Faculty Senate Meeting Minutes
October 20, 2023 @ 2:30pm
Torgersen 1050 or via Zoom

Check-In:

Present: Joe Merola (presiding), Monty Abbas, Luke Achenie, Onwubiko Agozino, Diane Agud, Barbara Allen (alternate for Rebecca Hester and James Hawdon), Richard Ashley, Paul Avey, Azziza Bankole, Virginia Buechner-Maxwell, Scott Case, Guopeng Cheng, Rebecca Cockrum, Carolyn Commer, Kristy Daniels, Ashley Dayer, Jonathan Everett, Stuart Feigenbaum, Carla Finkielstein, Becky Funk, Rodney Gaines, Chris Galitz (alternate for Costin Untaroiu), Scott Gartner, David Gregory, David Hicks, Mantu Hudait, Scott Huxtable, Ran Jin, Bryan Katz, Alex Kinnaman, Leigh-Anne Krometis, Jacob Lahne (alternate for Laura Strawn), Catherine Larochelle, Evan Lavender-Smith, Renee Leclair, Justin Lemkul, Kim Loeffert, Gary Long, Charles Lowery, Guo-Quan Lu, Jason Malone, Majid Manteghi (alternate for Jeff Walling), Eric Martin, Michelle Maycock, Ali Mehrizi-Sani, Rachel Miles, Gonzalo Montero, Zhange Ni, Greg Novack, Thomas O'Donnell, Yuchin (Albert) Pan, Robin Panneton, Nicole Pitterson, Steve Rideout, Susanna Rinehart, Nino Ripepi, Nicholas Robbins, Nazila Roofigari-Esfahan, Adrian Sandu, Charles Schleupner, Karen Schnatterly, Yang Shao (alternate for vacancy in Geography), Richard Shryock, Charles Smith, Jay Teets, Jim Tokuhisa, Kwok Tsui, Alp Tural (alternate for Bill Green), Bimal Viswanath, Jerald Walz, Robert Weiss, Rose Wesche, Ashley Wilkinson, Erin 'Nikki' Worthington, Randy Wynne, Hehuang Xie, Yan Xu, Diane Zahm, Lizette Zietsman

Guests: Carrie Cox, Lynsy Belshe, Chris Galitz, E. Fanny Jasso-Hernandez, Monique Logan, Amanda MacDonald, Laurel Miner, April Myers, Nick Quint, Dee Dee Somervell, Pam Tate

Absent with Notice: Angela Witcher Walker, Cori Ruktanonchai, Stephanie Smith, Keith Stephenson

Absent: Jonathan Auguste, James Casey, Josh Clemons, Mark Coggins, Nick Copeland, Zhuo Fu, Wesley Gwaltney, Daniel Hindman, Joseph Hughes, Young-Teck Kim, Luca Massa, Hans Robinson, Eric Stanley, Saied Taheri, Shane Wang

Call to Order by the President Joe Merola at 2:32

Approval of Agenda and Minutes (Joe Merola)
- Consent agenda was adopted:
    - Minutes for 09-22-2023 ([Link](#))
    - Agenda for 10-20-2023 ([Link](#))
    - CSPA Resolution 2023-24A Resolution to Add a Statement of Support for Participation in Shared Governance and Professional Development to Staff Job Descriptions; waived right to comment

Business Agenda

Old Business

1. Updates & announcements from Committees, Commissions, University Council: Available for review on the Faculty Senate SharePoint site.
2. The Committee on Faculty Ethics is seeking members. One faculty representative from each college, University Libraries and Extension is required. (Current vacancies on the committee include representatives from AAD, Pamplin, COE, VetMed, and University Libraries.) The Committee on Faculty Ethics receives and considers charges of violations of faculty ethics that involve the abuse of professional responsibilities. There are currently no charges to be considered, but the committee should be staffed and prepared to act when needed.
    a. A concern was raised regarding departments who have provided multiple messages through different venues seeking volunteers, with no one being willing to serve. Departments are encouraged to make every effort to recruit representatives. There have been vacancies in the past. Discussion was held regarding whether a message could be distributed by upper administration indicating the importance of the committee.
3. Joe Merola introduced elections to fill a vacancy on the Transportation and Parking Committee. Alan Munshower was previously nominated for the position. No further nominees were received from the floor.
    a. Alan Munshower was elected as the faculty representative to the Transportation and Parking Committee. 59 votes, 3 Abstentions.

New Business

4. Carrie Cox, Senior Director for Auxiliary Services, provided an update on Transportation and Parking Services.
    a. The Campus Master Plan of 2018 encompasses the Parking and Transportation Master Plan of 2016 and provides direction for the future. The university is working toward meeting goals of enhancing mobility while

preserving campus character and preparing for growth in student enrollment, but these efforts continue to disrupt parking access. Transportation and Parking Services encompasses 4 areas: Parking Services, Fleet Services, Sustainable Transportation, and Air Transportation Services.

b. The department remains committed to Climate Action Commitment Goal 9, reducing single-occupancy-vehicle commuting by 20 percent by 2025 and reducing transportation related GHG emissions by 40% by 2030.

c. Initiatives are underway to increase bike lanes and provide the ability to ride bikes on campus without being on the road. The Bike Hub provides services for maintenance and houses a commuter education center. The use of electric buses and the number of EV charging stations is increasing.

d. Construction on the Multi Modal Transit Facility is expected to be complete in early 2024, with the facility being fully operational by the fall. This will provide a central location for all transit services with two loops, including a true campus loop that will provide frequent service with little to no wait from the hub to campus locations.

e. Parking Services is an auxiliary unit that is a 100 percent self-supporting, user-based system. Affordability and accessibility remain a priority with many options being considered including how to utilize the on-campus loop once the Multi Modal facility is open in addition to carpool, bus, bike and walk options.

    i.   There are 14,255 current parking spaces on campus with over 12,000 parking spaces for faculty due to the tiered system. There are generally 700 open parking spaces available daily, mostly in peripheral parking areas. A late afternoon/evening permit was implemented this year, which offers a lower cost.

    ii. An additional parking garage is on the 6-year plan. Location and design have not been determined. As parking spaces continue to be displaced, additional strategies are being considered. The majority of commuter and graduate student parking will continue shifting to the periphery. Some parking will reopen as specific construction projects end.

    iii. A summary of the Parking Services budget was shared.

f. Two questions were addressed (below). Additional questions will be collected and submitted to Parking and Transportation Services, and answers will be provided.

    i.   It would be more convenient to be able to purchase carpool passes online. Carrie Cox responded that, because of the carpooling requirements, vehicle ownership documentation must be provided, so in-person purchasing is required.

       ii.   Concerns were expressed regarding sufficient ADA accessible parking spaces, with additional challenges due to students being dropped off in or near ADA parking spaces. The issue has been previously reported but has not been addressed. Carrie Cox reported that a workgroup has been convened to consider solutions for this issue.

5. Justin Lemkul presented Commission on Faculty Affairs 2023-2024A: Resolution to Revise the Description of Faculty Senate Standing Committees in the Faculty Senate Constitution for first reading.
   a. This resolution attempts to clarify the scope and responsibilities of the Faculty Senate Standing committees.

6. Carla Finklestein presented Commission on Research Resolution 2023-24B: Resolution to Revise Policies 13005 and 3020 on Center and Institute Establishment, Oversight, and Governance and Financial and Administrative Procedures for first reading.
   a. Laurel Miner provided a summary of this resolution. The two policies referenced in the resolution relate to centers and institutes at Virginia Tech. Both underwent major revision in 2011 and were streamlined in 2020. The current revision is more substantive. The resolution will combine the two policies into one and also provides clarity.

7. Carla Finklestein presented Commission on Research Resolution 2023-24A: Resolution to Revise Policy 13040: Virginia Tech Human Subjects Research Policy for first reading.
   a. This resolution updates the Virginia Tech Human Subject Research policy to meet government regulations and provides minor clarification in the text.

8. Q&A with Provost Cyril Clarke. Provost Clarke began by providing comments on subject areas that senators previously submitted.
   a. Salary compression, especially regarding instructors. Salary compression is a matter of concern that must be managed on an ongoing basis and impacts all faculty. One way that compression is addressed is through the National Distinction Program. Additional strategies are also employed including case-by-case consideration.
   b. Partnership for Incentive-Based Budget. There have been recent changes to the model but those are not dramatic; it functions in the same way that it always has. The model includes two parts, unit allocation and incentives that are awarded in accordance with university strategic goals. There are other budgetary inputs at the university.
   c. Living wage for graduate assistants. VT has a significant interest in advancing and improving compensation for graduate students. If the university considered graduate assistantships to be like other university wages, they

would be a 0.5 FTE and would not provide the desired advancement. Over the past several years, 5% increases have been provided. Virginia Tech was made aware that these increases did not filter down to all graduate assistants. This issue has been addressed. Steps have been put into place to ensure that future increases will be extended to all graduate assistants. A resolution to the Board of Visitors provided for higher compensation for graduate students, and this was supported and approved by the BOV. The university is committed to continuing to monitor and work towards furthering graduate student compensation.

 i. Additional questions were asked about graduate student fees and summer employment. The university has been asked to consider waiving the comprehensive fee, but students would still be using the services provided. From a budgetary viewpoint, that process would be complicated. Additional information about tuition and fees can be viewed at https://www.bursar.vt.edu/content/dam/bursar_vt_edu/tuition/fall-2023/2023-2024%20Tuition%20and%20Fees_v4.pdf. Graduate assistantships are 0.5 FTE. Graduate students can be employed separately in the summer for work-related tasks.

d. Additional topics of discussion were initiated by senators:

 i. COACHE survey data. This information was introduced in a town hall format. The recording is available on the Faculty Affairs web page, https://faculty.vt.edu/faculty-development/mentoring-and-support/coache-survey.html. College deans have access to the COACHE information dashboard, and they will be making it generally available. Any faculty member needing access now can contact Rachel Gabriele, Associate Vice Provost for Faculty Affairs.

 ii. Faculty report difficulties with reimbursement for expenses that used to be covered, for example, paying for a meal for a visiting researcher or lodging for travel. Provost Clarke responded that similar issues have been reported by many departments. He expects clarification to be communicated by Amy Sebring, Executive Vice Provost and Chief Operating Officer, and emphasized that there are specific laws that must be considered and followed by the university.

  · Faculty report that they are no longer able to use P-Cards to pay for student travel to conferences if lodging is included. If a P-Card cannot be used, then faculty must pay with their personal card and obtain reimbursement. Provost Clarke requested that the Faculty Senate send this additional issue to

the Executive Vice Provost and Chief Operating Officer for guidance.

iii. Faculty report that many spring classes do not yet have classrooms and asked about classroom shortages. Provost Clarke responded that the type of space, amount of space required, and type of instruction all must be considered. He encouraged faculty to fully utilize the Monday–Friday, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. schedule. There is much pressure on the registrar's office regarding preferred class times, but work is needed to smooth out space utilization.

iv. A question was asked regarding whether IT issues can be included in shared governance. Provost Clarke stated that shared governance elevates the collective voice of faculty, and that there is room for improvement in communication and consultation. The IT Transformation and conversion of email systems from Google to Microsoft were mentioned.

- Discussion was held around faculty concerns with the transition from Google to Microsoft, including time and Teams/Drives that are not associated with specific department. Departments may purchase extra storage. If there are research or other activities where the purchase of storage is not cost effective or does not meet needs, please let Provost Clarke know.
- David Raymond, Interim Vice President for Information Technology and Chief Information Officer, will be attending a future Faculty Senate Meeting.

v. Any additional questions can be submitted and will be sent to Provost Clarke.

Open Floor Discussion

9. Ron Fricker asked for the Faculty Senate's help in communicating the need for faculty participation in a commissioned study on work-life balance and wellbeing of VT Faculty. Information can be found at the following link: https://news.vt.edu/notices/2023/09/provost-faculty-work-life-balance-survey.html An announcement will be sent that senators can share.

Motion to adjourn and seconded at 4:22 p.m.