

Faculty Senate Minutes September 7, 2018

Note: As of the 9/7/18 meeting, the Senate has 72 members. Motions requiring a simple majority require 37 votes in favor for passage. Votes requiring a 2/3 majority require 48 votes in favor for passage.

In Attendance (41 Senators)

Monty Abbas, Masoud Agah, Biko Agozino, Diane Agud, Robin Allnut, Susan Anderson, Richard Ashley, Michael Borowski, Brian Britt, Tanyel Bulbul, Leandro Castello, Sam Doak, John Ferris, Ellen Gilliland, Nicolin Girmes-Grieco, Sierra Guynn, James Hawdon, Bob Hicok, Kathy Hosig, Eunju Hwang, Eric Kaufman, Jake Lahne, Roberto Leon, Zachary Mackey, Paul Marek, Margarita McGrath, Polly Middleton, Cayce Myers, Mike Nappier, Marie Paretti, Hans Robinson, Todd Schenk, Brett Shadle, Richard Shryock, Manisha Singal, Ryan Speer, Cornel Sultan, Jim Tokuhisa, Diego Troya, Bruce Vogelaar, Daniel Wodak

Absent

Alan Abrahams, Mehdi Ahmadian, Osman Balci, Arthur Ball, Jacob Barney, Robert Bush, Virgilio Centeno, Kelly Cobourn, Harry Dorn, Stefan Duma, William Galloway, Roger Harris, Sara Jordan, Bradley Klein, Bettina Koch, Matthew Komelski, Chang Lu, Shelly Martin, Philip Olson, David Radcliffe, Ford Ramsey, Susanna Rinehart, Durelle Scott, Eric Smith, Stephen Smith, Jim Spotila, Divya Srinivasan, David Tegarden, Dwight Viehland, Layne Watson, Ryan Zimmereman

1. Approval of Agenda

The agenda was approved.

2. Approval of Minutes

- The minutes from April 24, 2018 were approved pending 1 correction.
- The minutes of August 24, 2018 were approved pending edits.

3. Announcements

- The Senate meeting ended early to allow Senators to watch President Sands' State of the University Address; the Senate live-streamed the event.
- Paul Marek is the new Senator for Entymology.

4. Topic: PIBB

The Senate Cabinet will meet with Cyril Clarke & Ken Smith on Sep. 14th to discuss Faculty Senate's involvement in the scorecard portion of the PIBB and to get answers to Senators' questions about the PIBB.

Provost Clarke has asked for Senate involvement in the "scorecard" portion of the PIBB related to the measurement of faculty and administrative performance. The Cabinet is willing to have the Senate get involved, but we need to have a better understanding of the PIBB and our role before we agree to our involvement.

Today's Senate meeting focused on eliciting questions and concerns from the Senate to bring to the meeting. Senators provided the following questions and comments:

- Do they know why this hasn't worked at other institutions? What are the specific reasons for failures?
- What models have they looked at? What metrics do they have in mind? What are their specific concerns? Hicok noted that they have a 2-year time frame for implementation. They expect the faculty scorecard portion of the model to account for 30% of the budget.
- Senators want a set of metrics that will fairly evaluate all faculty at the university without creating unintended disincentives.
- Is it possible to create a model that will work for all faculty across all departments? What if that model is not possible?
 - CAUS was given as an example. The CAUS budget came up significantly short using the PIBB model under its current terms. Is it that CAUS really deserves less money, or that there's a problem in the conception of the model? Hicok noted that the University is trying to tune the PIBB to the historical budget.
- One concern is that the process is being deformed rather than informed.
- Senators want to push for transparency once the PIBB is in place; we need more transparency, such as a web page or excel sheet that will let faculty see how the PIBB works.
- We've already been budgeting for the past 80 years and Deans have been doing it. The good thing about trying to formalize the model is that it pushes the Deans to try to quantify the things they've always been doing, and pushes toward transparency.
- It's not obvious that it's horrible to normalize whatever comes out of this to what came before. Starting to normalize can help to anchor existing patterns.
- In making budgeting truly transparent, it may become the mechanical monster that we truly fear. There needs to be an explicit subjective portion that Deans put in as the model develops.
- Hicok described his discussions with the University of Vermont, where promised conversations are not going on and the way numbers are being used is not being transparent. We (VT Senate) don't want to help them create a monster. If we enter the process, we're in for the long haul to continue to advocate for fairness and transparency.
- When Provost Clarke met with the Senate last semester, he talked about measuring faculty performance and the idea that failure in identifying viable means of measurement is not an option. But failure has to be an option. What happens if we cannot come up with an option we think will work?
- The needed operating budget should always be provided for departments; we need stability.
- The PIBB should be used to justify budget increases – i.e. what is the “bang for the buck” on increases to a unit's budget? The PIBB should be used to support why a department needs more funding.
- Improvement in the scorecard should be linked to faculty incentives not to department incentives. Faculty need individual motivation.
- While we trust that the current administration will have conversations around the PIBB, what's the guarantee that their successors will continue to have conversations? Is the University willing to build safeguards into the system that allow faculty to pull the plug?
- How will the University handle funding for primary majors and secondary majors? How are majors counted by the university? This issue is a persistent problem and has a huge impact on department budgets in several cases.
- We should schedule the next meeting as soon as the first meeting happens.

- Questions arose regarding the counting of graduate student credit hours and how graduate programs are funded. Graduate credit hours should not be weighted the same as undergraduate credit hours.
- Honors students/courses also require more time. How do we weight different kinds of credit hours?
- Not all departments are equal in terms of effort allocation to different types of classes (i.e. graduate or honors courses may be more work than standard undergraduate courses in some departments but not in others).
- What's the cost of implementing the PIBB?
- Can the criteria be customized by College and/or department (e.g. credit hour weighting for graduate students)?
- But customization leaves the problem of quantifying anything. That will end up making more work.
- If the Senate chooses to get involved in the scorecard, then we have to have an ongoing conversation. We need to be able to take a lead, but we do not want to take the "fall" if things do not work. We do not want to be the scapegoat.
- Hicok noted that if the PIBB is a done deal, then we have to be as involved as we can be to try to shape this as much as possible in our favor.
- Ferris noted that Dean Morton told the BOV that the Council of Deans is fully on board with the PIBB.

5. Standing Committees Reports

General Notes on Committee Appointments

- The Senate President has sent out a quiz regarding committee membership; thanks to all who have responded. Senators should respond asap.
- With respect to Senate representation on University committees, the Senate President enters prospective committee members' names into a web-based portal. The University reviews and approves those appointments, then Senators should receive a letter and meeting details from their respective committees.

Committee on Assessment of Faculty

Paretti provided a brief overview of the committee and its goals to develop recommendations for fair and reasonable assessment of faculty with respect to research, teaching and service.

- The work of this committee will intersect with the PIBB, but the focus is broader than simply providing input to the PIBB.
- The committee will seek to develop both a big-picture, broad philosophy and specific recommendations regarding all three major areas.
- One key area of discussion will obviously be the SPOT surveys currently used to evaluate teaching, and what potential alternatives might be. Strategic budget and planning always has a space for excellence in teaching, and the qualitative component of that process is unresolved.
- There is broad recognition of the need to separate metrics at the aggregate and individual levels, and to recognize that various departments within a College serve different needs and have different funding structures.

6. Proposal to amend the Faculty Senate constitution to use Robert's Rules (second consideration)

Whereas University Council and several Commissions use Robert's Rules of Order;

Whereas Faculty Senate would like to keep the parliamentary rules consistent for our constituents;

Therefore we propose the following changes to the Faculty Senate Constitution:

Proposed change to Article VII, Section 10. Parliamentary Procedure:

The latest edition of ~~Sturgis' Standard Code of Parliamentary Procedure~~ Robert's Rules of Order, subject to special rules as may be adopted by the Faculty Senate, shall govern the procedures of the Faculty Senate, cabinet, and standing committees.

This meeting was the second consideration. Ferris noted that all other University committees use Robert's Rules.

Proposals to amend the Constitution require approval by 2/3 of the senate membership (48 members).

A motion was made to approve the change, and the motion was seconded. The President called a voice vote. All were in favor, with none opposed and no abstentions. However, because only 41 Senators were present, the motion was not passed. An electronic vote will be taken to seek a vote of the full Senate.

7. Proposal to amend the Faculty Senate constitution around maximum terms (second consideration)

Whereas experience has shown that it is beneficial to have a mix of senators, cabinet members and officers with varying lengths of service;

Whereas colleges and departments should be free to make decisions around who best serves their interests;

Therefore we propose the following changes to the Faculty Senate Constitution:

Change to Article V., Section 1. *The Faculty Senate Cabinet:*

The members of the cabinet are the president, vice president, and secretary treasurer of the Faculty Senate, and one senator from each college and the library not represented by the officers. Faculty Senate cabinet members who are not senate officers are elected for a term of one year by caucus of the senators of the respective colleges. ~~A senator may not be elected to the cabinet for more than two consecutive terms.~~ The functions and duties of the cabinet are to serve as the executive committee of the Faculty Senate to which it is responsible and to which it reports regularly on the disposition of matters submitted to it; to act on behalf of the Faculty Senate between senate meetings; and to discharge other duties in accordance with parliamentary procedure and the Faculty Senate constitution and bylaws.

Change to Article III., Section 5. *Term of Membership and Vacancies:*

Senators are elected for a term of three years except as prescribed in the bylaws, and are eligible for re-election at their departments' will and in keeping with the Virginia Tech Principles of Community ~~but may not serve more than two consecutive terms (full or partial)~~. Senators serve until their successors take office. Vacancies in unexpired terms are filled as prescribed in the bylaws.

Robust discussion in the Senate followed regarding the pros and cons of term limits. Little opposition was voiced regarding removing term limits for the cabinet, but a number of Senators expressed concerns over the removal of term limits for Senators, citing the need for new ideas and voices.

A straw poll was taken via voice vote to determine whether to vote today or return the changes to the Cabinet for further discussion:

- 23 Senators were in favor of a vote; 12 opposed; no abstentions.

Because the Senate had differing views on the two proposed changes, a motion was made and seconded to separate the two changes. The President called a voice vote; all were in favor, with none opposed and no abstentions.

The President then called for a vote on the change to Article V, Section 1. All were in favor, with none opposed and no abstentions. However, with only 41 Senators present, the vote did not yield the necessary 2/3 majority. The vote will be repeated electronically.

The President then called for a vote on the change to Article III, Section 5. Thirty-one Senators were in favor, 5 opposed. The vote did not constitute a 2/3 majority, and there was opposition, so the Senate chose to send the matter back to the Cabinet for further review.

8. Proposal to amend the Faculty Senate bylaws (second consideration)

Whereas there is no need to enumerate the standing committees, ad hoc committees, and workgroups in the bylaws

Whereas there are two workgroups listed that may not be active: Legislative Affairs and Public Outreach. In any event, they do not need to be enumerated.

Therefore we propose the following change to the Faculty Senate bylaws, Article VIII. Faculty Senate Work Groups or Committees:

~~A.~~ The Faculty Senate may form work groups or committees as needed. Each is to be led by a coordinator or chair elected by its members. The groups shall report to the Faculty Senate and are subject to the purview of the senate.

~~B. Legislative Affairs and Public Outreach are current work groups.~~

~~Legislative Affairs: This work group will be responsible for establishing, continuing, and developing activities to ensure that those who make and influence public policy will be aware of the interests of the faculty.~~

~~Public Outreach: This work group will be responsible for establishing, continuing, and developing activities to ensure that citizens of the commonwealth understand what faculty do, who we are, why we engage in the work we do, and what we accomplish.~~

There was little discussion of the matter. The President called a voice vote. All were in favor, with none opposed and no abstentions. Since changes to the Bylaws require only a simple majority of the Senate, the motion was carried and the Bylaws have been amended.

9. Other business

The Senate has no other business.

10. Adjourn

The Senate adjourned at 3:20 p.m. Senators remained to watch the live stream of President Sands delivering the State of the University address.