

Faculty Senate Agenda & Minutes

August 16, 2019, 2:30-4:30pm

Location: NCB 160 (or [via Zoom](#) for those outside Blacksburg)

Present: Masoud Agah, Biko Agozino, Diane Agud, Susan Anderson, Richard Ashley, Tanyel Bulbul, Charles Calderwood, Leandro Castello, Benjamin Corl, Eloise Coupey, John Ferris, William Galloway, Nicolin Girmes-Grieco, Roie Hauser, James Hawdon, Bob Hicok, Eric Kaufman, Bradley Klein, Bettina Koch, Chang Lu, Zachary Mackey, Paul Marek, Cayce Myers, Amy Nelson, Patrick Pithua, Robin Queen, Susanna Rinehart, Hans Robinson, Ryan Speer, Tess Thompson, Vinodh Venkatesh, Bruce Vogelaar, Robert Weiss, Anthony Wright de Hernandez

Guests: Juan Espinoza (Admissions), Ron Fricker (Science), Luisa Havens-Gerardo (Provost's office), Sally Morton (Science), Tamarah Smith (Staff Senate)

1. Approval of Agenda

- Agenda approved by unanimous consent

2. Approval of Minutes (5 minutes)

- Minutes of April 19th approved with minor edits

3. Announcements (5 minutes)

- Regular Faculty Senate meetings
 - Structure and topics: Agendas will be prepared and shared by the Tuesday prior to the meeting.
 - Although we are holding the room reservation until 4:30pm, most meetings will end earlier.
- Expectations for commission and committee service
 - Many appointments can be filled by non-senators. Each senator should reach out to other faculty to solicit volunteers.
 - Senators noted the importance of recognizing faculty members for service throughout the university.
 - Rick Ashley highlighted the transportation and parking committee as one of the key opportunities.
- Governance Committee
 - "[Principles of Shared Governance](#)" document was shared via Canvas, and John encourages senators to provide feedback.
- [Faculty workload equity](#)
 - Virginia Tech invited experts to campus, Nov. 21-22. Anticipated visitors include KerryAnn O'Meara and Kiernan Matthews. Senators should provide input and plan to participate.

4. Topic:

- [Undergraduate enrollment](#)

- Luisa Havens-Gerardo (vice provost for enrollment and degree management) and Juan Espinoza (associate vice provost for enrollment management) shared their background and philosophy for long-term planning with enrollment.
- 15 different initiatives have been implemented in the last few years. Some are technology-focused, others are data-driven.
- [Many changes were implemented](#) last summer in response to barriers and dissatisfaction with the prior approach.
- Virginia Tech is now part of the [Coalition for College](#) shared application, and it includes more insight for students, as well as a more accessible fee waiver.
 - In the past, only 5% of applicants were eligible for a fee waiver; this year it was 20%.
- Virginia Tech also offered a new “early action” option for applicants. (This is different from “early decision,” which is more binding.)
- Admissions also facilitated a more holistic review of applications.
- A senator asked about changes that are increasing the competitiveness of admission to Virginia Tech, and Luisa framed the issue in terms of both diversity and maintenance of numbers over time.
 - Projections for continuing students are running low, which means more new students need to be admitted in order to replace graduating and departing students.
 - Virginia Tech is mandated by the state to limit the proportion of out-of-state students.
- Luisa indicated the modeling of data suggested they were taking a risk of over-enrollment of about 350 students (beyond the target).
- A strategic enrollment advisory group is being created to monitor and plan for enrollment in the future.
- A question was raised about course availability. Luisa indicated the scheduling was monitored through the summer to allow for shifting resources. She also highlighted Virginia Tech’s use of standard caseloads for determining resources for student services.
- A senator asked how faculty could gain more access to aggregate numbers and quantitative understanding of the dashboards being used to ensure the university is able to meet the needs of enrolled students. Many of the dashboards are currently in beta testing. Luisa indicated a desire to disaggregate data to a department level.
 - Headcounts, retention rates, and registration numbers will be reported within the next few weeks.
 - Systems are being built to add transparency to the process.
- A senator asked about the anticipated yield rate and why admissions anticipated a yield rate lower than past years.
 - Luisa indicated the challenge was exacerbated by limitations on point-in-time comparisons, recognizing the closing dates

and snapshots in numbers varied from time to time. Past records reflected process, rather than choice points. This year's model was based on the 2018 data, because that is the only one the admissions office had confidence in interpreting.

- Another issue has been the issue of first-choice and second-choice offers to students (i.e., was the student admitted for the major of their first choice).
- The goal of admitting a higher proportion of underserved students was a driver for key decision points in the process.
- The admissions office is in the process of building a new model based on data from 2015 onward.
 - The possibility of a recession in the short-term is a factor that cannot be properly accounted for.
- A senator asked about the root cause of the over enrollment. Luisa indicated it is difficult to determine which factors were the driving forces. Campus visit data has improved the predictability of the existing model, but that data has not been adequately tracked in past years.
- A senator noted the admissions office likely has more comfort with over enrollment than under enrollment. Louisa confirmed it is easier to work with more numbers than try to catch up from a behind position.
- There are no anticipated changes with admission initiatives during the upcoming cycle. Being able to continue with the current approach will help the admissions office better understand how the changes are actually impacting enrollment.
- The admissions office has a priority to maintain the quality of the class profile, while simultaneously meeting the targets for enrollment. This priority sometimes influences the decisions about yield rates to use in the models.
 - Luisa noted the quality of the class profile was maintained, with a larger class, without requiring additional financial aid.

5. Other Business

- A senator raised a question about potential changes to the bylaws that would impact term limits on senators. Jim Hawdon will follow-up on the matter.
- College caucuses met to discuss the following
 - Faculty Senate cabinet representation
 - Engaging college faculty associations

6. Adjourn

- Formally adjourned at 3:40pm.

Respectfully submitted by Eric Kaufman, Faculty Senate Secretary.