

Faculty Senate Minutes August 24, 2018

In Attendance

Monty Abbas, Masoud Agah, Diane Agud, Mehdi Ahmadian, Robin Allnut, Susan Anderson, Richard Ashley, Jacob Barney, Michael Borowski, Brian Britt, Tanyel Bulbul, Leandro Castello, Kelly Cobourn, John Ferris, Ellen Gilliland, Nicolin Girmes-Grieco, Sierra Guynn, James Hawdon, Bob Hicok, Kathy Hosig, Eric Kaufman, Bettina Koch, Jake Lahne, Roberto Leon, Zachary Mackey, Margarita McGrath, Polly Middleton, Cayce Myers, Mike Nappier, Ford Ramsey, Susanna Rinehart, Hans Robinson, Todd Schenk, Brett Shadle, Richard Shryock, Eric Smith, Ryan Speer, Jim Spotila, Jim Tokuhisa, Diego Troya, Layne Watson, Daniel Wodak

Absent

Alan Abrahams, Biko Agozino, Osman Balci, Arthur Ball, Carlyle Brewster, Robert Bush, Virgilio Centeno, Harry Dorn, Stefan Duma, William Galloway, Roger Harris, Eunju Hwang, Sara Jordan, Bradley Klein, Matthew Komelski, Chang Lu, Shelly Martin, Philip Olson, Marie Paretto, David Radcliffe, Manisha Singal, Stephen Smith, Divya Srinivasan, Cornel Sultan, David Tegarden, Dwight Viehland, Bruce Vogelaar, Ryan Zimmereman

1. Approval of Agenda

The agenda was unanimously approved.

2. Approval of Minutes from April 24, 2018

The minutes were unanimously approved.

3. Announcements and Expectations

The Senate has an opportunity this year to take a more active role and help lead several of the changes underway across the University. To facilitate more efficient and effective action on Senate business, we are initiating or reinvigorating several key practices:

- The Senate will use Robert's Rules of Order (rather than Sturgis' Standard Code of Parliamentary Procedure). Under Robert's Rules, everyone has an opportunity to comment once before anyone can comment twice on a motion.
- The Senate will use a committee structure for deliberation on key business points, with committees reporting out at the Regular Meetings.
- Because the Senate has seats on a number of different University Committees and Commissions, Senators are expected to serve on at least one commission or committee. For a full list of commissions and committees with Senate representation, visit <https://www.facultysenate.vt.edu/Governance.html>.

4. Topics for Faculty Senate to focus on for 2018-19

Faculty Senate will focus on the following key issues this year:

- Governance – The Senate continues to seek effective ways to engage in University Governance.
- P&T - There is a Commission on Faculty Affairs (CFA) Workgroup lead by Bob Hicok
- Assessment of Faculty - Marie Paretto will lead an ad hoc committee on this topic.

- Faculty Time/Productivity/Effectiveness - We will seek an ad hoc committee.
- Commission Review – The goal is to set up a standing committee to review items that come to the Senate for action from the various Commissions in order to make Senate action more efficient.

[Note that more detail on these issues appears under Item 5, below.]

Items of Discussion from Senators:

- The ongoing dysfunctionality of IRB continues to hamper research.
- Regarding Senate committees, individuals from outside the Senate can serve on these committees at each committee's discretion.
 - A key concern here is over the use of SPOT scores in evaluating teaching; the committee on Assessment of Faculty will be addressing this issue.
- The use of Academic Analytics remains a persistent concern; both Soundboard and the Assessment of Faculty committee are key avenues for raising our concerns.
- Soundboard is available to all faculty (not just Senators) and Senators are encouraged to publicize it.

5. Standing Committees

Status of Existing and Proposed Committees

- Existing: Legislative Affairs and Public Outreach workgroups (bylaws, Article VIII): No one is currently involved in this committee.
- Existing: Faculty Review Committee (Sean O'Keefe)
- Existing: Committee on Faculty Ethics (Joe Merola)
- Existing: Committee on Reconciliation (Ken Eriksson – This committee needs a new Chair.)
- Proposed: Governance (Bob Hicok) - Review Bylaws and Constitution of FS, Faculty Handbook, and related matters
- Proposed: Assessment of Faculty (Marie Paretti)
Key issues for this committee include
 - Teaching (SPOT), Scholarship, Service
 - Implications for P&T, eFAR, PIBB, and other governance/evaluation systems
- Proposed: Faculty Time/Productivity/Effectiveness (Chair needed)

Notes

- Past President Hans Robinson reported that President Sands was very positive about the comments Hans made to the BOV about our burden with administrative workloads that detract from our core work of teaching, research, and service. President Sands would like for the new COO and someone from HR to sit down with senators/faculty to discuss this issue.
- The Committee needs a charge and a useful name.
- Faculty Soundboard can be a mechanism for gathering input.
- Proposed: Resolution Review (Chair needed)
 - All resolutions are now reviewed by all constituent groups: Faculty Senate (FS), Staff Senate (SS), Graduate Student Assembly (GSA), Student Government Association (GSA).
 - To help the Senate be more efficient in its handling of these resolutions and make our regular meetings more effective, a new Resolutions Review Committee will

review the resolutions prior to Senate meetings and make recommendations to the full Senate.

6. Proposal to amend the Faculty Senate constitution to use Robert's Rules (first consideration)

Whereas University Council and several Commissions use Robert's Rules of Order;

Whereas Faculty Senate would like to keep the parliamentary rules consistent for our constituents;

Therefore we propose the following changes to the Faculty Senate Constitution:

- Proposed change to Article VII, Section 10. Parliamentary Procedure: The latest edition of ~~Sturgis' Standard Code of Parliamentary Procedure~~ Robert's Rules of Order, subject to special rules as may be adopted by the Faculty Senate, shall govern the procedures of the Faculty Senate, cabinet, and standing committees.

Comments:

- One preference for Sturgis
- One question on quorum: A quorum is only needed for the vote; the discussion today was only the first reading
- One comment that this will provide a different set of rules to ignore
- One comment that most other University committees and commissions use Robert's Rules.

7. Proposal to amend the Faculty Senate constitution around maximum terms (first consideration)

Whereas experience has shown that it is beneficial to have a mix of senators, cabinet members and officers with varying lengths of service;

Whereas colleges and departments should be free to make decisions around who best serves their interests;

Therefore we propose the following changes to the Faculty Senate Constitution:

- Change to Article V., Section 1. The Faculty Senate Cabinet: The members of the cabinet are the president, vice president, and secretary treasurer of the Faculty Senate, and one senator from each college and the library not represented by the officers. Faculty Senate cabinet members who are not senate officers are elected for a term of one year by caucus of the senators of the respective colleges. ~~A senator may not be elected to the cabinet for more than two consecutive terms.~~ The functions and duties of the cabinet are to serve as the executive committee of the Faculty Senate to which it is responsible and to which it reports regularly on the disposition of matters submitted to it; to act on behalf of the Faculty Senate between senate meetings; and to discharge other duties in accordance with parliamentary procedure and the Faculty Senate constitution and bylaws.

- Change to Article III., Section 5. Term of Membership and Vacancies: Senators are elected for a term of three years except as prescribed in the bylaws, and are eligible for re-election **at their departments' will** ~~but may not serve more than two consecutive terms (full or partial)~~. Senators serve until their successors take office. Vacancies in unexpired terms are filled as prescribed in the bylaws.

Comments/questions:

- Will this undercut diversity by keeping the same people in?
- Some departments find it difficult to find people willing to serve on Senate.
- In other cases, faculty report colleagues treating the Senate as an “easy” service activity, so it is always the same people trying to avoid other, potentially more demanding, service. Term limits force a change and limit this pattern.
- Should it be a mix of term limits/departmental discretion? Can departments ask for dispensation?
- Lack of continuity among senators has hurt us.
- Departments can have their own term limits.
- Comments from the Senate President: The purpose of the resolution is to make our rules less restrictive on departments.
- Comments from the Past President: If you start late in your senate career as an officer and want to go all the way through, from sec. to past-president, you might run out of time in your allowable service if we have term limits.
- Could we shift to three terms?
- Should we have a straw vote?
 - A straw vote was held and the results were in favor of the changes.
- Comments from the Senate President: We could eliminate limits for Cabinet members and change the limits on Senators for 3 terms
 - Comments from the floor: Since the straw vote pointed to a consensus for the changes as written, it seems best to move forward with the current proposal.
- Should be department decision.

The proposal remains as is, pending next steps.

8. Proposal to amend the Faculty Senate bylaws (first consideration)

- There is no need to enumerate the standing committees, ad hoc committees, and workgroups in the bylaws
- There are two workgroups listed that may not be active: Legislative Affairs and Public Outreach. In any event, they do not need to be enumerated.
- Proposed change to Article VIII. Faculty Senate Work Groups or Committees:
 - ~~A.~~ The Faculty Senate may form work groups or committees as needed. Each is to be led by a coordinator or chair elected by its members. The groups shall report to the Faculty Senate and are subject to the purview of the senate.
 - ~~B. Legislative Affairs and Public Outreach are current work groups.~~

~~Legislative Affairs: This work group will be responsible for establishing, continuing, and developing activities to ensure that those who make and influence public policy will be aware of the interests of the faculty.~~

~~Public Outreach: This work group will be responsible for establishing, continuing, and developing activities to ensure that citizens of the commonwealth understand what faculty do, who we are, why we engage in the work we do, and what we accomplish~~

Comments from the President: The rationale for this proposed change stems from the fact that these two workgroups are inactive, and there is no need to delineate specific workgroups in our Bylaws.

Comments from the floor: The Legislative Affairs used to be super-active in late 90s and early 2000s. They set up meetings with local reps and worked with Faculty Senate of Virginia, and provided a way for faculty to get the ear of delegates and senators in VA Gen Assembly. When working, the group was very effective.

Response from the President: The Legislative Affairs workgroup remains a positive idea, and could reform under the proposed change, but we would still like to remove the delineation of specific groups from the ByLaws to increase our flexibility.

9. Caucuses to elect their cabinet members

Senators remained after the meeting to select their College representatives to the Senate Cabinet.

Results:

- COB: Alan Abrahams
- Lib: Ryan Speer
- CAUS: Todd Schenk
- CVM: Kathy Hosig
- CNRE: Kelly Cobourn
- CALS: Nicoline Girmes-Grieco/Zachary Mackey takes over in October

10. Ombudsperson search committee nomination

We need one more nomination to the search committee for an Ombudsperson. Please send nominations to John Ferris by 9/7/18.

11. Other business

- There was a question about a search for the new Provost. The Search Committee has now been announced in the news.
- There was a request for an email when the agenda/minutes are posted. The Officers will make sure this happens.

12. The meeting adjourned at 3:30.