

Faculty Senate Agenda & Minutes

August 21, 2020, 2:30-4:30pm

Location: Zoom

Present: Eric Kaufman, Cayce Myers, Frances McCarty, Tess Thompson, Robin Queen, Ashley Shew, Tanyel Bulbu, Nicolin Grieco, Cathryn Copper, Susan Anderson, Jim Hawdon, Diego Troya, Harry Dorn, William Galloway, Jim Tokuhisa, Anthony Wright, Matthew Eick, Paul Avey, Liqing Zhang, Robin Allnutt, Hans Robinson, Leandro Castello, Richard Shryock, Sam Doak, Amy Nelson, Charles Calderwood, Nicole Pitterson, Jordan MacKenzie, Cindy Wood, Diane Agud, Evan Lavender-Smith, Esther Bauer, Susanna Rinehart, Paul Skolnik, Richard Ashley, Scott Pleasant, Aaron Noble, Chris Pierce, Sarah Barrett, Michael Nappier, Roie Hauser, Bob Hicok, Michael Borowski, Jacob Lahne, Todd Schenk, Peter Schmitthenner

Guests: Tamarah Smith (Staff Senate), Shaowen Luo (COSFA), Jeffrey Robert (PcoB), Patty Raun (CLAHS), Brett Shadle (CLAHS), April Myers, Coogan Thompson (GSA), Sally Morton (COS), Jia-Qiang He (CVM), Kerry Gendreau

Call to Order by Senate President Eric Kaufman

Dr. Kaufman began with two guiding questions:

1. How can we encourage faculty peers in our respective college to embrace opportunities for shared governance?
2. What priorities and actions allow the Faculty Senate to be most impactful during 2020-21?

Consent Agenda

The following items were approved by unanimous consent. Moved by John Ferris, seconded by Susan Anderson; no objections, approved.

1. Approve and post [May 1, 2020, meeting minutes](#).
2. Elect Sarah Barrett to fill the vacancy with the [Commission on Faculty Affairs](#).
3. Nominate Brad Klein to fill the vacancy with the [Employee Benefits Committee](#).
4. Nominate Layne Watson to fill the vacancy with the [IT Services and Systems Committee](#).
5. Appoint Susan Anderson and Susanna Rinehart, each to a three-year term, as Virginia Tech's representatives to the [Faculty Senate of Virginia](#).

Brief Updates and Announcements

- [Topical schedule for fall meetings](#) (Eric Kaufman, FS President). Discussion that Zoom meetings would be made for the duration of the Fall 2020 Senate calendar. Topics were discussed for the Fall 2020 Senate meetings, including:
 - [Faculty Senate Bylaws Concerning Membership and Elections](#)
 - [Standardized test requirements for admissions](#)
 - [COACHE survey results](#)
 - [Recommendations for assessing faculty](#)
 - Revisions to shared governance

- Diversity & Inclusion efforts
 - Climate Action
 - Prioritizing facilities renovations
 - Title IX update
 - Staff Senate, SGA, & GSA updates
- **Sharing faculty stories with [Board of Visitors](#)** (Eric Kaufman). Earlier this summer, Senate President Eric Kaufman put out request for faculty stories to share with BOV. The purpose of this was to capture experiences of faculty and individual departments. Dr. Kaufman suggested that there are maybe other stories on how faculty are working through struggles. Kaufman asked that this information could be passed along to him because it helps him to represent those experiences to the BOV. Kaufman specifically asked for stories regarding how faculty are impacted. These topics can include things such as a hiring “frost” or “freeze” that impacts people negatively. Other issues included faculty attrition and university community. These stories help to contextualize the way faculty feel about the institution and working through COVID to the BOV. It was also pointed out that not all stories need to relate to COVID-19.
 - Exploring a revised charge for the [Committee on Reconciliation](#) (Eric Kaufman). Dr. Kaufman stated there were issues with this committee not having a full committee for a few years. Faculty Senate need to clarify this. Kaufman asks for an email about those committee issues.
 - Updating Faculty Senate Records (Cayce Myers). Dr. Myers asked that Faculty Senators provide record updates to mcmyers@vt.edu.
 - [Faculty Affairs](#) Open Office Hours (Bob Hicok). Professor Hicok reminded faculty of the opportunity to participate in Faculty Affairs open office hours.
 - President’s Committee on Governance (John Ferris). Dr. Ferris reported that The President’s Committee on Governance met last academic year on what changes the president might consider for continued shared governance. Final recommendations letter will go to President Sands end of next week. The changes will be announced in the next few months.
 - [Standardized test requirements for admissions](#) (John Ferris). Dr. Ferris announced there is a larger issue about suspending the ACT SAT requirements for Fall 2021. He is working to find out what options may be available for undergraduate admissions.
 - [Faculty Senate Bylaws Concerning Membership and Elections](#) (John Ferris). Dr. Ferris provided an update on Faculty Senate Bylaws for Membership and Elections. Specifically, he highlighted more responsibility in shared governance. He announced that the VT Medical School is now part of Faculty Senate.
 - Others?
 - [Open Letter from VT AAUP Chapter](#) (Richard Shryock). Dr. Shryock announced that the AAUP is here to support faculty in complementary ways with the FS. Central item for AAUP is situation caregivers in which the AAUP met with constituency groups regarding caregiving during COVID-19. Two deans were present at the meeting, and sent clear support messages. AAUP will hold another conversation session in mid-September. For information contact shryock@vt.edu.
 - Additional Comments or announcement: none.

Adaptations to Promotion and Tenure (P&T) in Response to Pandemic (Bob Hicok)

Professor Hicok spoke about Commission on Faculty Affairs (CFA) work on promotion and tenure issues during COVID-19. Specifically he asked the Faculty Senate what questions or feedback did they have for the [proposed guiding document](#). Several issues were discussed including university access, lab access, and publications. It was noted that pre-tenure faculty have some employment risk due to limited tenure resources. Professor Hicok said that the resources should be focused toward pre-tenure faculty. He also noted the possible risks R&T and non-TT faculty will have if furloughs or salary cuts are filed. He said tenure track should absorb those cuts to protect non-tenure track faculty as possible. Jim Hawdon also is available to discuss this issue. During the discussion several points were made:

- A senator asked about service burdens between tenure track and non-tenure track faculty. Professor Hicok responded that any accommodations that are done to help pre-tenure track faculty cannot be shifted to non-tenure track faculty.
- A Senator noted that hiring new people to replace turnover is extremely costly. He said that avoiding losing people who we want to keep and should be kept is a priority. He also noted that fairness is important but so is efficiency. Professor Hicok responded that we should help keep people stay here.
- A Senator noted that some faculty feel that Faculty Handbook is the place to go for questions and asked if there something in the handbook that needs to change. Professor Hicok stated that there were no changes in the Faculty Handbook.
- Several Senators stated that changes to P&T sometimes is viewed as violation of handbook. Question centered on whether COVID related P&T changes (that ultimately benefitted faculty) were violations of the handbook. Professor Hicok responded that during the tenure process committee members and external reviewers are asked to look at tenure cases is the quality of the work. The result of COVID measures for P&T result in the same P&T expectations, but the COVID considerations are drafted to give people a break in amount or year that is fallow.
- A Senator said any potential furloughs should not be part of the P&T additions. Professor Hicok said that to put something in the document about retroactive money can be problematic. This may seem to privilege tenure track faculty. If there are furlough and salary cuts VT should protect non-TT faculty because they are more vulnerable. This document does not bring up furloughs in any way.
- Dr. Kaufman said people can continue to comment on the Google doc. The document should be completed by next Friday (8/28).

College Caucuses

Faculty Senate used Zoom breakout rooms to address the following questions within each college. The following questions were given to guide each college Caucus:

1. Who is participating in this college caucus?
2. Who is your college's representative to the [Faculty Senate Cabinet](#)?
3. Who are your college's representatives on the [Faculty Review Committee](#)?
4. Who is your college's representative to the [Committee on Faculty Ethics](#)?
5. How will you engage your college's faculty representative to [University Council](#) in communication and deliberations related to Faculty Senate?
6. How will you engage your [college faculty association/organization](#) in communication and deliberations related to Faculty Senate?

7. What issues and/or priorities are shared among faculty within the college, and how might the Faculty Senate help address those?

Other Business

Updates from college caucuses (detailed below).

- CALS: Discussion on student needs during the pandemic.
- CAUS: Discussion on Faculty Senate replacements and shared governance.
- COE: Last year the Engineering EFO invited the Faculty Senate cabinet member to the meeting, guests to Faculty Senate have the same information, one of the issues request for better communication from admin for COVID-19.
- CLAHS: Discussion about the association shared governance, more functional and active, structural and active, concern over consistency with deans in shared governance (dean to faculty interaction).
- CNRE: Only one representative from Faculty Senate present.
- CoS: Francis McCarty is now the new Faculty Cabinet representative.
- PCoB: Discussion centered on trying to figure out positions that were vacant. They want to go to dean to determine what to do.
- CVM: Through transition there has been neglect for university committees. Improve the FS Cabinet representative. They are going to clarify on others. CVM did appoint a member for faculty ethics.
- UL: Association President Rachael Miles vacancy on Faculty Ethics to be filled. Topics for future meets to be brought up. Continued Appointed (CA) and non-CA track. That track is not in alignment and salary compression. There are also issues with competitive salary for library. There are library issues for percentile salaries within peers. Conversion from non-CA to CA positions are no increases in salary.
- VTCSOM: The College focused on discussions of definitions and needing clarifications of what these roles are being relatively new to the Senate. Group of specialists from all departments most were on the call and are learning rapidly, and college units want to better communicate with departmental processes.

Action Items, Including Anticipated Follow-up Communication

- Reminder announcements (Cayce Myers). Announcement to send information about Faculty Senate representation. Any representatives not included in the Canvas site should email mcmyers@vt.edu.
- Evan Lavender Smith: Dr. Smith is beginning a term as president of VT's chapter of Phi Beta Kappa this semester. They are in need of a VP (as well as committee members). If anyone knows of PBK faculty - especially junior faculty - desirous of some relatively low-stress, light-workload university service, please pass along info to els@vt.edu.
- Weekly Provost update on COVID-19. People continue to ask about faculty testing. To-date university many not test if you want to be, but the local health department will test. Ongoing testing first wave of on-campus residents and then 400 tests per day after the first wave of testing. There is coordination with local health department.

Adjourn

The meeting formally adjourned at 4:20 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by Cayce Myers, Faculty Senate Secretary.