

Faculty Senate Meeting Minutes September 4, 2020, @ 2:30pm, Via Zoom

Senators Present: Masoud Agah, Diane Agud, Robin Allnutt, Susan Anderson, Sara Arena, Richard Ashley, Paul Avey, Joseph Baker, Arthur Ball, Sarah Barrett, Esther Bauer, Michael Borowski, Muhsine Turkaslan Bulbul, Charles Calderwood, Leandro Castello, Cathryn Copper, Benjamin Corl, Sam Doak, Cam Donaldson, Harry Dorn, John Ferris, Nicolin Grieco, Al Hagy, Roie Hauser, Bob Hicok, Daniel Hindman, Daniel R. Karolyi, Eric Kaufman, Bradley Klein, Jacob Lahne, Roberto Leon, Shaowen Luo, Cayce Myers, Evan Lavender-Smith, Paul Marek, Frances McCarty, Polly Middleton, Michael Nappier, Amy Nelson, Aaron Noble, Chris Pierce, Nicole Pitterson, Chris Pierce, Scott Pleasant, Robin Queen, Susanna Rinehart, Peter Schmitthenner, Todd Schenk, Yang Shao, Ashley Shew, Richard Shryock, Sabrina Sturgeon, Jay Teets, Steve Thompson, Jim Tokuhisa, Diego Troya, Layne Watson, Robert Weiss, Cindy Wood, Anthony Wright, Mehdi Ahmadian

Guests: William Galloway, James Lord, Camellia Pastore, Maruf Hoque, Rachel Gabriele, April Myers, Coogan Thompson

Call to Order by President Eric Kaufman @ 2:30pm

President Kaufman provided an overview of the Faculty Senate meeting with guiding questions:

1. What insights and questions from the COACHE survey findings can help guide the work of Faculty Senate this fall?
2. Shall we adopt the proposed amendment to Faculty Senate Bylaws to adjust membership and elections?
3. What interest or concerns do faculty share regarding standardized test requirements for admissions?

Consent Agenda

Robin Queen moved to adopt the consent agenda, and Susanna Reinhardt seconded the motion.

There were no objections; the following was approved unanimously:

- Approve and post [August 21, 2020, meeting minutes](#).

Brief Updates and Announcements

- Topical schedule for fall meetings: Eric Kaufman shared the future schedule for meetings.
- Updating Faculty Senate Records: Cayce Myers asked Senators to provide any updated Faculty Senate information to mcmeyers@vt.edu.
- Upcoming Q&A Session with President Sands: Eric Kaufman noted President Sands will join the Faculty Senate (FS) meeting on September 18th for 1 hour, 3-4 p.m. There will be other FS business. You may add questions to the Google doc no later than September 14th. Part of the advantage is, if you want an answer, it gives time to President Sands to find the answer to the questions.
- Upcoming Q&A Session with BOV Rector Valeiras: Eric Kaufman highlighted the anticipated visit by the Board of Visitors Rector, Horacio Valeiras. Senators may contribute questions to this Google Doc in advance of the October 2nd Faculty Senate meeting.
- Recommendations for assessing faculty: R. Scott Pleasant highlighted a [linked report](#) from the FS subcommittee on assessing faculty. The Commission on Faculty Affairs (CFA) will now take this document and begin to advance the recommendations.

- Bob Hicok noted that CFA will use this report for this semester, beginning with a focus on service.
- Others?
 - Robert Foster Cherry Award for Great Teaching: Eric Kaufman noted this award relates a bit to assessment of faculty. There are not so many awards for teaching that have a \$25,000 prize. [Robert Foster Cherry Award](#) is a national level award through Baylor University.
 - Susanna Rinehardt highlighted conversations with students and colleagues and the Commission on Student Affairs. There is an urgent issue among students for access to COVID-19 testing. Some have been turned away for tests with a greater frequency. She asked this area of communication be brought forward to administration.
 - A senator noted that COVID tests occur 5-6 days after exposure because of the potential false negative result before then.
 - Eric Kaufman noted the Senate Cabinet met with Department Heads Executive Committee earlier in the week and discussed testing.

COACHE Survey of Faculty Job Satisfaction (Rachel Gabriele, Robert Weiss, & Eric Kaufman)

- Dr. Kaufman provided links to the [Preview Report](#) and [full survey with codes](#). He also noted there will be a town hall that is open to the entire faculty to elaborate on key points.
- Rachel Gabriele, from the Provost's Office, noted Virginia Tech has participated in this survey 5 times. The survey is conducted every three years: 2007, 2010, 2013, 2017 (missed 2016), and 2020. This gives VT the opportunity to have a longitudinal data. First two surveys were structured differently than the last three. The major faculty groupings include tree areas: tenured, pre-tenured, and non-tenure track. The 2020 data is less represented by tenured faculty group. The college response rate is the norm, at about 40 percent. There was no statistical difference in types of responses, but the lower response rates are notable. COACHE has 112 colleges and universities participating. VT chooses 5 schools to compare with. Our peers are: Iowa State, UC Davis, NC State, Purdue, and Missouri. There are some breakdowns of the data that lead to conversations with specific constituent groups: nature of work, P&T, Department, Resources and Support, Institutional Leadership, Cross Silo Groups and Mentorship, and Faculty Governance. There is a current process of analyzing the full report, with the hope to answer questions after the town hall, hosted September 21, 2020, at 10 a.m., hosted by FS President Kaufman and Provost Clarke.
- Robert Weiss noted the COACHE data goes into demographics very deeply in the data. Department satisfaction is 92 percent and institution satisfaction is 71 percent, which is on par with peers and cohort (i.e., all COACHE participants). Data also included peer perceptions of best aspects of employment.
 - **Best points of VT in COACHE survey:** quality of colleagues, geographic location, academic freedom, support of colleagues.
 - **Worst points of VT in COACHE survey:** compensation, quality of facilities, too much service, unrelenting pressure to perform, lack of support for research, geographic locations, quality of leadership.
 - Facilities is both teaching and research. Service is about distribution and equity among demographic segments of the population.
 - Improvement themes: facilities, leadership: general, compensations, culture, and teaching. Quantitative data is anonymous, but qualitative may not be as anonymous because of context.
- Kaufman acknowledged that we want to recognize where we are as an institution; we are committed to progress. We would like to have a higher satisfaction and perception of

effectiveness of shared governance. It important for individual senators are relaying Faculty Senate information. Kaufman is not being prescriptive, because departmental culture is different. Senate Cabinet is working hard to build a culture where faculty consent to important initiatives are achieved. Provost Clarke is also working toward consensus with faculty and shared governance.

- A senator remarked that COACHE survey anonymity has various level of problems, particularly for smaller departments, which may affect response rate. However, the raw data is protected by Harvard, and administrators are unable to see findings for groups with small response counts.
- Rachel Gabriele stated COACHE data does result in impact such as P&T guidelines, responses to faculty concerns, and programs like the faculty writing retreats.

Faculty Senate Bylaws Concerning Membership and Elections (John Ferris)

- John Ferris moved to adopt the [proposed resolution to amend Faculty Senate Bylaws](#) (Appendix A), and Todd Schenk seconded the motion.
- The change would allow for 100 senators. Library would be considered the way a college is. No college would have no more than 20 percent of senate. All colleges would have at least 1 Senate representative. Medical School is exactly the same as all other colleges. College faculty associations would be allowed to elect 1 representative to the senate. If a college didn't have an association, they would still have representation. Senate officers will remain members of the Senate for one year after they serve as officers.
- Kaufman noted amending bylaws is now easier, without much oversight, so we can make future improvements, as needed.
- A senator noted that 11 faculty members from the medical school is high given the number of faculty who are primary VT employees. Ferris responded: If you only count people are technically VT employees that would be too few (3-4), and if it was everyone in med school number (27). We decided 11 departments and 11 seemed like a reasonable number.
 - Hicok noted we retain the right to enforce the employee requirement, and we moved to 11 to see if departments see value in senate. This gives everyone opportunity to see if they have value in senate. We reserve the right to revisit employment question.
- Small departments have always been allowed to merge to send a single representative. We worked out what a limited resources department might be. The decision was if a merged department would require 2 senators, then it's too large to be merged.
- The Resolution passed, 53 to 1.
 - This includes 44 positive votes in the poll; 3 positive votes via private chat, due to Zoom poll limitations; and 6 abstentions in the poll, which count on the prevailing side. The complete Faculty Senate roster at the time of the vote included 86 senators, so an affirmative vote of 43 senators was required to amend the Bylaws.

Standardized Test Requirements for Admissions (John Ferris)

- John Ferris shared various considerations on standardized testing requirements for undergraduate admissions. He proposed that the FS college caucuses get together with college faculty association and deliberate on the issue of standardized testing. If the faculty leadership of that college has a strong opinion, we can discuss with FS. If there are strong opinions, then there can be a discussion on undergraduate admissions; and if so, we can write a position statement. If there is no faculty association then the college caucus can address the issue. Timeline would be the next month.

Other Business

- Richard Shyroch announced that AAUP will be having another meeting that is open to members and non-members. It is a chance to get feedback during COVID. Here is the information:

What: An Interactive Community Conversation: Setting Goals for our AAUP chapter at VT - How can we help now and in the future?

Who: All faculty and graduate students involved in the education, research, extension, and service missions of Virginia Tech.

When: 4:30 - 5:30, Wednesday, September 16th

Where: Please link to this Zoom address five minutes before the start of the meeting
<https://virginiatech.zoom.us/j/96115067749>

Action Items, Including Anticipated Follow-up Communication

- Cayce Myers reminded senators to send any updates to mcmyers@vt.edu.
- Senators were also encouraged to add questions to the Google Doc in preparation for President Sands' visit on September 18th.

Adjourn

Meeting adjourned at 3:51 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted by Cayce Myers, Secretary

[Insert Appendix A: Resolution to Amend Bylaws]

Faculty Senate Membership and Elections

(Draft resolution for bylaws, to take effect October 1, 2020)

Whereas the Faculty Senate Principles of Representation defined in Article III of the Faculty Senate Constitution states that “Insofar as possible, each senator shall represent an equal number of faculty members eligible for Faculty Senate membership.”; and

Whereas Faculty Senate Nominations and Elections are defined in Article III of the Faculty Senate Constitution at the college level, not the department level, specifically “Candidates for the Faculty Senate are nominated and elected by each college or library faculty in the same manner as the officers of its faculty organization.”; and

Whereas College Faculty Associations (CFA) should be supported and strengthened and, as elected representatives of their college, their voice should be heard in the Faculty Senate; and

Whereas the current bylaws delegate the responsibility from the colleges to the departments in the election of senators and this has become the tradition, but this delegation of responsibility is not required or prescribed in the Faculty Senate Constitution; and

Whereas each college has the right to elected representation in the Senate regardless of size; and

Whereas the voice of the Faculty Senate should not be dominated by a small number of large colleges; and

Whereas each department should have at least one representative; and

Whereas the election of senators is critical to the democratic process and should not be circumvented for a more efficient, but less democratic, process; and

Whereas Officers of the Faculty Senate, as elected representatives of the Senate who may have experience and expertise beneficial to the Senate, should be retained by the senate for one year after their role as an officer expires;

Therefore, let the Faculty Senate Bylaws be amended as follows, where changes are indicated in red and deletions are indicated by strikethrough.

I. Principles of Representation

~~A. The library shall have two senators.~~

A. Terminology

1. With respect to Membership, and Nomination and Election of Senators, the following applies
 - a. University Libraries is to be treated as a college.

- b. Schools that are a subdivision of a college are to be treated as departments. The School of Medicine is to be treated as a college.
- c. The term “department” is understood to mean an academic department in which at least one eligible faculty member resides.
- d. The terms “faculty”, “faculty member”, and “eligible faculty member” are understood to mean faculty members eligible for Faculty Senate membership pursuant to Article III, Section 2 of the Faculty Senate Constitution.
- e. The terms “officer”, “senate officer” and “faculty senate officer” are understood to mean the officers of the Faculty Senate pursuant to Article IV of the Faculty Senate Constitution.
- f. The terms “cabinet”, “senate cabinet” and “faculty senate cabinet” are understood to mean the Faculty Senate Cabinet pursuant to Article V, Section 1, of the Faculty Senate Constitution.

2B. The underscored words in article III, section 2 of the constitution of the Faculty Senate are interpreted as follows:

a1. An appointment is considered continuing unless the letter of appointment states otherwise.

b2. The term academic department for the purpose of the Faculty Senate constitution shall apply only to those departments and divisions that are actively involved in the teaching of credit courses or the awarding of degrees in specific academic disciplines. The precise interpretation of this term will be made by the Faculty Senate cabinet.

c3. The university level, library, and college level administrators are the president, provost, associate and assistant provosts, vice presidents, associate and assistant vice presidents, the deans, associate and assistant deans and assistant to any of the preceding.

d4. A faculty member is considered to be studying for a degree at the university if the faculty member is currently pursuing a program of study that has been filed in the graduate school office.

3C. An eligible faculty member who is not affiliated by appointment with an academic department is assigned by the Faculty Senate Cabinet to the department the cabinet considers most appropriate.

B. Membership

1. There will be 100 senators unless an increase is required as defined in section D.
2. Each college will have at least one senator.
3. No college will have more than 20% of the total number of senators.
4. Faculty Senate Officers remain senators, although not necessarily officers, for one year following their service as an officer.
5. Insofar as possible within these bounds, the number of senators from each college will be proportional to the number of faculty members in the college.

C. College Representation

1. The senators from each college will include
 - a. Faculty Senate Officers from that college; and
 - b. One senator elected by the respective College Faculty Association, if not waived (under Article II, Section A); and
 - c. At least one senator from each department; and
 - d. Insofar as possible within these bounds, the number of senators from each department will be proportional to the number of faculty members in the department.
2. The School of Medicine will have eleven senators.

D. Department Representation

1. Two departments with limited faculty resources may join to elect a representative. A simple majority of faculty members in each department must agree to joining and the vote on joining must take place before each senatorial election. These joined departments are then considered a single department for election purposes.
 - a. The term “departments with limited faculty resources” implies that the joined departments would qualify for exactly one representative. If the joined departments would have a combined number of faculty that makes them eligible for two or more representatives, then those departments cannot join.
2. In the unusual case that the allotted number of senators for a college is less than the number of departments in that college:
 - a. All departments from that college will have one senator; and
 - b. The total number of senators prescribed in Article I, section B will be increased so that each department in that college will have one senator; and
 - c. Departments that have an unfilled position in the senate for the upcoming term will hold an election, except if a Faculty Senate Officer or their College Faculty Association representative for the upcoming term is a member of that department.

E. Number of Eligible Faculty Members

1. In January, the Faculty Senate Secretary/Treasurer
 - a. Will request the number of eligible faculty members in each college and department from the Provost’s Office; and
 - b. May contact the head/chair of any department and provide them with the Faculty Senate eligibility definitions and request from them the number of eligible faculty members in the department; and
 - c. Will identify the College Faculty Associations that are required to hold a Faculty Senate election by virtue of having an unfilled position in the senate for the upcoming term, and

notify those College Faculty Associations of their electoral obligations under the Faculty Senate Bylaws.

2. In February, the Faculty Senate Secretary/Treasurer will

- a. Propose a number of eligible faculty members for each college and department to the Faculty Senate Cabinet who will make the final determination on the number of eligible faculty members; and
- b. Identify the departments that are required to hold a Faculty Senate election by virtue of having an unfilled position in the senate for the upcoming term and notify those departments of the number of senators that must be newly elected for the department and their electoral obligations under the Faculty Senate Bylaws.

~~D. Determining the representation for each department—the Faculty Senate shall be composed of membership as follows:~~

~~1. The University Libraries shall have two senators:~~

~~2. Faculty in each academic department will elect representative(s) to the Faculty Senate for a term of three years, using the following formula and based upon the total number of FTEs in the department on February 1 of each academic year as reported by the Office of the Provost:~~

~~a) Department with fewer than 30 faculty will elect one representative:~~

~~b) Departments with 30 or more faculty, but fewer than 60 faculty, will elect two representatives:~~

~~c) Departments with 60 or more faculty will elect three representatives:~~

~~d) A department with limited faculty resources may join with another department of its choosing to elect a representative:~~

~~e) Terms will be staggered with one-third of the senators elected each year. (Initial membership is found in the Faculty Senate minutes of April 20, 2004.) Faculty serving on the Faculty Senate during the 2003-2004 academic year will continue to represent their respective departments until the expiration of their terms:~~

~~f) For purposes of nomination, voting, and election, "faculty" includes any person eligible to serve in the Faculty Senate as defined in article III, section 2 of the Faculty Senate constitution:~~

II. Nomination and Election of Senators

A. College Faculty Association (CFA) Elections

In February, those College Faculty Associations that are required to hold an election (under Article I, Section E) will

1. Generate a slate of faculty nominees; and

2. Hold an election; and
3. Report to the Faculty Senate Secretary/Treasurer the results of the election. If the CFA does not exist or does not supply the election results by the end of February, the college waives its right to a CFA representative in the senate, but does not change the total allotment of senators to that college.

B. Department Elections

In March, those departments that are required to hold an election (under Article I, Section E) will

1. Generate a slate of faculty nominees; and
2. Hold an election; and
3. Report to the Faculty Senate Secretary/Treasurer the results of the election.

~~CA. Election of senators shall be conducted by academic departments before March 15 each year.~~

Newly elected senators shall be observers until the effective date of their term of office on the first day of August, but may attend and participate and vote in elections for the organization of the following year's Faculty Senate and in the selection of commission and committee members who represent the Faculty Senate. Senate terms end on the last day of July.