Faculty Senate Meeting Minutes
April 30, 2021, @ 2:30pm

Senators Present: Monty Abbas, Masoud Agah, Biko Agozino, Diane Agud, Susan Anderson, Sara Arena, Richard Ashley, Paul Avey, Joseph Baker, Kemi Bankole, Sarah Barrett, Andrew Binks, Michael Borowski, Hilary Bryon, Scott Case, Leandro Castello, Kevin Cheng, Cathryn Copper, Benjamin Corl, William Ducker, Robert Dunay, John Ferris, Carla Finkielstein, Nicolin Girmes-Grieco, James Hawdon, David Hicks, Bob Hicok, Kevin Heaslip, Daniel Hindman, Laszlo Horvath, Ran Jin, Brett Jones, Eric Kaufman, Holly Kindsvater, Vivica Kraak, Jacob Lahne, Crystal Duncan Lane, Evan Lavender-Smith, Justin Lemkul, Roberto Leon, Alexander Leonessa, Douglas Lind, Jonathan Maher, Paul Marek, Frank May, Polly Middleton, Thomas Mills, Michael Nappier, Aaron Noble, Greg Novack, Thomas O'Donnell, Chris Pierce, Nicole Pitterson, Scott Pleasant, Ellen Plummer, Robin Queen, Steve Rideout, Susanna Rinehart, Tom Sanchez, Todd Schenk, Peter Schmitthenner, Yang Shao, Richard Shryock, Eric Stanley, Laura Strawn, Cornel Sultan, Jay Teets, Steve Thompson, Tess Thompson, Jim Tokuhisa, Diego Troya, Kwok Tsui, Kevin Wang, A.K. Ward, Layne Watson, Robert Weiss, Cindy Wood, Anthony Wright de Hernandez, Hehuang Xie

Guests: Marc DeBonis, Cameron Donaldson, Jaun Espinoza, Brandy Faulkner, Stuart Feigenbaum, Kara Latopolski, Ken McCrery, Jordan Metzgar, Scott Midkiff, Rachel Miles, April Myers, Ginny Pannabecker, Jill Sible, Tamarah Smith, Coogan Thompson

Call to Order & Guiding Questions
1. What are faculty interests and considerations related to "Google Workspace for Education Fundamentals"?
2. How do undergraduate admissions procedures align with academic program expectations?
3. Who will be in key Faculty Senate roles during the coming year?
4. How might we best address ongoing issues of interest to faculty?

Consent Agenda
- April 16, 2021 minutes were unanimously approved.

Google Workspace for Education
- Scott Midkiff noted that Google is planning changes that will affect higher education after July of 2022. It is important to address the issue now so that preparations can be made through IT and the university.
- Marc DeBonis shared a presentation about the Google-Suite update. The biggest impact of the announced changes is the limit on storage capacity. Virginia Tech is allowed to distribute the storage as it sees fit, but the total amount will be controlled. Google set SKU storage limits with varying costs. Virginia Tech currently uses 5.8 PB, whereas the new plan would only allow for 650 TB. The Google Workspace Program team is working on addressing this issue and faculty have an opportunity to be involved in the process.
- Marc DeBonis asked how faculty would like to be involved in the steering committee and if the Faculty Senate would like to appoint a senator to the committee.
    - Robin Queen expressed interest in appointing someone to the committee. She believes that faculty should definitely be involved in the process.
    - Todd Schenk asked if there is a global number of allocation or can it be distributed based on individual use?

- - ■ Marc DeBonis noted that Google has made some suggestions on how to split up the storage but it will be primarily left up to Virginia Tech.
    - ○ Jordan Metzgar asked if it is safe to assume Virginia Tech will remain with Google. If Virginia Tech does switch to Microsoft what IT services will be available to faculty?
        - ■ Marc DeBonis shared an estimated timeline about how the service changes and cleanup will be managed. Options will also be considered before July of 2022.
    - ○ Monty Abbas asked whether faculty will no longer have access to services similar to Dropbox.
        - ■ Scott Midkiff noted that the terms and conditions for Dropbox did not fit state conditions and is a little different than the Google issue. Every possible constituent group at the university is affected so there will be a lot of considerations made. There will likely not be one solution to all the problems, therefore other services besides Google will likely be used tangentially.
        - ■ Robin asked if there was a thought of ending access to Alumni email accounts.
            - ● Scott Midskiff noted that ending access is definitely on the table and a forwarding service is being considered.
    - ○ Evan Lavender-Smith asked if privacy is being considered throughout the cleanup process.
        - ■ Scott Midkiff noted that the individual will be conducting the cleanup of files, so no one's privacy will be compromised.
    - ○ Alexander Leonessa asked whether central storage units could be considered for various departments.
        - ■ Scott Midkiff noted that individually owned units become difficult when redundancy, insurance, and reliability is considered.
    - ○ Eric Kaufman noted that a representative can be discussed at the upcoming Cabinet meeting to better understand how the Faculty Senate can get involved.

Considerations for Admissions and Use of Standardized Test Scores
- ● Juan Espinoza presented changes made in the admissions process. In a national context, Virginia Tech is outperforming other schools in applications. He anticipates that the goal of 6,675 enrollments will be very close to realized in May 2021. The motivation of the changes made in 2018 were to ensure that any student who was interested in Virginia Tech was able to apply. He noted that Virginia Tech is one of the only schools in Virginia that allow self-reported academic records, which really helped in the COVID stay-at-home conditions. Tied to the application increase was the switch to the Coalition for College and the Common App networks. As a result of these changes, Virginia Tech applications were up by 36% which compares well to UVA's 14% growth. Before 2018, GPA and test scores were about 95% of the application decision. Through AACRAO, a more holistic approach was taken, which includes non-cognitive essay questions. He noted that 48% opted out of reporting test scores. A large percentage of minority and first-generation students opted out of the test scores and showed that more of those students applied as a result of that option. Juan Espinoza noted that high SAT scores often indicate affluent students as they have more resources available to help them prepare.

- Evan Lavender-Smith noted that his kids in high school are really struggling in school this year with their studies and mental health. He asked whether the difficulties they have faced this year will be considered in the holistic review.
  - Juan Espinoza noted that the difficulties as a result of COVID affected most students, but his team wants to get a better sense of what school systems handled the changes better than others. He did note that it is unfortunately true that there is no fair way of reviewing applications post-COVID.
- Laszlo Horvath asked what percentage of the holistic review is determined by the academic aspects.
  - Juan Espinoza noted that 65% is academic and 35% is based on the personal index. The system is not perfect, but he noted that they are doing their best to identify personal circumstances that may change the way a student is considered by admissions.
- Tess Thompson would like to understand how to better grow her department within engineering, even though other engineering departments have more than enough students.
  - Juan Espinoza noted that his team is working on better understanding the needs of individual departments as well as colleges.
- Juan Espinoza continued his presentation on his team's research into the correlation between high school test scores/ GPA and college performance. His study showed that high school GPA was much more indicative of college success and graduation than the test scores. He noted that he would share the presentation with the Faculty Senate so that it could be reviewed more carefully for those interested.
- Ran Jin noted that a primary concern of faculty members is that the outcome of opting out of test scores is still unclear. There is a group of faculty members that is interested in assisting with this type of study, in the computation and statistics departments. He noted that he would like to put those faculty in contact with Juan's group. There is also a concern about the bias that may be present in reviewing applications if test scores are no longer considered.
  - Juan Espinoza noted that his team is investigating what kinds of accolades could be used in replacement of or in conjunction with test scores/ advanced courses. This issue is definitely being investigated.

Faculty Senate Officer Elections
- John Ferris introduced the cabinet slate of nominees and asked for any nominations from the floor:
  - President: Robert Weiss
  - Vice President: Robin Queen
  - Operations Officer: Ran Jin
- Eric Kaufman distributed a voting poll to approve the nominations. The slate was approved unanimously.

Nominations and Appointments to University Governance
- Eric Kaufman shared University Governance training tutorials that may be helpful: https://governance.vt.edu/training-tutorials.html
- Eric Kaufman explained the proposed commission and committee appointments for 2021-22 and shared the spreadsheet with the proposed slate.
  - John Ferris moved to adopt the recommended appointments, and Susan Anderson seconded the motion. The slate was approved unanimously.

Undergraduate Honor System
- Kara Latopolski shared a presentation on the Undergraduate Honor System Update. She explained how cases have been reviewed over the pandemic period. The case count was significantly higher in the 2020-2021 school year as compared to the 2019-2020 school year. The student-faculty resolutions have increased throughout the year, however. There is a lag in panel processing which is largely due to a lack of panel volunteers. Zoom and email fatigue may be contributing to the lack of volunteers. An Assistant Panel Coordinator Position was created to help with the increased workload, and they are looking to hire a graduate coordinator as well. Panels will not be held during exam week but will be continued over the summer for the first time.
- Brandy Faulkner encouraged Faculty Senators to volunteer to sit on the hearing panels and on the Honor Council. She noted that the more volunteers they get, the faster the cases can be completed. For more information on the Honor Council, please contact Brandy or Kara.
- Kara Latopolski noted that if senators are not available, it would be helpful for them to encourage their fellow faculty members. Cases are being evaluated in the order received, with the exception of graduating seniors. However, this process will take a significant amount of time.
- Thomas O'Donnell asked if the office engages with websites like Chegg.
  - Kara Latopolski explained that faculty members are able to contact her office for instructions for contacting Chegg. Chegg will then respond with information that they have about who posted assignments, and faculty may request that the assignment or test be taken off the website.

Virginia Tech Experts Directory
- Eric Kaufman noted that Ginny Pannabacker could be contacted regarding the Experts Directory.
  - Virginia Tech Experts is a new searchable profile system that will provide a public facing view of researchers, scholars, educators at Virginia Tech, along with their publications, research interests, teaching, and additional activities. Learn more via this guide.

Other Business
- Eric Kaufman noted that the Working Group to Develop a University Policy on Native Nations is looking for a Faculty Senate member to participate. He noted that any interest can be directed to his email and he will put you in contact with the group.

Action Items, Including Anticipated Follow-up Communication
- Eric Kaufman noted the following announcement links:
  - [Important COVID-19 vaccination survey for employees](#)
  - [Plans, preparations continue to move Virginia Tech toward an in-person fall semester](#)
    - [Faculty and Academic Staff Engagement plan](#)

Adjourn

The meeting was adjourned at 4:23pm.

Submitted by Cameron Donaldson, undergraduate assistant