

Faculty Senate Minutes

September 21, 2018

NCB 160, 2:30 - 3:45

Senators Present: Monty Abbas, Biko Agozino, Diane Agud, Robin Allnutt, Susan Anderson, Brian Britt, Kelly Cobourn, Harry Dorn, Ellen Gilliland, Nicolin Girmes-Grieco, James Hawdon, Christine Kaestle, Eric Kaufman, Bradley Klein, Bettina Koch, Jake Lahne, Roberto Leon, Zachary Mackey, Paul Marek, Shelley Martin, Margarita McGrath, Gail McMillan, Polly Middleton, Philip Olson, David Radcliffe, Ford Ramsey, Susanna Rinehart, Todd Schenk, Durelle Scott, Brett Shadle, Richard Shryock, Manisha Singal, Stephen Smith, Ryan Speer, Jim Spotila, Cornel Sultan, Jim Tokuhisa, Diego Troya, Bruce Vogelaar, Layne Watson, Daniel Wodak.

Guests: Rachel Iwicki (Graduate Student representative to the BOV), Sam Felber (SGA President), Robert Sebek (Staff Senate President), Anderson Norton (COS Faculty Association), Linbing Wang (Engineering Faculty Association), Cayce Myers (CLAHS faculty Association), Robin Lemaire (CAUS Faculty Association), Sherrie Clark-Deener (CVS Faculty Association), Yan Jiao (CNRE Faculty Association), Robert Grange (CALS Faculty Association)

The meeting was called to order at 2:33 p.m.

1. Approval of Agenda

The agenda was approved.

2. Approval of Minutes

The minutes were approved pending edits.

3. Announcements

- Ferris provided a brief update on the results of the Cabinet meeting with the members of the Provost's Office regarding the PIBB. Key points are as follows:
 - Overall process
 - The scorecard is evolving and Provost Clarke and Ken Smith are open to suggestions.
 - The administration acknowledged that decisions represent philosophical/values-based choices.
 - The current “tuning” of the model is in both directions (PIBB to college budget histories and college budgeting to PIBB); after we reach “equilibrium,” the PIBB will be the driver.
 - Need for dialogue and transparency
 - The administration is open to suggestions to ensure ongoing dialogue and qualitative input on budget decisions.
 - Multiple strategies are in development to allow people to see the processes and scorecards.
 - Critical issues

- They are open to reconsidering items such as the current formula regarding 1st and 2nd majors and the weighting of graduate vs undergraduate courses.
- Senate feedback included concerns about how deans in different colleges are using the PIBB differently – perhaps to consolidate money centrally – and the need to have more discussions around college processes.

4. Standing Committees Reports

- Resolution Review Committee: Current members are S. Anderson and N. Girmes-Grieco. The committee needs more members.
- Faculty Priorities/Time/Productivity/Effectiveness: The committee needs a chair and members; Ferris will reach out via email.
- Governance: No updates
- Assessment of Faculty: This committee needs an organizer.

5. Topic: Strengthening Faculty Senate Connections (Led by T. Schenk)

- Schenk began the discussion by highlighting the need to strengthen the Faculty Senate's connections to other constituent groups, including the Staff Senate, SGA, GSA, and college faculty associations (FAs). He then introduced representatives from several of these groups who were present and invited each of them to highlight current concerns and foci of their respective groups.

Robert Sebek (Staff Senate President)

- A key focus for the Staff Senate is the needs and concerns of the lowest paid staff members, including parking and affordable housing. As apartments in Blacksburg get demolished and replaced, the replacements are increasingly luxury housing. Access to affordable childcare is also a critical issue.
- Staff Senate is slated to speak to the BOV meeting in December, where they seek to highlight the need for benefits to be applicable to all employees. Currently, under the terms of the University's relationship with the State of Virginia, University staff are in a separate category from other state employees and are not governed by the rules that apply to other state staff. UVA and William and Mary, which have similar relationships with the state, have done significantly more with respect to staff benefits than Virginia Tech, which has done little if anything. The University needs to do more to look at benefits for staff, and Staff Senate wants support from the other constituency groups.
- The Staff Senate had semi-regular meetings last year with the leaders of other constituent groups, and found many intersections. GSA has long been working on better wages for staff, for example. They strongly support the efforts to get folks together more.
- Staff participation in University service and governance is also a significant issue because staff are often required to take leave in order to participate in governance and service. They would like support for changes in that culture and relevant policies. They have submitted a proposal to the new VP of Human Resources for mandatory training for supervisors around policies such as staff use of FMLA for sick children and staff participation in governance activities.

Rachel Iwicki (Graduate Student representative to the BOV), Sam Felber (SGA President)

- Iwicki and Felber presented together because they see strong intersections across the needs and concerns of graduate and undergraduate students.
- The current student climate is moderate. Last semester's issues surrounding the women's lacrosse team created significant tension and concern, but much of that has simmered down.
- Students' biggest concern is parking, but beyond that, the student community perceives a lack of communication as to what is going on at higher levels of the University, including questions ranging from "What is the master plan?" to "Why can't we get food in a timely manner at campus dining centers?" The rapid growth of the University is creating significant time problems for students (e.g., access to dining halls or other services), and there is a sense that student concerns are not being heard at the higher levels.
- There is a perceived lack of listening to students regarding the University's plans related to Beyond Boundaries and the Destination Areas, and a perception that the administration is trusting in the transience of students and therefore does not need to focus on student interests and concerns. They point to the need for better information flow.
- There is a need to help students be better informed about how governance at the university works.
- They are working on a student climate survey.
- Students feel forgotten in the master plan – they see a lot of new buildings and new research frontiers, but not a lot of attention to student needs.
- Enrollment growth is a major concern in that it appears very haphazard with respect to planning for student needs. For example, we have added several hundred more students but only 53 more seats in dining. The growth of enrollment is not supported by growth in facilities.
- There is a need for better lighting in dark areas on campus. They noted significant overlap with a number of facilities-related issues.
- They recognize the need for better communication across bodies; they need to know what Senate is doing, and we need to know what they are doing.
- Students have concerns about learning and want a better sense of what students need.
- SGA has done a lot of restructuring to help it better advocate for all students. We need a structure that allows them to advocate for all students and communicate their power and avenues for that.
- The University needs a mechanism for students to be able to both voice their concerns and gather information. How can Faculty Senate help students have a central place to access information, find new information, and raise issues? One of the challenge of such a mechanism is the need to moderate it and make sure concerns are moved forward effectively and efficiently.
- We all recognize the need to proactively maintain ongoing dialogue across our groups so that we know what's happening in both directions.
- *Responses to questions from faculty*
 - Pathways: Students haven't been concerned about the transition from CLE to Pathways since it was a shift that occurred for incoming students only – i.e., no students had to make any changes. They did note that many first-year students don't really understand how Pathways is being implemented and there is substantial unevenness across advising.

- Title IX: There is very little awareness of the changes among students. Students are concerned with how reporting does work, but they aren't aware of what's changing and what they're supposed to do.
- Cook Counselling: Access remains a significant problem, and that is one of SGA's top priorities. Cook had 200 slots for incoming first-years, and 400 requests; they did finally get through them all, but Cook is continuing to struggle to get enough appointment slots. SGA will have a representative on the Mental Health Task. The need here continues to grow, and while we have a number of counsellors, it is not enough to meet demand. 83% of the students who wanted an appointment at Cook had seen a professional prior to coming here.
- With respect to issues around both parking and mental health, students experience a lack of communication from the administration. Movement on these issues seems to be slow; the administration seems to know of the problems but does not seem to be acting on them.
- SSD: No concerns have come before SGA, but they have a new committee to try to better address and listen to concerns from students with disabilities. The topography of campus makes it difficult for some students to come here, and they would like to know whether the master plan seeks to address that.
- Suggestion from the faculty: Student organizations can promote the Dining with Faculty Program to increase their access to and discussions with faculty. It's a difficult program for faculty to promote since it might be perceived as selfish, but if more students know about it, they can leverage that to open up more dialogue with faculty.
- Information from Campus Police: Students are trying to push more for reporting and strategies.
- *General Senate Responses*
 - Senators noted the commonalities in our concerns, and began discussing ways we could encourage students to take their concerns forward. We urged Iwicki and Felber to encourage their constituents to think about their faculty as people who will help advocate with them, and we want them to know that faculty share their concerns, and want to hear them.
 - With respect to staff, Senators noted that winter holiday closings are another area of concern because the University closes and requires staff to take leave. We are the only public university in Virginia that has this requirement. Faculty and students can support a change to the policy. It was originally implemented to save energy, but it hasn't done so because in reality, nothing shuts down.
 - Senators noted the pay gap between VT staff and UVA staff. VT staff pay is currently 3-10% below market value, and this continues to be a problem. How can faculty help? We noted that it is the people in the lowest pay bands that most need salary increases simply to cover core needs such as transportation and childcare. The lowest-paid staff are really struggling. We also need to consider the needs of hourly part time people.
 - Ferris reminded people of the Faculty Soundboard, and the need for a committee to support that.
 - Senators reinforced the need for better attention to parking for lowest paid staff; parking is far away and buses don't run when housekeeping gets there. We noted

that raising staff salary for our lowest-paid employees is a pretty small budget item in the big picture, and at UVA, that much of that push came from SGA.

- Students feel like the master plan is all about research, and that faculty are all focused on research, and teaching is not a priority. Students see it in levels of preparedness and attention, with a sense that they are the low priority. SGA acknowledges that those perceptions may be split, with some faculty more engaged than others.
- In response to questions about the nature of student concerns relative to parking, Iwicki and Felber noted that parking spaces were reduced and costs raised this summer, and the BT doesn't have enough capacity. Students feel lost in the development plans.
- There was broad consensus on the need to reinforce the links between students and Staff Senate as well as Faculty Senate. SGA has had problems in the past making connections to other organizations, and this is one of the few times we've had SGA. Contact information for Felber at SGA: ext 8631; samf97@vt.edu

Remarks from the College Faculty Associations (FAs)

Engineering Faculty Organization (EFO): Linbing Wang

- EFO consists of is all faculty in the college; each department has representatives to EFO.
- The purpose is to bridge faculty to administrators, and the organization represents faculty concerns to the Dean, proposes initiatives, and supports graduation events.
- The organization has monthly meetings with the Dean. Last year they distributed an online survey to collect faculty input; they used the survey to identify problems and present them to the dean.
- As an example activity, EFO proposed an Inspiration Seminar series, which they've now inaugurated, to bring in outside speakers for the college.
- They've also worked to help faculty establish collaborations with industry and faculty from other universities and worked with the Dean and ICTAS to support faculty members in developing larger proposals.

College of Science: Anderson Norton

- The COS FA is new and includes representatives from each department. Norton was chair last year. They are trying to fill faculty governance positions from the college, and they have a meeting with the dean once a semester in which they are voicing concerns that echo much of what we've already discussed (e.g., mental health services for students, use of SPOT scores, disparities in summer pay for teaching).
- They have modeled themselves after the Faculty Senate. They developed their bylaws 2 years ago; last year was the first year that they had department representatives and began work.

College of Architecture and Urban Studies: Robin Lemaire

- The CAUS FA has been relatively non-existent, and they are currently seeking to build it up. There is substantial interest, particularly from junior faculty. They see a real need there, and the Dean really wants ways to get feedback from the faculty beyond that provided by school directors and program chairs. Their goal is to learn from other faculty associations as they are in the building phase.

College of Veterinary Science: Sherrie Clark-Deener

- Clark-Deener is newly elected, but CVS has had an FA for the last 2 years. They are focused on getting elections in order, and developing a structure. CVS is a small college with small departments, and they are struggling to get the information they need from the department heads regarding who's eligible and related details.
- They are also trying to work out their new curriculum, and have challenges on the communication in both directions, including issues such as credit for teaching.
- Faculty also feel the push to be more research-oriented and the tension surrounding that push.

College of Natural Resources: Yan Jiao

- CNRE has had an FA for a long time, and it's very much in line with the Faculty Senate in terms of roles and responsibilities. They are trying to increase communication between faculty and the College leadership team, and trying to improve college governance.
- They have 8 standing committees with different purposes and functions. Some committees have been more active than others, so they are trying to get the activities up across the board. They are learning from other FAs about how to better communicate with their faculty and what activities other FAs are pursuing, including online surveys to collect comments and concerns from faculty.
- CNRE is a small college with only 79 faculty, so communication is a bit less of a problem because of the small size. Their challenge is in encouraging faculty participation.

College of Agriculture and Life Sciences: Robert Grange

- They don't know what the senate, staff, and student issues are. They want to help.
- They would like to identify one or two key issues that we can collectively put forth and focus on those.

College of Liberal Arts and Human Sciences: Cayce Meyers

- Their previous deans closed the faculty associations out. The University has no formal requirement for deans to meet with FAs, so deans can control those meetings and can shut out the associations at will.

Summary and Overall Comments

- The critical issue for FAs is support from the college deans. This is an issue across the university. We have to figure out ways that require and support faculty governance. The Senate had a robust discussion about the need for accountability for administrators with respect to listening to faculty. We need to create a sense of visibility and an understanding that people are watching what's happening. We raised the possibility of a motion from Senate to support dialogue between deans and faculty.
- Is there a way for the PIBB to build in accountability for administrators relative to attention to their constituents?
- We need to figure out regular ways for us to have these discussions across constituencies because there is significant power in joining together. Even though it's challenging, we need to create space for dialogue and joint efforts.
- There is a sense that perhaps the institution makes sure that we don't have time to participate in governance.

- These issues (including faculty governance) should be raised with the Provost candidates.

6. Other business

- International Support Services is no longer supporting adjustment of status for faculty. ISS will be coming to a future meeting.
- Pathways: Faculty need to use standard rubrics to assess Pathways courses, and there is a concern that these rubrics will be used for P&T processes as part of teaching effectiveness. CFA needs to look into this issue.
- We need a rubric for assessing the performance of administrators.

The meeting adjourned at 4:07.