

ATTENDANCE:

Abbas, Agud, Allnutt, Anderson, Bairaktarova, Baker, Balci, Brown, Bush, Campbell, Corl (forgot to sign), Dalloul, Etzkorn, Gabbard, Geyer, Gilmore, Hicok, Hosig (alternate), Jordan, Kaufman, Klein, Mackey, Martin, McGrath (alternate), Noiro, O’Keefe, Olson, Polanah, Puckett, Richey, Robinson, Rosensweig, Safaai-Jazi, Schenk, Shadle, Smith, Spotila, Sultan, Tavera, Tegarden, Tracy, Trogdon, Vogelaar, Watson, Wemhoener, Young, Zhang

= 46 senators

+ guest + GSA liaison

1. Approval of agenda

2. Rector Jim Chapman and President Sands – Welcome

Rector Chapman presides over the Board of Visitors (BOV), Virginia Tech’s governing authority. The BOV consists of fourteen members, thirteen of which are appointed by the Governor of Virginia. For more information, see: <http://www.bov.vt.edu/bylaws/bylaws.html>

Rector Chapman is new in this role after several years on the Board. His wish is that the multiple constituencies served by the BOV work collaboratively. Among other initiatives, Beyond Boundaries energized the Board.

Here are the highlights from the 80-minute Q&A session with Rector Chapman and President Sands:

I. Mountain Valley Pipeline issue: what role for VT?

President Sands proposed a forum of VT-affiliated experts, whose findings and deliberations could inform the Board. This is urgent matter. The pipeline is slate to be very wide and pass through the county just two miles from the Blacksburg city limits.

II. Benchmarking (both for P&T and the new budget model):

A 1-year deferment has been decided. A “bottom-up” approach is favored, Presidents Sands insists on that. Departments and other relevant units are challenged to define what excellence and national benchmarks mean for them and their disciplines.

III. Multiple changes announced produce a sense of whiplash; everything appears in flux:

To President Sands, Beyond Boundaries is the main big change. There is a generational shift in leadership as well, but the President wishes to move ahead at a “faculty-driven” pace.

IV. Certain faculty members, if not Colleges, feel unheard or left out due to communication issues:

President Sands acknowledges that things are in flux (Destination Areas and the Budget Model, mostly) hence the difficulty to find up-to-date information. Metrics will be tuned up. The goal remains “to provide some transparency,” contrary to the old budget model – a decentralized, participatory model. A new challenge will be when and how to partner, since Colleges will hold most of the decision and funding power, not just the Provost’s office anymore.

V. Will said metrics all be quantitative in nature?

In the President’s words, the underlying question is: “What does it mean to succeed at a national level?”; “to be a nationally impactful unit”? The only bar ‘across-the-board’ for P&T is the formulation

of national benchmarks and achievement targets, defined by the Faculty. We are a national research university. Engagement and Diversity matter too, beyond scholarship.

VI. Update on the Campus Master Plan:

President Sands wants to bring in both the towns (Blacksburg + Roanoke) and partners from the North Capital Region in order to build new structures and programs such as Destination Areas. Master planning has begun for the NCR, a global center for policy and opportunity to develop an urban land-grant presence. For a gradual migration toward NCR, some barriers need to be lowered (e.g. transportation and faculty mobility).

VII. What does “the VT-shaped student” imply?

Priority given to interdisciplinarity concerns the student experience, not faculty output. Some budget-model metrics will encourage units to break down barriers (e.g., serving student from other departments or colleges; team-teaching, etc.). Rector Chapman supports the idea of well-rounded student, able to collaborate with others.

VIII. What about the issue of Faculty compensation vis-à-vis peer institutions?

This is constant budgetary issue but slow progress is being made. This year the “National distinction program” supplemented the standard 2% raise for some, but a 4-5% increase over 5 or 6 years is needed still. We are 10% below our peers on average (worse for CLAHS and some other departments). Rector Chapman underscored that philanthropy is now a critical piece: We are aiming for a 2-billion endowment. Heightened efficiency, retention, and working on compression and inversion are also on the President’s agenda. A Faculty Club could be created as long as it becomes self-sustaining; but “We’ll work on salaries first.”

IX. Parking issue during football games, especially Thursday evening:

The goal is *not* to do Thursday nights in the future. A statement to the ACC and ESPN shall be issued to that effect.

3. Discussion of resolutions submitted

Resolution for Establishment of School of Plant and Environmental Sciences (SPES) from CUSP and CGS&P¹:

CNRE people have raised concern, because “Environment” is in their own College name. But the 3 CALS departments that would thus become a school, plus their Dean, support it.

The Senate voted to waive the right to comment on this resolution.

4. Presentation by Mike Moyer on the new “VT Business Engagement Center” (BEC)

Moyer works for Theresa Mayer, VP for Research, and will collaborate with the VP for Advancement as well.

Fundraising is a University priority. Something is being built in corporate-and-foundation relations now, to enhance:

- Experiential learning
- Cross-sector partnerships
- Philanthropy

¹ *SPES Resolution and supporting documents are uploaded in scholar under Faculty Senate Resources / FS Materials 2016-2017 / Meetings / October 18/SPEC folder. Faculty from College of Natural Resources and Environment are especially requested to read the SPEC proposal 15-day review response and comment during the FS meeting.*

Inclusion and Diversity

So far, industry partners have been approached from various sides that *do not* communicate with one another. The **BEC** answers that need for a **coordinating unit** to dispatch partner companies as appropriate (i.e., towards Faculty, Students, Philanthropy, and Licensing).

This entails a completely different organizational structure but the only new position is the Executive Director of the BEC, to be hired soon.

Meeting adjourned at 7:12 pm.