

FACULTY SENATE MINUTES

September 6, 2016

ATTENDANCE: Abbas, Ahmadian, Allnut (alternate), Anderson, Ashley, Balci, Baker, Brewster, Brown, Kaufma, Corl, Campbell, Gaskill, Gilmore, Hicok, Hopkins, Hosig, Kaufman, Lear, Lyon, Mackey, martin, Nappier, Noirot, Olson, Puckett, Richey, Robinson, Scaggs, Schenk, Sirgy, Spotila (alternate), Stauffer, Sultan, Tegarden, Trogdon, Wemhoener.

The meeting was called to order by President Monty Abbas at 5:17. 38 senators were present. The quorum was not reached.

1. Minutes

Approval of minutes for the August 23 meeting shall be done electronically, in the absence of a quorum.

2. AY vacancies to fill

Vacant seats in the Cabinet were all filled. More soliciting and consulting will be done online and in person so as to fill the few remaining commission seats.

3. Reports from commissions

N/A – Most commissions have not met yet for AY 2016-17.

4. Discussion of Faculty development plan proposed by President Monty Abbas

In light of the new P&T guidelines issued by Provost Rikakis, stronger mentorship and support feels needed, and the Faculty should take charge of it.

Issues addressed were: incentives; significant differences between Colleges and programs; what sort of Senate resolution could we start with? How to get input in order to craft such a resolution or recommendation (e.g., surveying P&T committee chairs)?

5. Consultation with Steven M. Culver, Assistant Provost for Assessment and Evaluation, on updating the SPOT process and beyond

New software will soon be introduced for SPOT surveys, “Evaluation Kit”; it integrates seamlessly with Canvas. Response rates should jump 10-12%.

The floor entered in an extensive discussion of the existing SPOT questionnaire and problems related to using the SPOT “Overall” score, which, as research shows, is *not* a measure of instructional effectiveness. Faculty were invited to work on a process that would improve the use *and* usefulness of SPOT data and scores. Jamie Williams from the same A&E office could help crunch data, run features analyses perhaps.

About 30% of students currently fill out the SPOT forms. The ideal would be to build a better instrument, not just improve the existing one.

A list of concerns was shared, as well as suggested improvements and solutions:

- defining what SPOTs actually evaluate (e.g., the course or the instructor? teacher popularity or effectiveness?);
- flexibility and nuance: using customized/multiple indicators/averages/data points
- specific, not broad, questions

- the big picture: how to focus on the process, not a number? (e.g., formative evaluations and/or teaching portfolios)
- uncovering biases (related to gender, timelines, etc.)
- considering the level of challenge and innovation
- examining how the SPOT scores are used
- refining how SPOT is used, what metrics (e.g., standard deviation, means vs average, etc.)

A previous report from a taskforce on student evaluations from 8-10 years ago will be shared.

The challenge of changing the culture of teaching and how it is valued at VT was raised.

The meeting was adjourned at 6:54 pm.