

FACULTY SENATE MINUTES

Tuesday February 7, 2017

PRESENT: Abbas, Agud, Ahmadian, Allnutt (Shelly Maycock, alternate), Amacher, Anderson, Balci, Baker, Barney, Billingsly, Brewster, Brown, Bush, Campbell, Corl, Dalloul, Etkorn, Gaskill, Gilmore, Hicok, Hosig, Jordan, Kaufman, Leon, McGrath, Nappier, Noiro, O’Keefe, Rinehart, Robinson, Savla, Shadle, Sultan, Tegarden, Tracy, Trogdon, Vogelaar, Watson, Wemhoener (Shelly Maycock, alternate), Young.

ABSENT: Al-Haik, Ashley, Bairaktarova, Ducker, Ferris, Gabbard, Geyer, Gindlesberger, Good, Guynn, Hopkins, Luttrell, Lyon, Mackey (with notice), Martin, Matheson, Merola, Olson, O’Rourke, Patterson, Polanah, Puckett, Reed, Richey, Rosenzweig, Safaai-Jazi, Schenk (with notice), Seth, Sirgy, Skaggs, Smith, Stauffer, Stivachtis, Tavera, Viehland, Zhang

I. HOUSEKEEPING

The agenda was approved.

The minutes for the January 24, 2017 meeting were approved.

II. CONTROLLER OFFICE: TAXABLE VS. NON-TAXABLE UNIVERSITY TRAVEL

With Lynn Meadows, Travel Supervisor; Wendell Vest and Ken Miller were also present.

The main issue is student travel. Most grants are treated as income, included travel grants for educational purposes, as opposed to business purposes. Under the “**Accountable Plan**” – part of IRS compliance – any payee must document a **business purpose** (service provided to the University). For instance, students presenting at a conference with or for a Professor who will then lists them as co-authors can be reimbursed. For international payees, it depends on tax treaties. Residents vs. non-residents are treated differently – immediate tax withdrawal for non-residents. The distinction between VT Foundation money and external funding does not change Accountable Plan rule.

When the payees are graduate students, there will be grey areas since research and educational purposes are often intertwined. There is a judgment call to make. Hence documentation is needed, to show that the activity **primarily benefits the University** – again: “business purpose” = non-taxable – as opposed to the student as an individual (“educational purpose”= taxable).

III. UCCGE RESOLUTION 2016-17.G

Resolution to the Revise Pathways General Education Curriculum (Presidential Policy Memorandum No. 125 and University Core Curriculum/Curriculum for Liberal Education [CLE] [PPM 24]) and Implementation for the Pathways General Education Curriculum to Include “Identity and Equity in the United States.”

The issue is that the 3 credit-hours required would rarely be “double-counted”; they would often come on top of all other Pathways requirement.

A motion to add a supportive statement to this resolution passed. It will be forwarded to Menah Pratt Clarke within a week.

II. HANS ROBINSON ON CFA RESOLUTION 2016-17C

This resolution states that the Terms of Faculty Offer can override details in the Faculty Handbook. Contact hours for instructors, for instance, may be higher than stated in the Handbook. The wording concerns hires with “distinctive assignments and work schedules,” such as LCI instructors. Discussion ensued.

III. PROVOST RIKAKIS ON BENCHMARKING AND METRICS

1. **Benchmarking** (with Jack Finney)

- a. What plans for faculty involvement in the creation and implementation of metrics are there?

Ken Smith has shared a list suggested by Heads, Deans and other parties. March 1st is the deadline to submit metrics for Student Success. Metrics will be selected or modified by each unit.

The PIBB has two main parts:

- The **“Unit” part** (students enrolled, dollars coming in, etc.)
- The **“Scorecard” part** (students + faculty success).

Metrics will need to be prioritized (out of 200) and/or created. Those created will be verified against the proposed benchmark institution(s); some correlation is required. In what areas does your unit wish to establish a regional/national reputation? Those are the **“Areas of Distinction”** that will be compared to your benchmark institution(s). Predictive modeling will be done. This is an iterative process. Tools in analytics will be used too (hence the Provost Office reorganization). The goal is to generate and analyze data to make decentralized decisions tied to the distribution of discretionary funding – “a customized way of doing business.”

In short, benchmarks are ways to measure national standing and success both for faculty research and student achievements.

- b. Every single one of the 200 metrics released comes down to numbers or a dollar amounts, so what about quality? It is harder to measure but it is measurable, says Provost Rikakis.
- c. What do 3-5 indicators for Faculty success mean? You will give 5 at first, then 10 or more; those are “measures/metrics” that are informative; plus 1 benchmark institution for each (e.g. graduation rates, external grants, publications, student placement, etc.); plus 3 “aspirational peers.” You can look at programs, not just departments, for certain “areas of distinction.”
- d. A “National Distinction” merit pool will be set aside for special merit raises.
- e. What about faculty Service? It is unlikely it will appear in most “Scorecards,” says Provost Rikakis.
- f. Problem: **Academic Analytics** is largely a black box; the methodology is hermetic if not suspicious. And yet they are supposed to be the main resource used to verify benchmarking, provide comparative data, and check the correlations. (No further discussion that night.)
- g. Other questions & concerns:
 - The benchmark model doesn’t take into account differences in resources with departments we’re asked to compare ourselves to.
 - How will the data be used? Decisions will still be made by peers.
 - What about administrative units? Administrative units will be evaluated under the same budget model.

2. Destination Areas

Starting this summer, the Senate will have **representatives** in all DAs.

3. Provost Office Reorganization

150-200 metrics will likely be tracked soon. We need the staff for that. A slideshow containing the “Matrix management for academic enterprise; cross-cutting administrative outcomes [...]” was shown.

Other categories beyond Student & Faculty Success to justify our growth and impact: Embedded Impact, Economic Development, Personal Development, Knowledge Creation, and Workforce Development. VT’s mission is an “integrative enterprise.” The goal of the PIBB and Provost Office reorganization is to “show the holistic value of our institution through measures”; Richmond wants numbers.

V. OTHER ITEMS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

Bob Hicok’s “Benchmarking/Quality-assessment” taskforce: New call for volunteers!

The P&T taskforce has also been looking at benchmarks.

[...] The Secretary had to leave before the meeting was adjourned. (Senators & Officers: feel free to send additional content to be incorporated into the present minutes.)