Faculty Senate Minutes: Oct 11, 2011
Virginia Tech
7- 9 pm, Pamplin 32

I Introductions
     Bruce Pencek presiding
      Guests – Paul Knox and Frances Keene

II. Approval of Agenda & Minutes of Sept 13, 2011
    Minutes and agenda moved and seconded. Both approved.

III. Long-Range Planning Task Force: Paul Knox, Frances Keene
See <http://blogs.is.vt.edu/longrangeplan/ > and
<http://www.longrangeplan.vt.edu >

   Process is in "early middle" stage. Nothing solidified. Hope things gel to a
rough draft strategic plan by beginning of next semester. End is scheduled to
take place at March BOV meeting. Now, everything is at serious conversation
stage, but no firm conclusions.

   Began in February 2011. President Steger asked Knox to coordinate strategic
plan effort. Looked at what other universities have done. In March established a
55 person task force with input from Deans and Academic Council. Wanted to
look further out and called itself "Long-range planning." Big Issue: what kind of
institution do we want to be and what do we need to be to survive and prosper?

   55 team split into 5 subgroups each with a chair and co-chair. Working papers
put on web at end of Spring 2011 semester. These papers were examined over
the summer. There was a place on the web for comments and input. In Fall
2011, these groups were shuffled and reconstituted.   Groups have just turned in
executive summaries. They can be found on the website and there are blogs for
input and comment.

BOV did visit the long-range planning effort at a retreat. Some points from BOV:
  - No support for any significant growth of the university.
  -   Some growth support for the graduate level, especially doctorate. Mostly in
STEMH areas. Meet grand challenges of the coming decades.
Cross-disciplinary trans-disciplinary etc.
  - What will help us strengthen national and international identity and attract the
best students?

Major themes from each of the sub-groups:

1. Envisioning Excellence. Culture of innovation. What does that mean in a practical sense?

2. Tomorrow's University. Moving to a trimester system would help us to be more efficient and use our facilities better. Governance and operation - get faster decisions for course approvals etc. Have the governance operate throughout all the year. Are there certain fast-track issues that can go through fast and what would process look like. Encourage multi-disciplinarity. Extending and improving global experience for both undergrads and grads.

3. Tomorrow's Leaders: (undergraduate education) Reaffirmed VT will be a holistic university with an emphasis on ability of graduates to conceptualize and visualize. VT should position itself as technology-focused research university. VT does not seek growth in undergraduate enrollment.

4. Tomorrow's Scholars: (graduate education) Develop interdisciplinary and trans-disciplinary programs.   Driver for growth is quality not quantity. Internationalized set of experiences.   Integrate praxis in graduate education.

5. Tomorrow's Knowledge: (research) Emphasis on excellence. Pushing toward expanding and redefining the land grant mission. Expand geographically and scope thematically. Work to develop synergies between institutes and departments.   As one example of a strategy, a separate panel recommends establishing faculty of health sciences to try to deal with expansion of health science related research.

(SQ means a senator question.   SC means a senator comment.)
(SQ: Where are the humanities in all of this? We are hurt by the fact that social sciences and humanities are kept out by barriers.)
(SQ: Why no one on health science committee from WFU initiative?)
(SQ: What about the impacts of the past decisions? Without that, how can we have learned from the past.)
(SC: would like transparency in general. A lot of money went into the medical school. If we aren't willing to learn from mistakes, we can't move forward.)
(SC: Most faculty spend their time with their students and see what gaps they may have in their education. The capacity that has been shrinking is the ability of our students to think and assess. This is the best thing you have said. Real gap - when students go abroad, they often do that without knowing the culture of that country.)
(SQ: What does it mean we are a technology-centered university?)
Knox: all of these questions and comments point to a need we have for the next phase - what are the specific instruments we have to accomplish these general goals? How do we do this without damaging our disciplinary base? We are shaping a vision - we don't know if we have the will, the funds, or the political savvy to implement it. The Health Sciences Faculty came from a different group, not the long range planning group and was brought up here as an example of a strategy.

(SQ: Early documents suggested new tenure tracks. anything changing there?)
Knox: that hasn't survived past the first set of working papers.
(Q: where are the data that backs up the statements ?)
Knox: The groups have just been visioning and brainstorming. After the first several iterations, we will track down data for the most important conclusions/issues that evolve from input.
(Q/C: I have less faith over the time I have been here that the administrators are here to support us. As faculty, the role of faculty is not as strong as it might be. But, the search for money has pushed a lot of decisions - we need to document what the outcomes have been. Only then can we credibly go and say what we need to add in the future. I hear the nice words but I have little faith in them. Incredible salaries are going into some initiatives - how are we getting that money back to go into other programs and reach the goal of a holistic university?)
Knox: not sure we can satisfy all of that completely, but we are looking at data such as - if we add 100 new students here is what it takes so we can be realistic about what will be needed to implement changes.
(Q: Any group looking at the impact of athletics on the university?)
Knox - that really hasn't come up yet. Karpanty: that has been mentioned in her group but is not reflected in documents.

Bruce - How can we and our constituents get our comments, questions and concerns into the process.
Knox - if faculty senate has a document that it wishes to pass/endorse, they could put it on the web. The more the issues are aired the better it would be.   Keene - anyone can join the scholar site and input comments on the blog site.

IV. Announcements
   1. Cabinet members   Bruce – I would like to thank all who have agreed to serve on the revived senate cabinet.
Bernice Hausman represents CLAHS
Jim Bassett represents CAUS
Mike Akers represents CALS
Brian Cloyd   represents Pamplin
     We are still looking for representatives from ENGR and VetMed
2. Senate committee appointments and recommendations
   • Ethics (CALS, Pamplin, CLAHS, CNRE, prob also ENGR) Susan Clark
   • Reconciliation (need at least 3, probably 4)
   • Review (CLAHS, Extension; probably also CALS, Pamplin, ENGR, VetMed [2])
3. Commission vacancies
• Commission on Faculty Affairs (at least 1, possibly 2)

Diane Agud has agreed.

Pavlos Vlachos is considering.

• Commission on Staff Policies and Affairs

• University Curriculum Committee For Liberal Education

d. Governance/commsisions news (if any)

Discussion about name change for Forest Products to Sustainable Biomaterials at CUSP

Question about Medical evacuation insurance.

.V. New business

a. Transportation center pollution (Long)

Multi-modal Transport Facility

   Corner of West Campus Drive and Perry Street

Large pollutant source for undergrad labs and other labs

BOV June 2011   Mouras - this site is a go but the potential fumes are a part of a priority task. Correspondence related to this issue was shared by G.Long   What about the traffic issue?

We have two problems - bus station and shared governance.

We don't want this to be just about the bus station but about faculty input into important decisions as well.

Motion to go to COR and CFA about the MMTF

Passed

Motion to adjourn 9:05 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Joseph S. Merola

Secretary/Treasurer

Approved November 8, 2011