Faculty Senate Agenda & Minutes
November 22, 2019, 2:30-4:30pm
Location: NCB 160 (or via Zoom for those outside Blacksburg)

Present: Diane Agud, Susan Anderson, Richard Ashley, Michael Borowski, Tanyel Bulbul, Charles Calderwood, Leandro Castello, Virgilio Centeno, Benjamin Corl, John Ferris, Ellen Gilliland, Nicolin Girmes-Grieco, Bob Hicok, Christine Kaestle, Eric Kaufman, Bettina Koch, Jake Lahne, Jordan MacKenzie, Zachary Mackey, Marie Paretti, Patrick Pithua, Robin Queen, Susanna Rinehart, Yang Shao, Eric Smith, Jay Teets, Jim Tokuhisa, Mark Van Dyke, Vinodh Venkatesh, Robert Weiss, Anthony Wright de Hernandez, Liqing Zhang

Guests: Coogan Thompson (GSA)

Approval of Agenda
Agenda approved by unanimous consent.

Approval of Minutes
Minutes of November 8th meeting were approved.

Announcements
- John Ferris provided an update on the Enrollment Advisory Group. The group has met a couple times, and John has requested more specific data. He plans to have more of an update at the next Faculty Senate meeting.
- John Ferris shared thoughts on Faculty Senate membership and elections. These are some initial ideas for consideration, and he welcomes comments directly on the Google Doc.

Topic 1: Big Deal Negotiations and Open Access
University Libraries Dean Walters shared a presentation on big deal negotiations. The "big deals" relate to access to bundles of resources (e.g., journals). A small number of publishers is taking a larger and larger portion of the University Libraries' budget. Globally, there is more emphasis on public access policies, offering more immediate and broad access (e.g., the European Union's Plan S). As a result, the payment to publishers ends up primarily being for publications in the most recent 12-month period. Virginia Tech's University Libraries negotiates contracts as part of a consortium of research libraries across Virginia. For more information on current planning and negotiation process, go to https://lib.vt.edu/oa-big-deal.html.
- A senator asked about implications for speed of access. If the contract with the larger publishers expires, University Libraries remains committed to providing access to the resources, but there may be less immediate access. Interlibrary Loan is working to increase the speed of responses, and many requests are now fulfilled within 24 hours.
- Interlibrary Loan allows free access when another library in Virginia has access. If none of the libraries in Virginia have access, articles are purchased from libraries in other states that have access. If no library in the U.S. has access, purchases would occur through commercial document delivery services.
- Open repositories like VTechWorks are helping to provide more access to scholarly publications.

- Some of the current battles relate to who owns the copyright and what limits are placed on what authors can do with their work. Many of the more recent agreements allow authors to retain more complete ownership.
- Open publishers have formed a society, and they have standards to maintain quality controls, just like conventional journals.

Topic 2: Governance Update

Bob Hicok shared two documents: [Characteristics of shared governance at VT](#) (Appendix A) and [the current state of shared governance](#) (Appendix B). The principles and characteristics of governance being established now will guide the structures that will be adopted in the future. Bob noted that discussions have generally reflected broad agreement on the proposed principles and characteristics, even though some of the language suggests changes to current practices. The trend is toward greater faculty involvement and support in shared governance. The process for change takes a long time, but Bob believes there will be a proposal at the end of this academic year. He anticipates some basic resolutions, including removal of the term limits for faculty serving on University Council. Some ideas would allow the Faculty Senate to have more decision-making authority for who represents the faculty in various roles (e.g., representative to the Board of Visitors or chair of the Commission on Faculty Affairs).

Topic 3: Discussion of [P & T (Chapter 3) Revision to Handbook](#)

Bob Hicok reshared the proposed revisions to Chapter 3 of the Faculty Handbook. These changes have been presented for first reading with the Commission on Faculty Affairs (CFA), with the hope that a resolution would complete the governance process this academic year. Because of the winter break, we have more than the standard one-month time period to provide feedback. Input may be sent directly to Bob.
- One faculty member relayed concerns about having departmental expectations documents accessible and referenced long after they have changed. This must be balanced with some "grandfathering" and ensure faculty are able to be evaluated based upon the expectations at the time they were hired.

Other Business

Adjourn

The meeting formally adjourned at 3:34pm.

Respectfully submitted by Eric Kaufman, Faculty Senate Secretary.

Appendix A: Characteristics of Shared Governance

The characteristics below were written with the "Principles of Governance" and our discussions about the current state of governance at Virginia Tech in mind. For example, the inclusion of a "rocket docket" is a way of partially addressing concerns about efficiency, and the expectation that governance can be represented in a clear visual format gets at the heart of transparency. Think of these as key or required features of governance. This list is not meant to be exhaustive so much as a spur for discussion.

For the sake of simplicity, "senates" refers to Faculty Senate, Staff Senate, the proposed A/P Senate (CAPFA will soon make this request through a resolution), and the various student groups, which could be gathered within a single Student Senate. "Associations" refers to college associations.

The system of governance that this committee proposes should include the following characteristics:

1) A clear structure that connects the major elements of governance -- the BOV, president, provost, councils, senates, commissions, committees, and associations (hereafter referred to as the components of governance). The structure is simple enough that it can be conveyed in a clear visual representation.
2) A place within that structure for the Departments Heads Council's Executive Committee, Deans Council, and a new body, the University Council cabinet. Comprised of leaders from the various groups, it determines UC agendas and has the authority to request that University Council invokes a "rocket docket" to expedite a specific piece of work.
3) Governance is sized to ensure representation and sufficient connections between components without unduly increasing our collective service obligations. The utility of all components has been analyzed and bodies that can be eliminated or combined have been.
4) Large academic changes or initiatives (such as Pathways) requires a 2/3 vote in University Council for approval (or we use a system of weighted voting in University Council that affords constituencies greater say on issues that affect them, or…)
5) All senates have some initiating capacity, the ability to propose, whether directly or indirectly, a course of action, and this capacity varies by senate and context.
6) Requirements for the following documentation: a statement of the purpose and scope of authority for all components of governance, including their responsibility for determination, recommendation, or consultation in specific areas, such as academics or finance; processes for communication within and between the components; and guidelines for work-flow within and between the components, including the processes by which decisions are reached.
7) In addition to their assigned legislative responsibilities, all components of governance include regular opportunities for open discussion.
8) A process for making substantial academic changes -- such DAs, experiential learning, and Pathways – within and not adjacent to governance. Committees that undertake these tasks are formed by a steering committee or process within University Council, and contain, in addition to other members, members from the senates in numbers related to

the nature of the task. These committees report periodically to UC, and members report to and obtain feedback from their constituent groups.

9) Recognition that senates are the source of authority for the groups they represent. Staff Senate speaks for staff, Faculty Senate for faculty, etc. We no longer speak of "faculty stakeholders" or the like.

10) The right for senates, councils, and associations to determine who represents them in all facets of governance and for periods of time of their own choosing.

11) Senates are responsible for informing their senators of their duties and explaining the basics of governance. Senates and the Office for Policy and Governance are jointly responsible for training senators who serve in roles external to their home body.

12) Senates have members assigned to administrative duties that include managing work-flow and coordinating that work with other components of governance. The University provides financial support for these positions. These individuals periodically report the Office for Policy and Governance on the activities of their senates, which maintains an overview of the governance work going on at any time. The OPG is financially supported in this task.

Appendix B: The current state of shared governance at VT: topics for discussion

1) *Belief in shared governance.* The COACHE survey suggests a high level of faculty apathy toward shared governance. Apathy reduces participation, which changes the nature of decision making, which affects buy-in, which negatively impacts success. Why are faculty views on governance so negative? Why do VT faculty show less trust/belief in shared governance than our peers? Is greater participation a significant factor in increasing faculty involvement in shared governance?

2) *Communication between FS and faculty/departments.* How to "take the pulse" of the larger group is a problem faced by all representative bodies. Meeting minutes and the FS president's constituency reports to the BOV are the only official avenues of communication FS employs. We rarely use polling, surveys, etc. How can FS do a better job of ascertaining the needs of faculty, discovering where they stand on issues, and conveying to faculty and departments the goals/work of the senate? Staff and students face similar issues.

3) *Deliberation vs legislation in UC and FS.* University Council's time is largely taken up by presentations and the processing of resolutions, with very little devoted to open discussion of goals and issues. It is not, by and large, a deliberative body. At the heart of governance, the place where all constituencies meet, should we be fostering deeper and broader expression, with the aim of working toward consensus? FS *is* primarily a deliberative body. If you want to mull over an idea or problem in a broad manner, we can do that, but we're less adept at focusing deliberation, at legislating. What would make FS a more productive body? More generally, are there things UC and FS have to learn from each other?

4) *Diffusion of voice.* While faculty, staff, and students are active in governance, the bodies that represent us and through which we express collective views and desires have more limited roles. We often speak of the participation of "stakeholders" from the various groups (faculty, staff, students, administrators) on commissions and committees (including ad hoc committees tasked to work on large initiatives), but how often do these individuals have an official role in governance and actually represent a constituency? Our current approach can offer the appearance of broad representation w/o actually being representative. Should Faculty Senate speak for faculty, Staff Senate for staff, etc.?

5) *Perpetual "youth" of faculty, staff, and students participating in governance.* The rapid turnover of faculty, staff, and students in key governance positions, as well as the nature of the preparation for these roles, keeps us perpetually inexperienced, makes it hard to retain knowledge of how shared governance/the institution works, and limits our effectiveness as advocates and participants. Should there be more training for governance service (a recommendation of an earlier task force)? Should length of service be variable and include some element of choice?

6) *No small committee of constituency leaders within governance.* The large bodies – UC, SGA, FS, etc. – are not good for focused/detailed discussion. The commissions are much better for this, but each commission has a defined scope. We don't have a small committee within shared governance that brings together constituency leaders on a regular basis within an open forum, though we have examples of the effectiveness of small bodies: FS cabinet, heads executive council, deans council. The advisory groups (to the president) serve a different purpose and are not part of governance.

7) *Connections between levels of governance.* While departments and schools are assured representation in FS, and FS is assured representation in UC and commissions/committees, there are no required faculty links between college and university governance. For example, the CLAHS "Faculty Council" is not assured membership in FS. One member of that council currently serves in senate, but he is on the council only one semester this year and the council meets just once a year. The on-line roster for the "Engineering Faculty Organization" includes no one currently in FS. A good way to foster communication is cross representation between components of governance, and not just those mentioned here: for example, should the DHC be integrated into governance?

8) *Composition of University Council does not allow faculty to act decisively on academic matters*. Faculty are supposed to have one more voting member on UC than the number of administrators (deans and VPs). Shouldn't we include other administrators (such as assistant VPs and associate deans) in the count? Are A/P faculty counted as faculty? Few A/P faculty are really faculty and A/P faculty are not part of FS. The numbers matter because it's harder for faculty to act as a collective than it is for administrators: we represent a much larger and more diverse group that has a far more diluted presence in UC. For example, while 100% of deans are in UC, only 1.3 % of faculty are (excluding A/P faculty). Administrators are also more likely to vote together, given that they are part of a hierarchy. An equal weighted vote on all issues leaves faculty extremely unlikely to have a decisive say on academic matters.

9) *Representation for A/P Faculty.* Should A/P Faculty have their own senate? There are 1,854 A/P faculty but they have limited access to governance.

10) *Initiating capacity.* Faculty Senate can't initiate resolutions – we have to go through the commissions, each of which has a defined scope. For example, governance doesn't fall within the purview of CFA.

11) *Efficiency/time.* We move slowly. In many respects we need to, but are there processes, or parts of processes, that can be sped up without limiting the depth of deliberation necessary to make shared, informed, adequately vetted decisions? Productivity increases can partially offset funding/staffing limitations. How do we bring more people in; how do we take full advantage of people willing to do an inordinate amount of service; how does FS generate greater capacity for administrative duties? If everyone in FS needs to weigh in on every decision, we'll get very little done. Should FS cabinet be more of an administrative body that has *some* authority delegated to it by the full senate?

12) *Resources.* Are we devoting sufficient resources to governance, both economic and human? Should FS have some kind of staff and the staffing of Faculty Affairs and Policy and Governance be increased? Are we using governance to gather the human resources and talent we have? Excluding grad students, we employ about 8,400 people, including 2,000 TT and non-tenure-track faculty and over 3,000 A/P faculty. The range of knowledge and ability across that population is immense. Are we tapping it?