

FACULTY SENATE MINUTES

November 14, 2017

IN ATTENDANCE:

Monty Abbas, Alan Abrahams, Diane Agud, Susan Anderson, Robin Allnut, Richard Ashley, Osman Balci, Arthur Ball, Jacob Barney, Michael Borowski, Carlyle Brewster, Tanyel Bulbul, Virgilio Centeno, Alan Esker, John Ferris, Matthew Gabriele, William Galloway, Leon Geyer, Ellen Gilliland, Tracy Gilmore, Nicolin Girmes-Grieco, Roger Harris, James Hawdon, Bob Hicok, Eric Kaufman, Bettina Koch, Eric Lyon, Chang Lu, Zachary Mackey, Shelly Martin, Margarita McGrath, Cayce Myers, Marie Parette, David Radcliffe, Susanna Rinehart, Hans Robinson, Todd Schenk, Brett Shadle, Richard Shryock, Gary Skaggs, Eric Smith, Stephen Smith, Ryan Speer, Jim Spotila, Divya Srinivasan, David Tegarden, Jim Tokuhisa, Kelly Trogdon, Diego Troya, Bruce Vogelaar, Layne Watson, and Ryan Zimmerman. (52 senators).

ABSENT:

Masoud Agah, Biko Agozino, Mehdi Ahmadian, Gregory Amacher, Bonnie Billingsley, Bryan Brown, Robert Bush, James Campbell, Stefan Duma, Candace Fitch, Joseph Gabbard, LuAnn Gaskill, Sierra Guynn, Kathy Hosig, Sara Jordan, Roberto Leon, Mike Nappier, Sean O'Keefe, Philip Olson, Doug Patterson, John Richey, Tina Savla, Dean Stauffer, Cornel Sultan, Benjamin Tracy, Dwight Viehland, and Percival Zhang. (27 senators).

1) Agenda

The agenda was approved.

2) Minutes

The minutes from the Oct 31, 2017 meeting were approved.

3) Q & A with Provost Clarke

While the Provost made comments and answered questions about multiple subjects, most of his time was spent covering recent issues relating to P & T.

He began by noting that Virginia Tech has a good P & T process in place and that we shouldn't be trying to alter it at this time, except in small ways "around the edges," as changes to the process must go through normal governance processes. "P & T is a ship that shouldn't be turned too quickly," he said, adding that the administration is committed to letting the system work "as is" this year.

He stated that the primary role of the University Committee is to make sure there's reasonable consistency across colleges, and that domain knowledge must be respected, as exemplified by this statement -- "I'm not going to pretend to do anything directive about how you appreciate quality in the humanities and social sciences."

He has asked deans to look at dossiers coming through to make sure they comply with the Faculty Handbook and contain adequate letters from department heads.

As far as reappointment or track switching, he said there are two opportunities for this to take place within the normal tenure clock, but that it should not take place once a candidate has gone up for tenure.

Regarding P & T expectations, he believes that it's important for departments to create a

document that clarifies what criteria will be applied, criteria that will be a mix of the quantitative, qualitative, and subjective, depending on the approach that works for each department.

In the remaining time he had, the Provost spoke very briefly about Destination Areas (DAs) and the Partnership for an Incentive Based Budget (PIBB).

DAs are Virginia Tech's version of centers of excellence. They need to be distinctive, relevant, large enough to have impact and allow for cross-disciplinary intersection, and financially sustainable over the long term. As they are built out of deep and well anchored disciplinary interests, he stressed that VT must maintain its disciplinary excellence, without which DAs are not possible.

The PIBB "is work in progress." As funding will flow to the colleges, and from colleges to departments, colleges need to decide how much information they'll disseminate to departments. Without explaining how, he said that the PIBB incentivizes growth while ensuring the resources necessary to provide a high level of instruction.

4) Faculty SoundBoard Permanent Survey

Alan Abrahams gave a presentation on the Virginia Tech Faculty Soundboard, a permanent survey that he created, through which faculty can anonymously enter concerns and issues.

The Senate approved the survey for a test run, pending responses from the VT legal department to several questions raised by the Senate, such as, "Are submissions subject to FOIA?"

5) Report from the P & T working group

John Ferris updated the Senate on the discussions of the P & T working group, which is in the process of clearing away issues related to the recent concerns about P & T, before turning to the work of clarifying, and possibly revising, the P & T section of the Faculty Handbook. The key suggestions of this group are that no ad hoc changes be made to the current Faculty Handbook, and that participants in the P & T review process should follow the Faculty Handbook and related procedures.