

Date: Tuesday, April 14, 2015

Place: Pamplin 32

Time: 5:15 p.m.

Chair: Rami Dalloul (for Bernice Hausman)

Minutes: Rebecca Miller

Attending: Robin Allnutt, Nahum Arav, Richard Ashley, Godmar Back, Joseph Baker, John Barrett, Robert Bush, Maria Belen Cassera, Virgil Centeno, Rami Dalloul, Felicia Etkorn, John Ferris, Leon Geyer, Rosemary Goss, Ralph Hall, Wat Hopkins, Kathy Hosig, Aki Ishida, David Jacobsen, Bradley Klein, Joe Merola, Rebecca Miller, Jim Parkhurst, Paulo Polanah, Wornie Reed, John Richey, Christine Kaestle (for Tina Savla), Hannah Scherer, Heinrich Schnoedt, Madeline Schreiber, Dan Thorp, Eric Vance, Phillip Young, Anne Zajac

Quorum (42) was not met, with only 34 senators in attendance.

Guests: Ken Eriksson, Chair of the Faculty Senate Committee on Reconciliation

Meeting purpose: Regular Faculty Senate meeting

Agenda items: Approval of the agenda

Announcements

Old business

New business

Meetings for the rest of 2014-2015

Faculty Senate Vice President Rami Dalloul called the meeting to order at 5:16 p.m.

Agenda item 1: Approval of the agenda

Motion to approve the agenda was seconded and passed by unanimous decision.

Agenda item 2: Announcements

The search committee for the Senior Advisor to the President and Vice Provost for Inclusion and Diversity has been assembled, and Faculty Senate Vice President Rami Dalloul has been asked to serve on this committee in the role of representing the Faculty Senate. The recruiting company is Isaacson, Miller. So far, the committee has discussed desired characteristics and potential candidates. Finalists should have on-campus interviews in early fall.

One senator mentioned that there was an email from the Town of Blacksburg about a group forming for bringing rail service to Blacksburg by 2020. The proposal is asking to extend the rail line expected to come to Roanoke. Faculty were asked to respond to this email in order to show interest.

Agenda item 3: Old business

Review/Reconciliation/Ethics Task Force Meeting with President Sands

Ken Eriksson, Chair of the Committee on Reconciliation, discussed a proposal to President Sands to combine the Review, Reconciliation, and Ethics committees and form an Ombuds Office. He presented the proposal and a brief review of the meeting. Materials, including the proposal and presentation, are available in the April 14, 2015 Meeting Agenda folder on the Faculty Senate Scholar site.

President Sands was very receptive to the idea of establishing an Ombuds Office, and was involved in establishing this office at Purdue recently. President Sands stated that he would be happy to have the Ombuds report directly to him in order to preserve confidentiality.

Ken Eriksson asked Faculty Senate if there was general enthusiasm for establishing an Ombuds Office on campus, and senators indicated that there is, indeed, enthusiasm for establishing an Ombuds Office. A brief Q&A with Ken Eriksson highlighted the following concerns and ideas:

- Ombudspersons are impartial and trained through the International Ombudsman Association.
- Ennis McCreary is the Graduate School Ombuds, and handles about 250 cases a year. Her job is to talk, listen, and explore options while bringing individuals closer together.
- The Ombudsperson would be selected through a formal search in order to avoid a political decision.
- College representatives would comprise the Ombuds Team, and the Faculty Senate is responsible for approving and confirming College representatives to this team.
- The Ombuds will take the place of the Chair of the Committee on Reconciliation, which will require constitution changes for the Faculty Senate.
- The case load of the current Committee on Reconciliation is about 20 cases per year.
- The Ombuds would initially be a half-time position with staff support, building up to full time.

It was moved that the Faculty Senate take a straw vote on carrying the proposal to create an Ombuds Office forward. The majority voted in favor of carrying the proposal forward.

Governance meeting with Sands

Wornie Reed, Rami Dalloul, Monty Abbas, and David Tegarden have been working on a proposal for a change in VT governance structure. Materials are available in the April 14, 2015 Meeting Agenda folder on the Faculty Senate Scholar site.

It was moved that the Faculty Senate take a straw vote on releasing the governance survey results to the general faculty, through minutes, the blog site, and senators sending the results to their faculties. The majority voted in favor of releasing the results through the methods indicated.

Wornie Reed and Rami Dalloul reported that President Sands is completely on board with the Faculty

Senate changing the structure of governance on campus. This news was enthusiastically received, and it was noted that our processes over the past year have worked.

Prior to the meeting, President Sands was given access to a copy of the proposal from earlier this year and results from the shared governance survey. During the meeting, they discussed the fact that VT is out of sync with its SCHEV peers. He agreed that we should not have to go through University Council in order to make this change.

Next, the Faculty Senate needs to create a shorter proposal, based on President Sands' feedback. Moving forward, this proposal is not Faculty Senate on its own; rather, it is Faculty Senate with administrative support. The shorter proposal will be in a resolution-type format. We need to prime people that this is coming, and see if we need to go through University Council. That might happen in the fall, but we want to start these discussions this spring.

Overall, President Sands is reviewing options for changing governance on a broader level on campus. Because of this, as we transition, we will need to change the way we work as a Faculty Senate. We may consider using subcommittees to complete work rather than having the full Senate deal with minutiae.

Elections and positions for 2015-2015

Available positions on committees and commissions are outlined in several documents available in the April 14, 2015 Meeting Agenda folder on the Faculty Senate Scholar site.

The available Faculty Senate offices are: Secretary-Treasurer and Vice-President.

2015-2016 is likely to be another lively year. Faculty Senate governance proposals should make it through the governance system in the early fall.

Please send nominations to Rami Dalloul (rdalloul@vt.edu). Senate will appointment replacements for committees and commissions that require a senator if a senator leaves Senate.

Journal impact factor discussion

Philip Young continued to lead the discussion on journal impact factor use on campus. Materials are available in the April 14, 2015 Meeting Agenda folder on the Faculty Senate Scholar site. Many senators expressed interest in discussing this topic in the Scholar Forum.

Currently, SPIA has been the only group to respond. All supportive of the need to change how we discuss research and scholarly impact need to participate in this discussion. The goal of this discussion is educational, to consider ways to share information about what an impact factor should and should not be used for. Since different types of research, including interdisciplinary research, have different criteria for quality, it was decided that the best place to continue this discussion is the Commission on Faculty Affairs. Faculty Senate decided to send Philip Young's information to the Commission on Faculty Affairs for discussion on this topic and a decision on how to move forward.

Commission and committee reports

Commission on University Support

One senator announced that there is currently a traffic bottleneck problem being ignored by the Commission on University Support. Felicia Etkorn volunteered to bring this up on behalf of Senate at the next CUS meeting.

Commission on Equal Opportunity and Diversity

Anita Puckett announced that CEOD was discussing changing the Principles of Community in order to include "ethnicity" or "ethnic group." This will be discussed more in the fall.

CEOD will also be restructuring itself in order to include more caucuses and reduce the number of representatives. There will be more discussion on this in the fall, as well.

Agenda item 4: New business

There was a brief discussion about whether or not senators who represent the Faculty Senate on committees and commissions should be replaced if they complete their Senate term before completing their committee or commission term. The general guideline was the senators should be replaced with an active senator, but the Cabinet made an executive decision to allow senators to complete committee and commission terms if they have completed their Senate term.

Agenda item 5: Meetings for the rest of 2014-2015

President Hausman asked senators to keep April 21, 2015 during the FS time open, as we may be able to have President Sands at the meeting. This is a possibility but has not yet been confirmed.

April 28, 2015: Scott Midkiff from IT would like to discuss the timeline and process for implementing a new course management system to replace Scholar. There is already a handout in the April 28 meeting folder. Scott also suggests faculty look at materials at <https://www.tlos.vt.edu/NextGenerationLMS/>

We still have an invitation out to the President to attend Faculty Senate. As a result, we can't as yet cancel any of our meetings for the rest of the semester. The April 28, 2015 meeting may be short. The content of the May 12, 2015 meeting is unclear, but we may have a reception for the provost. It is possible that a meeting with the President will be set up for an off-week, so President Hausman asked senators to keep calendars open during Tuesday evenings.

There is a possible visit by Ellen Plummer April 28, 2015 to discuss sexual assault legislation in Richmond and its effects on faculty, as well as proactive faculty responses to the current legislation.

Another topic for the April 28 meeting could be the meeting time of the Senate and whether we could adjust it to address the myriad problems associated with meeting after 5 p.m., or at least develop a strategy to address this problem.

There will be meetings with the candidates for the provost position late in the semester, so please watch for emails with that information.

Next meeting: Tuesday, April 28, 2015, 5:15 p.m. in Pamplin 32

The meeting was adjourned at 6:49 p.m.