senate Secretary/Treasurer the results of the election. If the CFA does not exist or does not supply the election results by the end of February, the college waives

its right to a CFA representative on the senate, but does not change the total allotment of senators to that college.

B. Department Elections

In March, those departments that are required to hold an election (under Article I, Section D.2.b) will

1. Generate a slate of faculty nominees; and
2. Hold an election; and
3. Report to the Faculty Senate Secretary/Treasurer the results of the election.

~~CA. Election of senators shall be conducted by academic departments before March 15 each year.~~

Newly elected senators shall be observers until the effective date of their term of office on the first day of August, but may attend and participate and vote in elections for the organization of the following year's Faculty Senate and in the selection of commission and committee members who represent the Faculty Senate. Senate terms end on the last day of July.